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**TALENT CHALLENGES IN  
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT:  
MINDFULNESS' ANSWER**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** The objective of this document is to analyse and highlight the need for new approaches and tools such as Mindfulness in human resources management. In order to achieve this, firstly, the transformation the social system and the organizational world have been going through is discussed. Secondly, the concept of Mindfulness will be revised and analysed along with the possibility of including it as a tool in organizations in order to finally, present a possible program proposal of the concept.

**Design / methodology / approach:** The document represents a theoretical review and expansion of Mindfulness based on the current need for change and innovation in the management of people. Its developmental procedure is centred on the search and review of primary and secondary data sources.

**Findings:** The organizational and working world is suffering constant and rapid changes which are creating an imbalance between the needs of people and the workings of organizations. With the objective of achieving this equilibrium of people-organization, businesses must continue focusing on innovation, talent and the development of employees. Therefore, the paper highlights the relevance of Mindfulness as a tool and the benefits its integration in organizations will bring so that the “whole” of the organization equates to more than each of its parts.

**Originality / value:** The objective of the paper is to analyse and propose a new tool which better satisfies the needs of organizations and people, allowing the former to grow as human beings.

**Key-words:** Mindfulness, Organizational Change, Strategic Management of HR, New Approach.

**Paper type:** Theoretical review.

## 1. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SOCIAL SYSTEM AND THE CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL WORLD

The social system and the organizational world as we know them are undergoing a profound transformation. According to Barriga et al. (2004) this transformation of the current era we find ourselves in can be characterized by:

- a) Globalisation and glocalisation. *“The complexity of today’s society undergoing contradictory processes such as globalization and glocalisation”*. This signifies that we live in a generally globalized context, yet at the same time our local surroundings remain relevant due to the importance of local identity and social roots.
- b) Change of values. A shift is occurring from materialistic values: *“a rupture between the processes of institutional rationalization and personal emotive nature”*, to post materialistic values: *“an individualist approach as a result of the relentless pursuit of neocapitalism”*, all the way to transmodernity: *“reconstructing the relationship between the institutional and the individual, turning the person into a socially constituted individual”*.
- c) Social coexistence. A growth in problems of social coexistence. The fact that *“harmonizing equal rights and the difference of social identity”* creates a challenge both for majorities as well as minorities to be tolerant under equal conditions.
- d) Social structure and multiculturalism. Key aspects that increasingly influence today’s society and that of the future.
- e) “The permanent welfare state crisis”. This does not refer specifically to economic issues, but also to psychosocial ones as well.

All these aspects influence the world of business in different ways. As Blanch (2014) sums up, we are facing a metamorphosis of work characterized by three steps.

- a) The move from stable, solid modernity to inconsistent, changeable, liquid modernity (Bauman, 2013), a society of risk (Beck, 2002).
- b) The move from a Keynesian welfare state, with the promise of permanent employment, to a neoliberal model where employment is uncertain,

underlying the new working poverty (Fraiser, Gutiérrez and Peña-Casas, 2011) and to the decent work deficit (Boulin et al., 2006, ILO, 2012), in which the idea of a lineal and planned working career disappears, being replaced by temporary, discontinuous, fragmented and insecure employment.

- c) The move from working activity that involves a relatively natural pace or effort, to one which leads to overwork and urgency; technostress; saturated schedules; an excessive working pace, intensity and lack of time. This creates a feeling of overwork or too little time to carry out tasks effectively, working calendars become full, constant urgency is required, leading to burnout and collapse and the awareness that tasks are being carried out ineffectively.

Taking into account what has been mentioned above, the main changes that can be witnessed have occurred in **technology**, the **employment market** and in **organizations**. The following will go into detail about each of these changes.

### 1.1. Technological changes

*“The technological revolution in recent decades heralds a change of era”* (Grisanti, 2014). The great technological changes which are being produced in recent years are having an increasingly accelerated effect on changes in society. (Gainza, 2003). As expert in new technologies Nicholas Negroponte points out (Holguin, 2014): *“Any technology related to science produces a change in the way we live and understand reality. In the last few years an intense and accelerated knowledge of the universe has come about through technological advances, as well as a transformation of the planet and those who inhabit it”*.

This should not surprise us, however. Just as technological advances came about during the beginning of the industrial revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the introduction of line production and the division of labour at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or even with the technological revolution of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we now encounter what economists call **Industry 4.0** or the fourth industrial revolution, which affects both the social as well as economic relationships of most of the world. As Cicero claimed, “those who forget history are doomed to repeat it”. We should, therefore, learn from

what has occurred in the past and take advantage in the best way possible of the opportunity of advancement which we are being presented with.

Quite recently, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January this year, the World Economic Forum recognised, from a number of participants, that the world has officially entered the fourth revolution. Marc Benioff, CEO of Salesforce, added that *“As a society, we are entering unknown territory”*. Although there are disagreements surrounding what this 4<sup>th</sup> revolution will mean (Parente, 2016), what is clear is that it will mean new ways of understanding what we do and how we behave. The reality is that a great number of changes are in progress that determine how people and businesses behave.

The technological revolution affects societies, and at the same time, the intensity of technology is affected by social, political, as well as ideological aspects (Pérez, 2004).

It is true, however, that the relationship between society, and more specifically between people and technology, is not really clear. As Gargallo and Suárez (2002) point out *“(man) creates it and uses it to amplify his senses, but at the same time, technology itself in turn transforms man himself, and also society”*. A truly interesting reflection.

In this attempt to understand what the new technological era means, and taking into account that in principle it offers important opportunities, it can also be seen as a type of threat towards the traditional way of behaving in businesses, institutions and in a large part of society. It is a real change in various areas of society that imply all at once, resistance (Pérez, 2004). Moreover, as a consequence of this, it implies unexpectedly negative results.

Just as changes have been produced throughout history, we are currently witnessing shifts. More specifically, we are witnessing what is now known by some as the **Information Society** (Adell, 1997; Echeverría, 1998), and for others such as Echeverría (1998) *“telépolis”* or for Terceiro (1996) *“the digital society”*. As a report by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (n.d.) on new technologies in the workplace indicates; *“It is possible to say that nowadays a new revolution is under way, the Information Revolution. The subject matter of this new revolution is information, or data knowledge and programs”*(p.2). These are three essential elements for the duties of society which we could consider to be more or less beneficial, as has been considered by many authors throughout history. There are those who consider that this

new information era will only benefit society as a whole (Gates, 1999), making reference to the idea of a digital nervous system, while there are others who consider it to be mainly detrimental (Stoll, 1995).

While it is true that not everything in life is black or white, this case is no exception. Moreover, *“technology itself is not inherently positive or negative. It acquires these connotations according to the societies that use it”* (Gainza, 2003). Therefore, in relation to the impact that the Internet has had on the organizational world and the increase in **virtuality** in the last few years, we can highlight various ideas (Camacho, 2004):

-Culture and business relationships influence the incorporation of technology. The culture of every organization and how these relationships are designed within each institution have a great influence on the effectiveness of the advance of technologies. In the same way, if the structure of the business is flatter or more hierarchical or if it is more participative and decisions are consulted before being made, then the Internet and technological development may be able to help strengthen working practices to a greater or lesser extent, respectively.

-More efficient management. *“The incorporation of the Internet in organizations favours more efficient management, as it speeds up processes and the coordination of activities as well as at the same time, improving interaction between the different components of the organization”.*

-A tool which favours movements. The Internet has an impact on organizational relationships in that *“it doesn't create social movements, or inter-organizational networks, but it has become a useful tool that works in their favour”.*

-Transformation of organizations. *“Information technologies suppose the ability to transform organizations because on the one hand, the tasks related to the administration of information are being carried out by the same people, with the same abilities and the same occupational profiles as before the adoption of technology”.* This situation can make it seem like an **overload of work** in many cases, and as a consequence can be seen as **inefficient**. In other businesses, however, people are being employed to exclusively manage these tools. (See for example job offers on Infojobs for *“Information systems and Technology manager”*).



-It generates frustration. Alongside this previous point, technology can also “*generate feelings of **frustration** as a consequence of the **saturation** of messages and information, proximity, the distancing and lack of personal interaction. It takes away **reflection**, reading, enjoyment and exchange which are indispensable for the development of the processes which construct knowledge*”. Without a doubt technology can make work relations easier, but it shouldn't necessarily do so with social relations.

-New knowledge. “*A qualitative jump from information to knowledge*”. Alongside the previous points, this point tries to emphasise the vast quantity of information and data that must be digested daily, in turn becoming **unmanageable**, not only because we receive the information, but because we expect it to turn into knowledge.

Alongside the points mentioned in the previous study, it is necessary to put emphasis on the fact that people, and organizations in general also find themselves in what is known as the **era of connectivity**(especially digital connectivity) (Echecopar and Musso, 2014). The era of connectivity means that devices such as mobiles or tablets have become extra limbs on our bodies, making us available 24 hours a day. Consequently, not only are we answering emails or messages from our workstations, but also during our 15 minute break, weekends or from wherever we have gone on holiday with our family. The line is being blurred in such a way that our work day has become continuous. Has your boss or colleague ever sent you an “urgent” email at unexpected times? Or have you ever been reminded of that very important meeting you have first thing on Monday morning? Being continually connected as well as all the technological advances we have witnessed in recent years undoubtedly have many advantages, but they also carry some inconveniences. A study carried out by the American Association of Psychology (2016) tells us that “*this level of constant availability lowers our energy levels and increases our stress levels*”. Therefore we can make conclusions around whether we are using technology to our advantage or not, and the degree to which it could be detrimental to our health.

Alongside being available 24 hours a day, we are also exposed to constant **interruptions**. This is not only a reference to the noise you can hear from your office window, but also to the constant messages or emails that are sent to your mobile phone or other devices while you try to read this text, all of which “indisputably” need answering, or at least consulted, without being able to finish reading the sentence. The

constant need to publicise what we are doing at any given moment and to know what our contacts are doing force us to spend many hours on a wide variety of social networking sites, and is consequently a huge investment of time and effort. This idea is very well expressed in the short film "A social life" (Lemon, 2016).

For workers, this generates a truly drastic **lack of focus** on the tasks they carry out. Surely if you are not capable of watching a television programme without having to check if your friends are watching the same one, how are you going to be capable of finishing a report for the following week without looking at the photos your friends have posted? Do you remember the last time you saw a film at home without the need to check your mobile? Too many interruptions. A lack of focus. The effectiveness with which employees carry out tasks is decreasing, and this significantly affects businesses and their results. That is not to say that workers should be in a state of concentration 8 hours a day. That would be impossible. However they should be giving 100% when completing a task.

The psychotherapist and professor of professional skills Fernando Tobias makes reference to this issue in an interview with Elcorreo.com (2012). "*We should know how to go from 'multi-tasking mode' to 'single-tasking mode' to convenience*". It would be interesting if people were able to be focused on what they were doing at any given moment and that they didn't waste so much time as a consequence of the distractions and the quantity of information that they are continually swamped with. We are informed in Tilves (2016) of the study carried out by the consultancy Bain & Company, "*Managing Your Scarcest Resources*", where they claim that directives only have 6.5 hours per week to work without interruptions.

Along with what has previously been said, it is also important to highlight that the huge quantity of information that we receive every day makes it impossible for us to pay attention to everything. More specifically, we do not know how to manage so much information. Considering that both points are true, what is evident is that we are subjected to such a great deal of information that we do not know how to assimilate it and we end up losing concentration. Here we can underline the physicist Albert Cornellá's concept of "**infoxication**" (information intoxication). As he said in a conference (2000): "(...) *the main problem we face is not technological. The problem we face is cultural, psychological, social, whatever you wish. The problem information*

*anxiety, the anxiety of having more information than you can manage, and as a result not having enough time to absorb it all...*"The ideal thing would be to have a personal filter for all the information, like an audit. We need relevant information and the ability to know which information is for us. Professor Tobias states inElcorreo.com (2012) that *"so much information forces us to **lose concentration**. We jump from one thing to another permanently and when we want to focus on only one, what we need, our mind, has other habits and we find it difficult"*. Likewise, *"recent research shows on the one hand that we find it more difficult to focus and pay attention, and that on the other hand we live in a state of stress and anxiety"*. We can therefore see the necessity of being able to manage these new situations in order to be happier with ourselves and to have the ability to carry out tasks, in turn, improving results. All of this taking into account as stated in the Tricontinental Economic Forum (2016) that *"(this) has only just begun"*.

## 1.2. Changes in the job market

The economic-financial crisis that the world's economy has suffered and continues to suffer is also reflected by growing **job insecurity** (Mena, 2013). This job insecurity has been defined as *"the perceived powerlessness to maintain the desired continuity in a threatened job situation"* (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt, 1984). High unemployment is another feature of this crisis, although this is not a new aspect for Spain (see unemployment rate INE, 2015) and as is explained by Aznar-Marquez and Azorín (2010), *"frequent job changes, long-term periods of unemployment and an increase in precarious work"*. This issue can be seen reflected in peoples' stress levels and their mentality, both by not finding work but also the thought that the work they have could be lost. As a consequence, it implies negative results *"for the economic, psychological and social welfare of those workers"*(Sora, Caballer and Peiró, 2014).

We must also not forget the progressive increase in **life expectancy**, which according to the latest revised INE results (2014) is 80.2 years in men and 85.7 in women, and that the consequent **aging** of the population will be a challenge for future societies (Lorenzo, 2004). This challenge will not only be due to the ability to maintain the current welfare state, nor the effect it will have on pensions, but also the fact that it will have a considerable effect on **labour supply**, something which is expected to increase considerably. With this, it is expected that peoples' working lives will be longer. It is

believed that people will have to work more and for longer and if so, “... *aging will turn into a problem*”(Fernández and Herce, 2009).

In relation to what has been previously stated, Wharton Business School (2010) highlights the words of its human resources manager Peter Capelli: “*One possible difficulty is that older workers, as they remain in the same job for longer, end up being supervised by younger bosses*”. This can imply important implications for both parties. Likewise, there are businesses in which **three generations** of people are working together (baby boomers, generation X, and generation Y). While this contains positive aspects such as new knowledge, experience or originality, it also poses the challenge of managing to keep them all together. In order for businesses to be successful, they should be able to get people working in the same direction and to do this “... *mental flexibility and the ability to learn will be key for the team to function*”(Bustillo, 2015).

Another important element related to what has been said previously is the **loss of talent** that society has and continues to suffer, more specifically in businesses. This tends to be caused by: **a)** poor quality management, **b)** loss of enthusiasm, **c)** other job offers or **d)** a bad climate of employment (Ortega, 2014). This is even more relevant nowadays taking into account the predominance of **the Society of Talent**. Understanding talent as “*the combination of abilities to use knowledge*”(Ortega, 2013), it is something that is becoming more relevant for organizations (Bonache and Cabrera, 2006) and as a result also affects the job market.

We cannot fail to mention the increasingly visible incorporation of **women** in the job market, “*the still unequal distribution of responsibilities at home*” (Aznar-Marquez and Azorín, 2010) and as a consequence, the effect this has on the professional and home life. It must be highlighted that family structures are changing (Burgos, 2001; Arranz and Oliva, 2010). Nevertheless, we shouldn't forget that although there have been advances, it still remains an obstacle for women to achieve the same opportunities as men, as is indicated in the following statistics: “*31.4% of IBEX companies have 10% or less of female talent in their management boards*” or “*women in Spain earn 17% less than men despite having more labour force*”(Info Libre, 2015).

All the changes that are taking place affect the job market. As Nelli (2012) points out, now the job market is more dynamic, there are other types of jobs available, with other types of needs and both a higher supply and demand of qualified workers.

Competitiveness in the market is growing (De Pablo, 1995) and at its centre are the concepts of competitiveness, flexibility, deregulation and reengineering (Rubio, 2000).

Organizations and more specifically, people should therefore adapt themselves to the new issues and reality we face. In a society that starts with talent, people should evolve in the same way as society does. This does not mean changing for the sake of it, but evolving in a conscious way. Knowing where we are at any given moment and what we need to achieve, starting from the knowledge of our emotions. As Montoya (2013) explains: "Facing the current panorama, it has become necessary to create a new way of being..."

### 1.3. Changes in organizations

Just as we have seen changes in the technological world and in the job market, the important changes in organizations must also be highlighted. Equally as important, it is now clear in organizations *"the revolution (...) that we are currently experiencing is much greater and more profound than any other change witnessed in the last 300 years"* (Kravetz, 1990).

In this way, taking into account the various **structural changes** that are being produced, we can underline the INNFORM project (Pettigrew and Felton, 2000). It is considered to be one of the most interesting regarding changes which are occurring in organizational structures. Based on it, we can highlight three key changes. These are:

-Changes in structures. The focal point of the structural changes is based on the progressive reduction of hierarchical levels in companies, the increase of structures based on projects and the increase in decentralisation.

-Changes in limits. These changes in limits include a bigger number of experiences of outsourcing, the development of strategic alliances and an increase in the diversification of products.

-Changes in processes. These make reference to the increase in horizontal interactions, changes in technological infrastructure and new practices related to human resources.

Moreover, the same study insists that performance improves substantially in those companies that have the best relationships or synergy between the three elements.

Nevertheless, these changes are radically changing our organizations, where **yesterday's organization is no longer apt**. Management must **delegate** more work to employees and increase their **autonomy**. Moreover, productivity is improved, it overcomes the generation gap that is being produced (Mazariegos, 2013) keeping in mind that this type of situation occurs in complex and unpredictable environments (Jones, 2010) such as that of today.

The traditional idea of **employee selection** on behalf of companies was based on the thought that workers would be doing the same tasks every year, therefore looking for those who had the most knowledge and experience necessary to cope in their potential job positions (Bonache and Cabrera, 2006). Reality nowadays is different, however. Businesses are changing and they do not focus their priorities on these aspects of work. Considering the fact that we find ourselves in an increasingly changeable and competitive environment, Bonache and Cabrera (2006) insist that activities in the organization are also going to be volatile. In this way, for the progressive **project approach** and the increasing **decentralization**, it is necessary to look for those who are capable of adapting and who stand out because of their competence.

Regarding this idea, Cristina Villanova, general corporative manager of Catenon, through an interview with the newspaper Expansion.com (2015) believes that moreover, geographic borders have been lifted in the search for professionals and also in the search for employment. She adds that *“new working models will allow us to find work wherever it is needed and to find talent wherever it may be”*.

Bearing in mind that we find ourselves facing a new type of organization, with an increasingly even structure more focused on **strategic management of human resources**, something which is increasingly more dynamic, flexible, team oriented and focused on abilities; companies look for people who bring **value and talent** to the organization (Bonache and Cabrera, 2006). As Rubio (2000) points out *“there is a substantial change in the level of training and the type of qualification required of workers by employers”*.

The profiles and evaluation of candidates who gain access to selection processes are increasingly demanding, both of knowledge and ability (Alles, 2000; Pita, 2013). In regards to the search for talent, Daniel Cucchi, an Argentinean specialist in business management, gave an interview to the newspaper "El Financiero" (2016). In it, he explained that a potential talent "(...) is characterized as someone who has a positive attitude, is perseverant, who dominates anxiety, manages to overcome frustration, applies what they have learned and has a desire to stand out".

Nevertheless, we must consider that as people, we possess some of these characteristics to a higher degree than others, but all of them can be developed through knowledge and learning (Pita, 2013). Jobs in which people depend on themselves are also emerging. "People stop working for the company and begin to work for themselves"(Goleman, 1998).

Here it is interesting to take into account the predominant **multitask approach** that many businesses are focusing on to design their job positions. "Multitasking refers to the supposed ability to carry out various activities of certain cognitive demand simultaneously and effectively" (Perdomo, 2014). Driven also by the crisis that the country has and is still going through, employees are being made to increase their level of responsibility in the company and this has given way to situations of pessimism (on many occasions it is more than they can handle and are not compensated for), worry and stress in the day to day of people (Rodriguez, 2009). People are expected to be able to self-adapt to these new perspectives and as it may seem, this is not always the case.

Currently, there is a lot of controversy over the suitability of using a multitask approach because it lowers the effectiveness of employees (Adler et al, 2015; Rubinstein, Meyer and Evans, 2001). Moreover, the study carried out by Nass, Wagner and Ophir (2009) is very relevant, where the previous point is corroborated. In fact, Clifford Nass, one of the researchers, stated that "multitaskers believe they are good at doing various things at the same time, but the study contradicts them". In addition, this study also highlights that when these people have such a large quantity of information available, they do not know how to separate things in their heads and they commit errors.

It is important to note that all this does not only affect the working lives of individuals, but also their **personal lives**. Both of these are becoming increasingly integrated, not

forgetting the work-life balance as a burning issue in today's society (Larrañeta, 2015). Both are more and more linked and this means that workers with families whose personal matters require attention or that cause some degree of concern are becoming increasingly dispersed in their tasks in companies.

Furthermore, it must be noted that new generations of workers require or have **other priorities** within the organization "*...they demand greater equilibrium between personal life and that of the workplace, and it will be necessary to attend to flexibility and autonomy; to geographic mobility; and to the fact that professionals will be more open to a change of professional career, sector or company with greater frequency*". (Fernández, 2015).

All of this is framed by a current **labour environment** that is characterized as being extremely fast and immediate, where total urgency and availability is needed both physically inside and outside the place of work and which leaves us no time to relax or think. Organizations are made up of people, and these people are constantly interacting with their environment to achieve a common goal. Here is where we can see the importance of growth and well-being of people in a business to improve the group as a whole (Project Sukha,n.d.).As the psychologist Rafael Bravo (2009) informs us, "*the current work environment increases self-demanding and provokes anxiety*", which translates as work related stress, time off work or a bad quality of life. We take on an increasingly larger number of tasks and we need to carry them out quickly and effectively.

In the following table (Table 1) we can see a summarised version of the factors, elements and implications that are forcing us to reconsider the functionality and the structure of the current social and organizational system.



Table1.Implications of the current social system and the organizational world

FACTORS	ELEMENTS	IMPLICATIONS
<b>TECNOLOGY</b>	Industry 4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unknown territory</li> <li>- Transformation of society and people</li> <li>- Threat towards the traditional way of behaving</li> </ul>
	Information Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overload of work</li> <li>- Inefficiency</li> <li>- Frustration</li> <li>- Saturation</li> <li>- Lack of reflection</li> <li>- Unmanageable information</li> </ul>
	Era of connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constant availability</li> <li>- Lower levels of energy</li> <li>- Increase of stress levels</li> </ul>
	Interruptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Huge investment of time and effort</li> <li>-Lack of focus</li> </ul>
	Infoxication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Difficult to pay attention</li> <li>- Too much information</li> <li>-More information than we can manage</li> <li>- Lack of concentration</li> </ul>
<b>JOB MARKET</b>	Job insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase of stress levels</li> </ul>
	Life expectancy and aging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Longer working lives</li> </ul>
	Three generations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work in the same direction</li> <li>- Mental flexibility</li> <li>- Ability to learn</li> </ul>
	Society of Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Importance of persons</li> <li>-Talent</li> <li>-Focus</li> </ul>
<b>ORGANIZATIONS</b>	Structural changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduction of hierarchical levels</li> <li>- Structures based on projects</li> <li>- Employees increase their autonomy</li> <li>- Increase of interactions</li> <li>- New HR practices</li> </ul>
	Employee selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Competences</li> <li>-Without geographic borders</li> </ul>

	Strategic human resources management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People who bring value and talent</li> <li>- Domain anxiety</li> <li>- Overcome frustration</li> </ul>
	Multitask approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase responsibility</li> <li>- Pessimism</li> <li>- Worry</li> <li>- Stress</li> <li>- Self-adapt</li> <li>- Lower effectiveness</li> </ul>
	Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Immediate</li> <li>- No time to relax or think</li> <li>- Increase of self-demanding</li> <li>- Anxiety</li> </ul>

Source: Self-compiled.

With this, linking together the **new situation** in which we find ourselves, **knowledge**, **peoples' skills** and the **new practices in human resources** which are appearing, the trend is an expectance of us to be capable of constructing **healthy organizations**. In this new business model, where skills and talent are expected to be maximized, **new tools** are emerging that help to improve the welfare of the most important capital of businesses and to help people who make up the business achieve better both in their personal lives as well as their work lives, becoming capable of **focusing on the "here and now"** and trying to face life with a different focus.

One of the **tools** which responds to this **need for change and innovation** in the management of **people** and which is going from strength to strength is **Mindfulness**. The following chapter is dedicated to its description and analysis.

## 2. MINDFULNESS AS A FOCALIZATION TOOL

Within this new organizational and social context, understood in a systematic way, a growing imbalance between organizational needs and the workings of human beings can be observed. This means new approaches and proposals are required from human resources management. Because of this, we can increasingly observe **oversaturation** (both cognitive and emotional) in workers, along with a general increase in apathy, disidentification and lack of compromise (which lead to Boreout). All of this linked with the fact that people seem to be in a constant state of “**automatic pilot**”; we find that they are not focussed on the “**here and now**”. On their behalf, organizations rely on their workers' talents to survive in today's world. Nevertheless, in many cases their culture and HR management practices prohibit both the creation and fostering of this talent. In fact, more and more workplaces are perceived as toxic. As we have been able to read before, this creates a series of **negative implications** and taking into account the importance of creating **healthy organizations**, what are emerging are new tools which are capable of improving peoples' day to day working approaches.

However, why question the traditional models of organization now? Are there toxic work environments? Have organizations not functioned correctly until now? They have, but due to the systematic way they have been created, they have only partially worked. They create more problems than solutions in the present. They have “worked” in the sense that we understand them as **growing** on account of economic results at the end of the year. Nevertheless, in today's context “worked” has much wider connotations. It makes reference to being able to **develop**. Nowadays a company works not only by achieving economic results, but by responding to the needs of people and the environment it finds itself in. It strives for **the joint development of employees and the organization** so that both can realize their full potential (Gimeno, 2012). Here is where the concept of **health** comes up. In the new organizational model, aspects such as job flexibility, values, trust, etc. are no longer enough. Now it is more appropriate and rational to bank on concepts such as immersion, interaction and collaboration, of attention and emergency, both for managing companies and for people. (Grandío, 2011 cited in Gimeno, 2012). In this way, by understanding organizations as **rational, natural and open systems**(Scott, 2005), businesses are now in the position of transforming themselves at the same pace as society does. Otherwise, they are

expected to disappear to a greater or lesser extent. Businesses should be ready to make a big effort to introduce different practices into the company with the aim of trying to become the **healthy organization** it needs to be.

### 2.1. The health emergency in organizations

It is imperative to understand that if we want people to invest in our **talent**-knowledge, creativity, innovation, originality- we must strive for a state of well-being that goes beyond mere physical health.

It would seem evident that in the current context, businesses need to widen relations between staff and that practices centred on the development of peoples' health is a path to take to achieve it. It is necessary at this point to state what is meant by health. The concept has evolved, referring originally to the easing of pain or suffering (Orozco, 2006; Vázquez, 2009). In 1948 the WHO defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". Even so, it is not completely clear if that definition is adequate today, in that the concept of health should take into account the idea of the human being as a **complete being** (Lopategui, 2000). It is important to highlight the extension the WHO (2010) has made on its definition of **healthy working environments**, which includes:

- Health and safety in regards to the physical working environment.
- Health, safety and well-being in regards to psychosocial aspects of work including its organization and the culture of the workplace.
- Health resources in the workplace.
- The ways in which the community seeks to improve the health of workers, their families and other members of the community.

Taking the idea of a complete being into account, here is where the concept of **holistic health**(Lopategui, 2000; Bermejo, 2005; Reyes, n.d.; Avila, 2009) comes to light. According to Lopategui (2000), this concept is essential as it includes definitions that the WHO has excluded such as the **emotional** and **spiritual** aspects of health. The concept would therefore take into consideration the interlinked physical, social, mental,

emotional and spiritual components of health. For him, the characteristics of this concept are as follows:

- a) Health is viewed from a positive perspective.
- b) Emphasis is put on well-being as opposed to illness.
- c) The human body functions as a complete entity.
- d) Health does not exist if one of its components is seen as unhealthy.
- e) Its main philosophy/purpose is the teaching of basic practices for a healthy life.

In the same vein, for Albornoz (2000) health is a question of **balance**. It is the search for equilibrium between the body and mind and harmony of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects. For him, being healthy consists of “preserving this dynamic and inherently harmonious balance of the body and mind”.

We can therefore state that the concept of health has been in a state of development for years, making its traditional definition obsolete. It no longer makes reference solely to physical aspects, but is also seen from a holistic perspective. This means that the concept is widened to take into account other aspects such as mental, social, emotional and spiritual well-being. All of this occurs in an organizational situation where, by broadening the relationship between the organization and its members and relying on peoples' talent, new practices are needed that foster the achievement of this holistic well-being. In order to do this, the concept of **Mindfulness** reappears as a fundamental tool to obtain it.

## 2.2. Approximation to the concept

At this point the concept of **Mindfulness** is highlighted, a concept that although not new, has taken centre stage in recent years with regards to its application in organizational areas.

Mindfulness is the translation of the Word *Sati*, from Pali meaning **awareness, attention and memory**. The beginning of Mindfulness in Buddhism 25 centuries ago (Mañas, 2009) was seen as a method of ending suffering (Siegel, Germer and Olendzki, 2008). Nevertheless, the idea goes further than that today. Psychology now considers it as an approach to increase awareness and to give the ability to respond in

the most skilful way to mental processes that contribute to emotional anguish or maladjusted behaviour (Bishop et al., 2004). Mindfulness is considered to be at the heart of Buddhist meditation (Silananda, 1990), although we have all experienced at some point in life being **conscious of what we are doing, thinking or feeling** (Simon, 2007). It is also important to highlight that the practice of Mindfulness is not generally linked to any religious belief. Therefore, without being considered a new expression, it is now applied and used practically (Gómez, Delgado and Gómez, 2015).

There exists a great deal of **authors** who write about Mindfulness. Some of the definitions of the concept are as follows (Table 2).

**Table 2: Definitions of Mindfulness.**

AUTHOR	DEFINITION
NyanaponikaThera (1972)	The clear and single-minded <b>awareness</b> of what actually happens to us and in us at the successive moments of perception.
Hanh (1976)	Keeping one's <b>consciousness</b> alive to the present reality.
Kabat-Zinn (1990)	Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.
Teasdale (1999)	Intentional control of <b>attention</b> in order to establish a process of the configuration of alternative information. Being instead of doing.
Marlatt andKristeller (1999)	Bringing one's complete <b>attention</b> to the present experience on a moment-to-moment basis
Kabat-Zinn (2003)	Paying <b>attention</b> in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.
Baer (2003)	Non-condemnatory <b>observation</b> of the flow of all external and internal stimulation exactly as it seems.
Brown and Ryan (2003)	Receptive <b>attention</b> and <b>awareness</b> to present experiences and events.
Germer, Siegel and Fulton (2005)	Moment to moment <b>awareness</b> . Accepted <b>awareness</b> of the present experience.
Vallejo (2006)	Full thoughtful <b>attention</b> and presence, trying to centre oneself on the present moment in an active and thoughtful way. A way of experiencing what is occurring in the present moment, the here and now, as opposed to living in unreality or daydreaming.

Mañas (2007)	It is the action of developing and maintaining a determined type of special <b>attention</b> to the present experience, moment to moment, with a radical attitude of acceptance, free of all control and value judgements.
Martín (2008)	A <b>full mind</b> , not full of ideas, desires or fears, but of the experience of the present moment.
Siegel (2010)	Waking up from a life of auto-pilot and <b>being sensitive</b> to new things in everyday <b>experiences</b> .

Source: Compilation based on (Gómez, Delgado and Gómez, 2015; Solé, 2015)

As can be seen in the previous table, a wide variety of authors have written and defined their perception of what Mindfulness is. Although it is interesting to see different ideas surrounding the same theme, what is important to highlight is that the concepts that predominate are “**attention**” and “**awareness**”. The “Real Academia Española” (RAE) defines “attention” as “the action of attending”. Its definition is the following: “*voluntarily applying understanding to a spiritual or sensitive object*” and/or “*taking something into account or consideration*”. In respect to the definition of “awareness” we find the following: “*the capacity of the human being to recognize the surrounding reality and relating to it*”.

We can also highlight then, that Mindfulness should not be understood generically, but that it always refers to a specific moment in time, the present. It is a way of living without prejudgments, of being able to experience the moment in a sensory way, being attentive and not valuing or rejecting that experience in an active or restrictive way (Vallejo, 2006).

### 2.3. Characteristic elements

Vallejo (2006) explains that the techniques of Mindfulness generally require the person to be led by the feelings they perceive. The most common procedure therefore uses techniques that include cognitive elements (meditation) and different types of relaxation techniques or exercises based on physical sensations. Similarly it requires people to try not to block the experiencing of feelings or emotions as instead of solving the problem, it could make it worse.

What is clear is that this tool aims to develop awareness in the **present moment**. In the following table the characteristics that define this process of awareness can be seen:

**Table 3.Characteristics of Mindfulness**

TRADITIONS OF THOUGHT THAT GIVE RISE TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION	PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES	OBJECTIVES, RESULTS AND/OR PROCESSES THAT ARE ADVANCED THROUGH ITS PRACTICE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Oriental traditions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Sufism).</li> <li>-Phenomenology.</li> <li>-Behavioural medicine.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Flowexperience</li> <li>-Insight</li> <li>-Self-control</li> <li>-Acceptance</li> <li>-Awareness:</li> <li>Feelings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The present moment</li> <li>-Moment to moment</li> <li>-Attention</li> <li>-Intention, prejudged attitudes.</li> </ul>

Source: Sánchez (2011)

In the previous table we can observe the characteristics of this moment of awareness that is referred to. More specifically, in the first column on the left, the main traditions of thought that give rise to Mindfulness are described. In the second column we can see the psychological processes that are involved during that same moment. Finally, the third column shows us the objectives, results or processes that are undergone through its practice. In this way, the final five ideas (**the present moment, moment to moment, attention, intention and prejudged attitude**) are key to understanding the experience of Mindfulness.

More specifically, in the following table, the factors that are involved in the practice of Mindfulness are highlighted by outlining of the **tools used to evaluate it**:



Table 4: Mindfulness evaluation tools

AUTHOR	TOOL	FACTORS	Nº of items
<p>-Buchheld, Grossman, Walach, (2001) (First edition)</p> <p>-Walach, Buchheld, Buttenmuller, Kleinknecht, Schmidt, (2006) (revised edition)</p> <p>-Kohls, Sauer and Walach (2009) (FMI-8)</p>	<p><b>The Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI)</b></p>	<p>-In the first version of the FMI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· F1. Awareness of the present moment without identifying with the experience.</li> <li>· F2. Not judging or evaluating one's own attitude or that of others.</li> <li>· F3. Opening to negative mental states.</li> <li>· F4. Processes aimed towards deep understanding of the experience.</li> </ul> <p>-In the second version of the FMI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· One single dimension of <i>Mindfulness</i>.</li> </ul> <p>-IN the FMI-8:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Presence</li> <li>· Acceptance</li> </ul>	<p><b>-FMI</b> consists of 30 items A reduced version exists;</p> <p><b>-FMI-14</b> which consists of 14 items</p> <p><b>-The FMI-8</b> Consists of 8 items.</p>
<p>-Brown and Ryan (2003)</p>	<p><b>-Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)</b></p>	<p>It displays only one factor centred on the ability of the subject to be attentive and aware of the present moment's experience in everyday life.</p>	<p><b>-MAAS</b> Introduces 15 items.</p>
<p>-Baer, Smith and Allen (2004)</p>	<p><b>Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS)</b></p>	<p>-The questionnaire shows four factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Observing</li> <li>· Describing</li> <li>· Acting consciously</li> </ul>	<p><b>-KIMS</b> consists of 39 items.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Accepting without passing judgement.</li> </ul>	
<p>-Feldman, Hayes, Kumar, Greesonand Laurenceau (2007) (revised edition)</p> <p>-Kumar et al. (2005) (first edition CAMS)</p>	<p><b>Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R)</b></p>	<p>-The CAMS-R provides a total score of mindfulness</p> <p>Through a combination of 4 elements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Attention</li> <li>· Focalisation in the present</li> <li>· Realisation</li> <li>· Acceptance of thoughts and feelings of everyday experiences</li> </ul>	<p><b>-CAMS-R</b></p> <p>Constitutes 12 items</p> <p><b>-CAMS</b></p> <p>Used to consist of 18 items (problems of internal consistency)</p>
<p>-Chadwick, Hember, Mead, Lilley andDagnan (2008)</p>	<p><b>Southampton Mindfulness Questionnaire (SMQ)</b></p>	<p>-The SMQ presents only one factor but is designed to capture four aspects of mindfulness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Conscious observation</li> <li>· Absence of aversion</li> <li>· Not judging</li> <li>· Letting go</li> </ul>	<p><b>-SMQ</b> contains 16 items.</p>
<p>-Cardiaciotto, Herbert, Forman, Moitraand Farrow (2008)</p>	<p><b>Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale (PHLMS)</b></p>	<p>-The PHLMS presents two factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Awareness of the present moment.</li> <li>· Acceptance.</li> </ul>	<p><b>-PHLMS</b></p> <p>Consists of 20 items.</p>
<p>-Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyerand Toney (2006)</p>	<p><b>Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ)</b></p>	<p>-It is basedon a factorial analysis of the five most important mindfulness scales(KIMS, FMI, SMQ, MAAS y CAMS). It consists of five constructs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Observing</li> <li>· Describing</li> <li>· Not judging</li> <li>· Not reacting to internal experience</li> <li>· Acting consciously</li> </ul>	<p><b>-FFMQ</b></p> <p>Contains 39 items.</p>

-Lau et al. (2006)	<b>The Toronto Mindfulness Scale (TMS)</b>	- The TMS evaluates the achievement of a <i>mindful</i> state immediately after a session of meditation. It consists of two factors: · Curiosity · Decentration	<b>-TMS</b> consists of 13 items.
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Source: Parra (2011).

As has been mentioned before, in the previous table we can observe different Mindfulness evaluation tools, with their respective authors, the factors that explain them and the different items that characterise them. At this point it is important to highlight the **factors** that appear in the table, as they indicate what Mindfulness is characterized by and what it looks to achieve. It is possible to underline the following as the most relevant: attention to the present moment, the opening to negative mental states, acceptance, being attentive and aware of the current moment's experience, observing, describing, acting consciously, accepting without passing judgement, focalization on the present, acceptance of thoughts and feelings of the experience, letting go and curiosity.

Shapiro, Brown and Astin (2008) cite Goleman (1972), who states that there are two types of **meditation techniques**. In the following table various characteristics can be found of the two approximations on which everything is based. They are:

Table 5.Types of meditation techniques

CONCENTRATIVE MEDITATION	MINDFULNESS MEDITATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Disciplined,</li> <li>-Single-pointed focus of attention.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Opening and expanding to an awareness of thoughts and feelings as they pass through the mind, but not focusing on a single purpose.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Attention is focused in a non-analytical, unemotional way, with the intent to directly experience the object of meditation.</li> <li>-Meditator may focus attention on breath, a word or specific sounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involves three core elements: intention, attention, and attitude.</li> <li>-Intention involves consciously and purposefully regulating attention.</li> <li>-Attention is the ability to sustain attention in the present moment without interpretation, discrimination or evaluation; “a bare registering of the facts observed”.</li> <li>-Attitude is a frame of mind brought to mindfulness meditation; commonly described as openness, acceptance, or nonjudgmentality.</li> </ul>
Like the zoom lens on a camera.	Like the wide angle lens on a camera.

Source: Shapiro, Brown and Astin (2008).

As the previous table points out, Goleman differentiates between two types of meditation: “Concentrative” and “Mindfulness”, and outlines the difference between the two. While “Concentrative Meditation” is centred on a single point of attention such as breathing, a word or sounds, “Mindfulness Meditation” involves thoughts and emotions that are passing through the mind, but is not centred on one single point. As is its intention, attention and attitude are basic elements of the former.

## 2.4. Implications for the organizational world and its employees

Throughout history, psychological treatments have shown their effectiveness on emotional or health problems. Currently, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) has put emphasis on empirically validating those treatments. At this point third-generation therapies will be discussed. While the first-generation therapies were mainly empirical in character, experimental and focused on direct behavioural change, the second-generation was centred on contributions from cognitive models. Now, the third-generation is characterized by taking a more **focalized sense on experience**. In the same way it focuses on **indirect character** change strategies, as opposed to the first and second generations (Vallejo, 2007).

One of the characteristics of these third-generation therapies is that they question the effort that society makes and, more precisely, the effort people make to reduce stress levels, anxiety, unhappiness or pain. Escaping these feelings is considered inadequate as it increases discomfort and fear. Therefore, it should be understood that feeling pain or pleasure are experiences that we all must have during our lives, while also taking into account the **welfare society** we find ourselves in (Vallejo, 2007).

Kabat-Zinn (1990) describes **seven attitudinal factors**, not independent of one another, that constitute key pillars in the practice of Mindfulness:

- a) **Non-judging**: To have the ability to abandon the labels and judgements surrounding our lives' experiences.
- b) **Patience**: allowing things to come in their own time.
- c) **Beginner's mind**: too often we let our thinking and our beliefs about what we 'know' prevent us from seeing things as they really are, which is why we need to have the ability to see things as if it were the first time we saw them.
- d) **Trust**: Trusting ourselves and our own feelings through the practice of mindfulness. Being able to be yourself and knowing what it means to be you.
- e) **Non-striving**: In meditation, the attitude of doing everything for a purpose can be an obstacle, as the only objective is to see yourself in a different way. Therefore, being able to not always want to change things, but accepting them how they are in the moment they occur.

- f) **Acceptance**: seeing things as they really are in the present. However, this does not mean you have to like everything or have a passive mindset and abandon your principles and values. It is simply being receptive and opening up to what we may feel, think or see and accept it because it is happening now.
- g) **Letting go**: not holding on to thoughts, experiences or situations that we have in our mind. Allowing the situation to be as it is, without hanging on to it.

Meanwhile, Siegel (2007) reduces them to four: **curiosity, openness, acceptance and love**.

On the same line, Sánchez (2011) states that Mindfulness is “a state of awareness that is reached through habit”. In his research he confirms that it was in the 70s when Massachusetts and Harvard universities started diverse research on the concept (Proulx, 2003). They not only carried out studies to reduce physical pain, but also relating to the **field of business** where Mindfulness is used to **increase creativity, reduce burnout and even avoid accidents using technology** (Mason and Hargreaves, 2001). Sánchez (2011) also highlights in the nineties, in the USA, it was hoped that it would be possible to develop **attention-concentration and awareness** for better physical and mental health through programs of stress reduction using yoga and meditation (Mason and Hargreaves, 2001).

The three distinct groups that can explain the effects of Mindfulness outlined by Shapiro, Brown and Astin (2008) are as follows:

**a) Cognitive and academic performance**

Mindfulness helps people to have the ability to increase their capacity to be more prepared and to guide attention. Moreover, it allows us to have a better capacity to process information more quickly and precisely. It is also worth noting that its practice during long periods of time leads to a positive impact on academic achievements. To explain this performance, it is essential to know how to differentiate between the processes of *top-down* and *bottom up*, referring to the entrance of information through the senses. The former is constantly making predictions regarding the incoming sensorial events. On the other hand, the latter (here and now information) makes reference to the entrance of “fresh” information, without being filtered by aspects such

as previous experience (Simón, 2007). "The process of Mindfulness can help to get rid of automatism from the top-down process" (Parra, 2011) by paying special detailed attention to the incoming information. It could be said that Mindfulness opens us up to experiences. The possibility of paying attention to the mental processes that are in progress allows us to have "the opportunity to make our answers more flexible, in other words, disconnecting automaticity (...)" (Simón, 2007). Simón (2007) calls this process SODA, a translation of Siegel's approach, YODA (You Observe and Decouple Automaticity). There are a variety of studies that corroborate this (León, 2008; Mañaset al., 2011; Sierra et al., 2015; Siegel, 2007; Beauchemin, Hutchins and Patterson, 2008; Sugiura, 2004; Chang and Herbert, 1989), among others.

#### **b) Mental health and psychological well-being**

In regards to mental health and psychological well-being, Mindfulness can reduce stress, anxiety and depression. It can also help you to have the ability to regulate emotional reactions and to create positive psychological states. The fact that employees in a business suffer from these symptoms (stress, anxiety, depression) forces them to make excess effort when carrying out day to day tasks, which exhausts the individual, more so when it occurs on a long-term basis (Gutiérrez, 2013). This is where we can highlight Kabat-Zinn's programs based on Mindfulness from the medical centre in the University of Massachusetts. Sánchez (2011) underlines the widespread use of the **Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction** program, which is relevant in many studies (Proulx, 2003; Pierce, 2003; Bédard et al., 2003; Tacón, 2004; Carlson and Garland, 2005; Farbet et al., 2007, Cadwellet et al., 2010). DMedicina.com (2016) also highlights research carried out by various institutions or magazines such as (Health Psychology, 2003; University of Oregon, 2012; Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, 2013; University of Lovaina, 2014) or even authors such as (Tloczynski and Trantiella, 1998; Biegel et al., 2009; Semple et al., 2010) who all attest that the practice of Mindfulness improves mental health and psychological well-being through the symptoms that have previously been mentioned.

#### **c) The holistic development of the person:**

In the same way, it also allows for the ability to develop creativity, while at the same time supporting and improving the skills needed to maintain interpersonal relationships. It also allows for the ability to give more empathetic answers and helps you to cultivate

self compassion. All of this is important in a moment in which it is hoped to have the capacity to create healthy organizations. Through the importance nowadays of people's talent in organizations, the ability to improve skills and interpersonal relationships is key.

Ostafin and Kssman (2012) bring to light the relation between Mindfulness and creativity, something which increases through regular practice. Shapiro and Brown (2007) also demonstrate an increase in empathy. Mañaset al. (2011) highlight the studies of (Cowger and Torrance, 1982; Langer, 2006) in relation to the development of **creativity**; (Carson, Carson and Baucam, 2004; Goleman, 2006) as trustworthy conclusions that it develops **interpersonal relationships**; (Shapiro, Schwartz and Bonner, 1998; Saphiroet al., 2007) in relation to its increase of **empathy**; and to (Shapiro et al., 2007; Leary , Tate, Adams and Hancock, 2007) for its contribution to the development of **self compassion**.

From all that has been said above, to summarise we can highlight Siegel's (2007) remark: *"Mindfulness allows the mind to "discern" its own nature and reveal to the person the knowledge, preconceived ideas and emotional reactions that are lodged in thought and the reflexive answers that generate internal stress. By disidentifying from thoughts and emotions and realizing that these mental activities do not equate to "I", and that they are not permanent, a person can let them appear and be dispelled, as if they were bubbles in a pot of boiling water"*.

After having described the main characteristics of the concept and its implications, in line with the objectives of this piece, we will now reflect upon the most relevant conclusions that we have been able to draw.

### 3. INTRODUCING MINDFULNESS INTO ORGANIZATIONS

It has been highlighted in previous sections that there is growing importance in HR approaches in organizations. Initially, employees were considered to be mere costs that needed to be minimized. However, human resources are now managed from a totally strategic point of view. Due to this new approach, employees are now considered to be the most valuable resource. It is necessary to **invest** in order for them to bring **value** and **talent** to the organization.



Likewise, the important changes that are taking place in the world of employment and organizations are coming to the fore. Organizations are heading towards businesses with much more level structures, where employees have a higher level of autonomy and **talent** is especially sought after. It is important to underline that talent not only refers to the knowledge someone may have, but also to multiple abilities such as motivation, attitude, involvement or management of relationships and/or emotions. In this way, a great deal of emphasis is being placed on the **emotional abilities** of people and how these affect the management of human resources in businesses.

Due to this **strategic management of HR**, organizations are increasingly more dynamic and flexible, there is a focus on the team and priority is given to abilities. These abilities are expected to be developed in time so that when businesses need the talent, they will be able to survive in any environment they may find themselves in. In other words, businesses need to readapt to the demands of their surroundings. Organizations are expected to emphasise teamwork and common objectives which are centred on the abilities of each employee and that **the “whole” equates to more** than each one of its parts. Employee satisfaction with the tasks they carry out and belief in the company's projects are sought after. Moreover, a working environment is desirable where employees are involved, are creative and carry out tasks in such a way that they are satisfied with themselves, thus feeling a commitment to the business and feeling that they are supported on behalf of the organization.

Nevertheless, there are some businesses that be it for the knowledge they possess or the practices they favour, they are incapable of neither creating nor retaining this talent. At this point we come across an **imbalance** between the needs of the people and the workings of these organizations. The latter see themselves in a position of changing and innovating the management of people. Changing and innovating in order to be able to strengthen and retain the talent, and therefore be capable of prospering. Therefore, the need to find new tools capable of responding to this need for change and innovation is becoming evident. These tools are necessary to reset the **balance** both the **health and talent** of both in danger.

Taking into account the importance of this balance, it is here where the concept of **Mindfulness** can be highlighted as a tool that is growing in strength and is capable of dealing with imbalance. The practice of Mindfulness is necessary and important due to

the talent that businesses must have to survive nowadays. This does not only refer to businesses, however. It is also necessary for people, who are immersed in this whirlwind of radical change and overload of information, to find their place in the here and now in order to grow as human beings. Its routine practice not only develops individual talent, but also that of the group. Businesses are therefore capable of being more competent and generating value. This radical change we are witnessing and its many implications emphasize the need for the application of Mindfulness.

On the one hand, we encounter work environments that stand out due to their **lack of definition**. Many businesses employ people without knowing exactly what for, which undoubtedly affects the employees by keeping them in a state of uncertainty. Others dismiss workers with the single objective of reducing costs and maximizing profits, something which leaves remaining employees **overworked** and in a situation of **uncertainty**. This state of uncertainty is fuelled by the simple fact that employees do not know what awaits them, and therefore do not know what their role in the company is. This **confusion of role** in organizations alongside a multitasking approach becomes a source of stress in many jobs, higher levels of anxiety and worry and evidence has even been found of lower levels of self-esteem. It is therefore important to highlight that this situation affects performance and does not favour peoples' health. It should be priority for HR to find practices that minimize these symptoms.

In this way, through the routine practice of Mindfulness, employees are capable of transcending this situation. Mindfulness allows people to become more prepared when faced with ambiguous situations like those that are occurring, being able to better respond to the demands and guide them to improved attention. This attention permits them to improve **cognitive performance** that the lack of definition is damaging. This lack of definition of activities and objectives forces people to take refuge in past experience due to the insecurity of coping in unknown terrain. It forbids us from living the moment exactly as it is, making us respond to it as our experience "predicts".

Mindfulness allows us to open up to experience by trying to disconnect from automatic pilot and motivates us to feel the present moment as it is. This helps businesses in the sense that employees are capable of finding quicker responses and reacting how they feel at that moment while also being focused. These benefits are interesting for businesses as they allow employees to be constantly conscious of what is happening

around them and inside them. It will give employees the ability to face more complex situations while also being more productive at the same time.

Similarly, albeit closely related to the above, this situation implies overexertion for people. That is to say that living day to day with certain levels of stress, anxiety, uncertainty, disidentification, lack of commitment, etc.; implies an effort that increases levels of tiredness in employees. Moreover, being able to transcend routine activities that generate these symptoms along with the increasing information overload of today, brings about an oversaturation that contributes negatively to people.

The constant self-demand that today's society demands, the urgency and need to be available at all times also negatively influence employees' health. Regarding this, it has been possible to prove that the practice of Mindfulness helps to improve **mental health and psychological well-being** through the reduction of the symptoms previously mentioned and boosts positive psychological states. Its practice could contribute to a higher level of health and well-being in people by generating serenity and vitality. It is clear that the practice of Mindfulness is beneficial for organizations due to its ability to strengthen the development of employees' abilities while at the same time, contributing to better health.

All of this is very relevant taking into account the objective of being able to construct **healthy organizations** that rely on **talent**. Being able to achieve a **holistic development** of the person will go a long way in helping to do so. The relevance of emotions nowadays must not be forgotten, and it is vital to find tools that are able to contribute to the development of emotionally intelligent people and organizations. Here we can highlight where the practice of Mindfulness allows us to experience a higher number of positive emotions.

Alongside the previous point, it is important to take into account the increasing integration of the personal and working life and the need to bring together different generations of people in the same organization. Mindfulness allows us to improve our ability to maintain **interpersonal relationships** and it makes it easier to give more empathetic answers. This is important due to the increasing amount of project based work. It is advantageous to businesses due to the fact that in today's world it is vital to focus on talent and creativity, and what better way to do this than by using tools that have demonstrated to be beneficial to both.

We can therefore underline that the practice of Mindfulness is beneficial on various levels:

-On a **task level**, as it permits the person to better manage demands while facing ambiguous situations on a daily basis.

-On an **individual level**, allowing the individual to grow. They are able to improve emotional stability and boost talent.

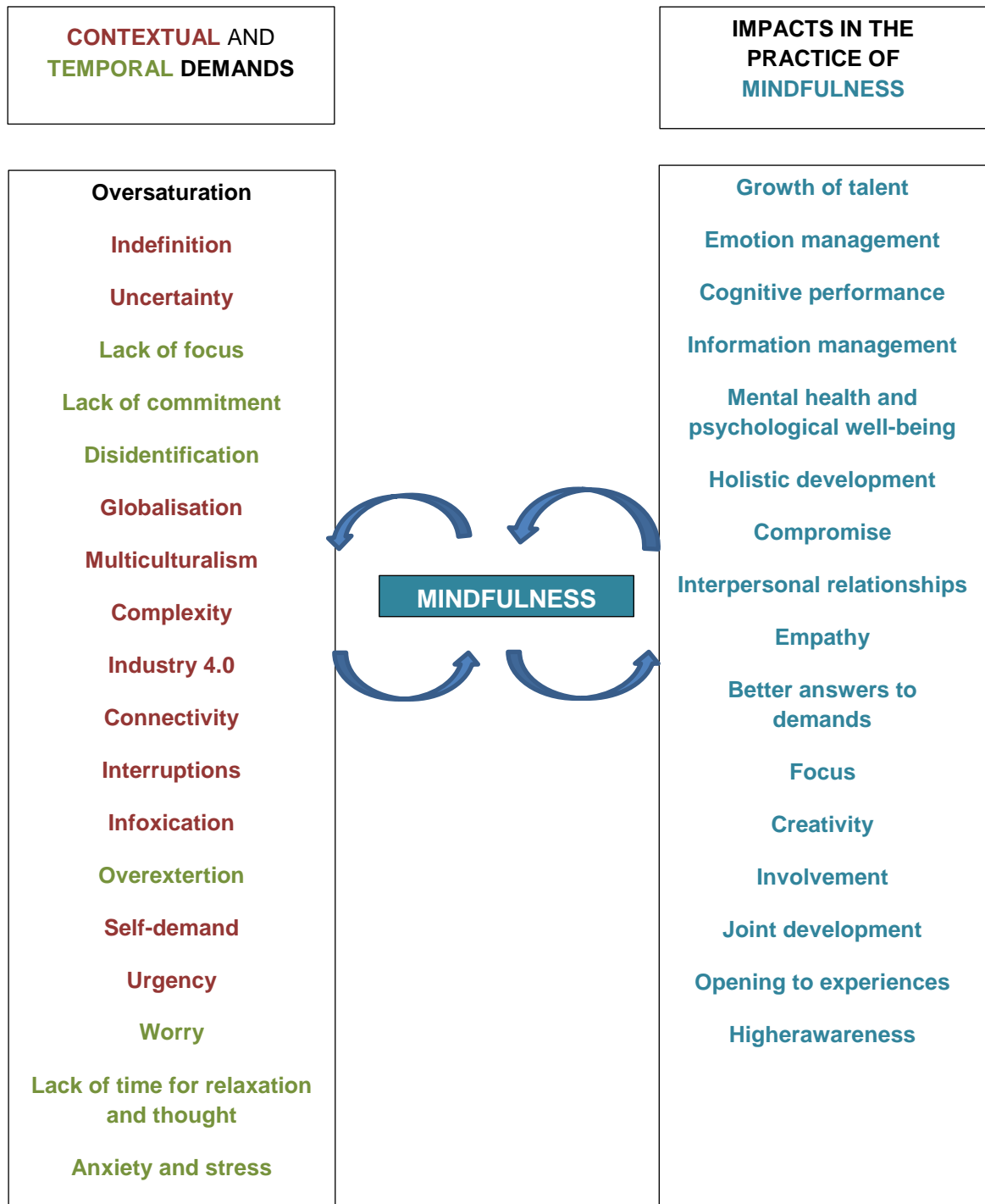
-On a **group level**, as it improves peoples' understanding of others and their interpersonal relationships in order to be in tune with the rest of the team/organization.

-On an **organizational level**, due to being able to foster involvement and commitment to projects.

In today's world, **emotions** and **talent** are becoming increasingly more relevant in our day to day lives and businesses have realized that Mindfulness is vital in developing them. By practicing **Mindfulness** we can achieve better results both in our professional and personal lives. Moreover, it allows us to strike up narrower relationships, carry out a greater number of tasks in a much more skilled way and be healthier, among other aspects previously mentioned. From here, businesses have begun to utilize it as a way to learn, improve and create a solid team of employees that make up an **improved combination of people for the company**.

In Figure 1 it is possible to see the main contextual and temporal demands that are produced along with the impacts in the practice of Mindfulness.

Figure 1: Main contextual and temporal demands and impacts in the practice of Mindfulness.



Source: Self-compiled

The path to achieving a more unified business is not easy by any means; however it should be a priority in the business environment. People are the most valuable part of a business and it should be ensured that they feel part of the projects they are carrying out, supported by the business and that they feel happy with what they are doing. If there are tools that assist in this, then why not start using them? Personally, I do not see a better moment to do so.

#### **4. PROGRAM PROPOSAL OF MINDFULNESS**

From the review that has been presented in previous chapters, it has been possible to confirm the increasing importance of Human Resources in organizations and the people that make it up. Taking into account the context in which people carry out activities and the objective of people to grow as human beings, Mindfulness has its place as a tool. All of this is based on learning, improvement and training of a team of employees that makes up an **improved combination** for the business.

We therefore understand that in order to be able to incorporate this tool into an organization, it would be convenient on the one hand, to work on the previously mentioned **effects** that Mindfulness has on people from previous chapters: **cognitive performance, well-being, and health and holistic development**. On the other hand, by realizing that incorporating HR practices on an individual basis is no longer sufficient, the importance of having a **multilevel perspective** cannot be dismissed. Working with each employee individually is no longer sufficient if what we want is to achieve group results like those of the whole organization. Therefore, in order to have the ability to construct a global image, it is necessary to adopt a **multilevel perspective**, the approach which allows us to study the relationships between variables and different levels of analysis (Osca et al, 2012). Although there are diverse opinions between authors regarding the number of levels that need focused on, here we will focus on the three levels that are considered to be indispensable: **the individual, group and organizational levels**.

At this point table 6 and 7 are highlighted from which we will begin to develop the proposal in more detail.

Table 6. Integral and integrated outline of Mindfulness: aspects to work on.

	COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE	WELL-BEING AND HEALTH	HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT
<b>INDIVIDUAL</b>	- Structure of the role - Relationship improvement with oneself	-Prevention: stress management strategies -Promotion: conciliation	-Proactivity, -To start with an end in sight To establish first things first, -“Sharpening the saw”
<b>GROUP</b>	-Assignment of role -Relationship improvement within the group	-Prevention: conflict Promotion: empathy	- To think of winning/losing -Try to understand first, then be understood
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL</b>	-Definition of roles -Relationship improvement between departments	Prevention: monitor healthy habits Promotion: a climate of innovation and challenge	-To synergize

Source: Self-compiled

Table 7. Integral and integrated outline of Mindfulness: practices.

	COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE	WELL-BEING AND HEALTH	HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT
<b>INDIVIDUAL</b>	-Transactional: meditation -Relational: self-reflection	-Prevention: daily stress -Promotion: timetable flexibility	-Meditation
<b>GROUP</b>	-Transactional: meditation observation -Relational: dialogue	-Prevention: simulation workshops Promotion: empathy techniques	-Foster culture through the redesign of departments
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL</b>	-Transactional: based on the construction of roles -Relational: communication	-Prevention: conferences -Promotion: innovative culture and rewards for innovation	-CSR and responsible citizenship.

Source: Self-compiled

In table 6 we can observe the integral and integrated outline of Mindfulness which includes those aspects that need to be worked on in order to achieve, through this proposal, that a tool such as Mindfulness can be incorporated into an organization. In the columns we can observe the effects Mindfulness has on people and in the rows the different levels upon which to be focused are highlighted.

In regards to table 7, we can find practices of Mindfulness that can be used in order to achieve what table 6 shows. The following is a detailed explanation of the program.

First of all, it is important to take into consideration that there exists a possibility of employees, middle management or even executives not having information around what a program of Mindfulness is or consists of. Therefore it would be a good idea to carry out informational group sessions at the beginning which would help them to understand what Mindfulness is, how it is practiced and its tools and components. This session would be complimented by a presentation from some trained group of employees, middle management or executives of some business that can attest to the benefits Mindfulness has brought them. It would also be beneficial if this group of people came from a business from a similar sector to the organization in which we find ourselves so as to feel identified with their testimony.

The program would be centred on group sessions (groups formed at random with members from all levels and timetables) so that the business may continue working as usual. The objective is that all members of the organization, no matter what their role, experience Mindfulness. An important aspect to take into consideration is if employees witness middle management and executives of the organization are committed to participating in the program, it will be easier for them to do the same.

Taking into account the aforementioned tables 6 and 7, the following aspects can be highlighted:

**Cognitive performance:** Regarding the job of cognitive performance from a task perspective in the organization, it is possible to underline the difference between transactional and relational practices. Transactional practices are those which are aimed at increasing efficiency and control of employees (job position design), while relational practices are aimed at satisfying the socio-relational dimension of the employee and favours participation, trust and collaboration (Gimeno, 2012).



With that in mind, in order to increase cognitive performance at an **individual level** it would be convenient to work on both practices. With these practices, hopefully the worker would be capable of understanding how he himself understands his own role in the company. In other words, being able to **construct his own role** in the organization while **improving this own relationship** with himself. All of this can be worked upon through training and more specifically, **meditation**.

In order to achieve this, the proposal is to establish a meditation exercise that lasts 2 minutes (to begin with). It would be beneficial if the employees thought for the first minute about their own identity. To do this, they would think of words which would define them and see if they are right or if it would be beneficial to change them. These words can be adjectives (fun, sociable, hardworking,...) or even words referring to their job position (boss, employee, colleague,...). The only things necessary to do this would be a pen and paper (or electronic devices), a comfortable sitting position to meditate and to focus on breathing for a few minutes. Once the time is up, they should ask themselves if they are words that they expected, if they believe they define them... and repeat the process for one more minute.

After this added minute, it would be a good idea to spend a few seconds observing the list in detail to see if it makes sense or if it surprises them, if they feel identified, how the list could have evolved since they started at the company and how they hope it will change in the next few years. This is an important point to reflect upon.

This practice is relevant in order for us to be conscious of what we think of ourselves or the job/role we believe we have in the company. The Buddhist word *anatman* which translates as "not me" highlights how people are not unchangeable, that we are flexible and in constant evolution. We are capable of playing different roles and having different qualities (Rinzler, 2015). It is important that people know that their role will go on being constructed depending on the situations in their lives.

This exercise will help workers to have the ability to construct their own role in the business and to be aware of the relationship they have with themselves. Moreover, if this practice is carried out in a group environment, we will achieve not only results on the first level (**individual**) but also on the next (**group level**). Starting with the vision of Peter Senge (2011), learning in a team begins with **dialogue**. In that case, if the previous practice is carried out in a group environment it would be beneficial to

comment on the results with others, having the ability to also comment on whether the words they have thought of correspond to how they see themselves. This would also begin a possible debate which would help both the communication within the group as well as the understanding of others, with each member of the group being able to give their opinion about the vision they have of other peoples' roles. From here, job/departmental groups would be able to assign different roles in function with how each person has constructed theirs, therefore improving the relationship between each person.

At an **organizational level**, the definition of roles should be based on each employee's own construction of that role and what they can bring to the group based on the projects they are working on. The foundations would be the abilities each person has and with what they feel most identified. It is important for each member of the company to carry out their most appropriate role in function with their abilities and personality, always considering the benefit of being part of a team. This is linked to an improvement in **organizational communication** by means of improving lines of communication.

To improve lines of communication, it must be considered that in many businesses what a group of workers perceive about the organization may differ vastly to what those in higher positions believe, and vice versa. Here is where internal communication within the business has importance. With quick and constant improvements in technology, it can often be a challenge to arrive to a point of understanding for the company as a whole. There should be continuous organized communication with viable and easily accessible methods to transmit the information. Employees should therefore create a list in which they state "current lines of communication in the business" and "lines of communication that they desire". The viability of these lists would be analysed by informal leaders and middle management who would decide which are the current lines of communication within the company. Consequently, employees would be informed of the new lines of communication.

**Health and well-being:** Both prevention and promotion must be taken into account. **Prevention practices** usually obtain measurable results, such as stress reduction, absence reduction, increase in motivation..., which have led to measures being established such as medical insurance, sports facilities, etc., while **promotion**

**practices** are broader. The idea of promotion refers to the strengthening of individual and collective capacities, linked to processes which are not expressed by precise or easily quantifiable processes (Czeresnia, 1999). Here, we can highlight practices which promote environments which foster health at work, concern for the employee and their development, aimed at promoting the pairing of person-organization (Gimeno, 2012)

In regards to measures of prevention at an **individual level** we can highlight **strategies to manage stress**. A stress diary could be created by employees for this. Firstly, this consists of trying to identify the factors or moments in which they feel stressed, and writing down somewhere how they feel. In this way, by maintaining a register, they will be able to explore their own feelings and thoughts and will be able to manage stress. They will also be conscious of what is going on at that moment upon writing down how they feel. Similarly, in regards to measures of **promotion** we can highlight ways to **conciliate the personal and professional life** of each employee. In order to achieve this, the organization could give the day off to employees on their birthday, their childrens' birthdays or even give them flexibility in their timetable to enter and leave work whenever it is convenient for them, among many other examples.

At a **group level**, **prevention practices** could lead to ways of managing possible conflicts. In the case of intradepartmental conflicts, if they themselves have not been able to solve the problem, the whole department will meet to come to a solution. In the case of interdepartmental conflicts that cannot be solved, management of the departments involved will meet with informal leaders in order to find the adequate solution. In order to put this into practice, conflict simulation workshops will be routinely carried out so that they are able to manage them in the best way possible.

In the case of the conflict being with someone outside the company, a meeting will also be held so that management and informal leaders can give their opinions about the case at hand and that the majority agree on the image and position the company will take in respect to the conflict. Similarly, an expert on the matter will be called in if necessary (from inside or outside the company). This expert will contribute by giving their professional opinion and will advise the members of the business the steps needed to be taken. Nevertheless, the final word will still be had by those previously mentioned. In order to pre-emptively manage the situation, simulations between the

various members will be carried out and they will try to arrive to the best possible solution.

In regards to **promotion** practices at a group level, small **empathy techniques** could be done in groups. For example, one exercise could be all members of the group, expect for one, to cover their ears and for the remaining person to start speaking slowly about themselves, saying good things that have happened to them, their personal life, their work life..., and the rest of the group must try to understand what it is the other person is saying. This is because in many cases, what someone says is not the most important thing, but what people say with their posture, expression or gaze. This helps to focus more on other important things that we normally fail to perceive. Once these three minutes are up, everyone uncovers their ears and between themselves try to explain what the other person has said, when they said something happy, when they talked about difficult moments..., giving way to a possible debate which would help both communication between the group and a better understanding of others. These sessions could be carried out for more or less time depending on the results and seeing how the members of the team improve and evolve. Feedback would then be important for the workers, both individually and in a group.

Finally, with regards to health **prevention** practices at an **organizational level**, we can find ways to monitor healthy lifestyle habits through conferences surrounding topics that may interest employees, after consulting them. For example: *“how to find time for physical exercise if we are at work”*, *“techniques to stop smoking”*,...etc. In terms of **promotion** it would be very beneficial to try and promote a **climate of innovation and challenge** through a culture that promotes a company that is more open to new ideas, to the adaption of risks, open to diversity and which is multidisciplinary, which has innovation as one of its main priorities, takes decentralized decisions and which rewards innovative ideas from employees. It would also be beneficial for this if at times a member of the department proposed an innovative project on which to work, related to the area they work in or any other aspect they are interested in. The best projects of each department would be rewarded.

Coming to the last column in table 6, we can observe **holistic development**. In order to achieve this, based on Covey's (2011) habits, we will work at an **individual level** on **“proactivity”**, **“starting with an objective in mind”**, **“establishing first things first”**

and “**sharpening the saw**”. For this it would be beneficial to do some meditation exercises that are characterized by not letting ourselves get trapped in things that happen to us. Beginning with the exercises that would have already been done to improve cognitive performance, and with roles already constructed, it would be beneficial to meditate for 5 minutes each day. Having said that, to begin it is important to follow some of the following techniques: We start by taking 3 or 4 deep breaths, inhaling and exhaling with our eyes closed. The process is then repeated, but whenever we exhale we hear in our mind a voice telling us that “*it is the moment when our **body** relaxes*”, noticing how each of our muscles start to gradually relax. Once we have noticed this relaxation of the muscles, we take 3 or 4 more breaths and upon exhaling we hear the same inner voice telling us that “*it is time for our **mind** to relax*”. We focus on the voice and are able to notice that our mind begins to relax. In the next few breaths our inner voice tells us that “***body and mind are one***”, and are totally relaxed. Moreover, every time we put our hands together we feel this body-mind relaxation again.

This meditation exercise will allow employees to have a more relaxed body and mind. People will therefore be more capable of routinely clarifying their thoughts, it will allow them to have a proactive mind (understanding that things that happen in life are “only situations”) and will be able to experience this serenity and continual confidence to improve (sharpening the saw).

At a group level it would be beneficial to work at “**win/win thinking**” and “**understanding first and later being understood**”. To do this, the company must be informed about how important the habit of mutual benefit and effective communication is. To develop these two ideas at a group level, practices must be carried out in communication, dialogue, new cultural bases, empathy techniques and new ways of dealing with conflict. Being aware of the importance of working in a team and that joint benefits are also individual benefits. This level of holistic development will also go hand in hand with the cultural essence the company now promotes. It will be important to invest in collaboration and team work, talent, mutual trust and friendship between colleagues, along with what has previously been mentioned. In order to create a company that is “whole” instead of different individual units, people could reorganize/redecorate their departments based on the values and ideas of the organizational culture.

Following this, in order to achieve holistic development at an **organizational level**, it must be possible to synergize. Covey (2011) states that it is necessary to cultivate the ability and attitude of valuing diversity by being aware that divergent ideas produce more superior ideas than individual ones. All of this stems from teamwork, innovation, organizational responsibility and the company's values. At this point it would be interesting to implement **CSR** practices or aspects related to the concept of **responsible citizenship**. For example, environmental responsibility practices could be highlighted such as workshops, increased use of increasingly popular sustainable goods in the workplace, or ecological vegetable gardens in businesses.

Having considered all of the above, we believe that explicit improvements at an organizational level and routine practices could help develop each one of the aspects of the integral and integrated outline of Mindfulness that have been proposed. While taking into account that each organization is different, it would be specifically adjusted to meet the needs of the people that make them up. It is also important to highlight the importance of constant feedback. The success of the program would therefore depend mainly on the predisposition of the organization and those who make it up to improve each of the previously mentioned aspects and the individual, group and organizational levels.

The way of managing organizations has become an important field of study of Administration and Business Management due to the relevance of its implications and the desire to do things better. In a changing, dynamic and unpredictable context like today, new tools to improve the management of people from a strategic and systematic approach are coming to the fore.

Nevertheless, despite the advances witnessed in recent years, various factors show that organizations and people still do not "understand each other". Therefore, the imbalance between the needs of organizations and people is growing increasingly larger and puts the health of both at risk. Moreover, it also compromises the survival of businesses faced with the need for this present and future rebalancing. Perhaps businesses do not know, do not want to, or perhaps do not believe they can do things better, or perhaps a mix of each. They can improve, however. If they do not know how, there are tools and possibilities of learning to do so.

An organizational world that increasingly relies on talent, emotions, innovation, technology, etc; cannot fall behind. It must not fall behind. Organizations still have time to evolve at the same rate as everything else, and for this they must be capable of changing their current approach and achieving the balance that has been mentioned previously.

The general objective of this Project has been an attempt to analyse and highlight the necessity of these new approaches and tools, where we find Mindfulness as a focalising tool. Its growing popularity due to its ability to go beyond traditional practices shows the extent of the concept. We have highlighted the benefits that its implementation bring to organizations at different levels and from different perspectives, giving value to the organization and allowing people to be able to focus on the day to day. This all contributes to the “whole” of the company equates to more than each of its parts.

Moreover with the integral and integrated outline of Mindfulness, we have proposed a possible program that could be implemented in organizations in order to reinforce this need for new practices and approaches that are required today.

It is also important however, to highlight that this Project is simply a first step. As the project unravels and develops we will find new lines of investigation, at the same time encountering different limitations in concepts or ideas.

In regards to limitations, it should be noted that the concept of Mindfulness, despite not being a new concept, is not used extensively in the West and its implementation in businesses *is* a new concept. Taking into consideration both aspects and despite a large number of studies and businesses that attest to its effectiveness, its use in organizations is still not as widespread as we would like.

It is also important to highlight that there is research that makes reference to Mindfulness as if it only focuses on meditation techniques or that it only deals with the topics of health and well-being (mainly to reduce stress). As has been commented upon and developed in this piece of work, this is not the case. The concept of Mindfulness is not limited to those aspects, but has a much wider focus.

On the same line, we have the possibility of going into more depth with organizations that focus on the talent and health of its employees and more neurobiological or

biopsychosocial aspects. While it is true that going into depth with these last two aspects would exceed our main objectives, it could be considered to be a future line of research.

Another limitation about the integral and integrated outline of Mindfulness is the number of levels used. We are conscious that there are more levels but we have decided to work on three, as they are considered to be the minimum necessary. The idea of using more levels would have supposed an increase in the complexity of managing the proposal and exceeding the objectives of the project.

All of this leads us to future lines of investigation. It would be interesting to carry out a more exhaustive analysis of the characteristics and evolution of the concept of talent and health, neurobiological or biopsychosocial aspects, etc. in order to be more aware of the extent of the concept. It would also be interesting to introduce new levels in the integral and integrated outline of Mindfulness along with the search for more practices that manage to improve each of its visible effects.

Similarly, it would be interesting through empirical research, to determine if there are significant differences between different groups of the organization with regard to the activities or levels they occupy in the business through the practice of Mindfulness.

Nevertheless, the most interesting future line of research is the possibility of experiencing first-hand a program of Mindfulness in order to analyse, prove and evaluate the benefits Mindfulness brings to us.



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