

FOLLOW-UP TO THE SECOND STUDY-AND-EXCHANGE MEETING DEDICATED TO RAISING THE STATUS OF SENIOR MANAGERS

The Canadian Managers Confederation and the Confédération nationale des cadres du Québec, in conjunction with the Senior Managers Job Placement and Training Centre, invited board-of-governor members from all senior management associations in the public, parapublic and peri-public sectors, as well as interested managers working in these sectors, to a second meeting on the theme of raising the status of senior management. No fewer than sixty participants were in attendance!



This invitation came as a follow-up to reflections initiated by professors Joseph Facal and Jacques Lusignan in May 2011. In reality, the working conditions of senior managers have not improved since, quite to the contrary. And the same holds true as for public opinion concerning the status of senior management... How can managers remain motivated in such a context? How can we as an association reverse the trend and raise the status of senior managers in our communities? Professor Jacques Lusignan has been interested in this subject for some years, and especially enjoys addressing the subject with large groups of senior managers, and he agreed to continue in the same vein as during his 2011 talk by sharing his changing reflections, analyses and proposals, in a concrete and dynamic manner.

As a backdrop, Mr. Lusignan first painted a portrait of the present context, including the current crisis in the workplace, the malaise of senior management, and the whys and wherefores of the malaise itself. This starkly realistic vision led to much reflection. Moreover, his remarks to the effect that "management is a profession in search of meaning" awoke his audience to the fact that clarifications are needed regarding the organizing and redefining of roles, as well as with respect to legal status (powers and duties). In his view, this is clearly a profession in the building stage, and it is therefore imperative that the nature of management work and the professional identity of the manager be subject to questioning and debate. As we are also faced with an issue of image and representation, the social and professional status dimension must not be overlooked.

Furthermore, in order to develop a strategic plan to raise the status of senior management, it would seem appropriate to take a closer look at sources of motivation and organizational commitment. Indeed, despite the enormous challenges that they face, and working and operating conditions that are often rather unattractive, the vast majority of managers enjoy their work and devote a great deal of effort and energy to fulfilling the mission of their institution. According to Jacques Lusignan, there are important avenues to consider as a means of raising the lacklustre status of senior management:

- Rebuilding a sense of identity for public consumption
- Adopting new management policies and practices
- Negotiating working conditions – for real this time
- Developing a collective sense of efficiency
- Networking based on ties of solidarity.

Senior management associations from all sectors clearly have their work cut out for them. That is why concerted action is the best hope, and sooner rather than later. The CNCQ and the CCC-CMC will be keeping a very close eye on this file...