

EXPANDED ABSTRACT

Chambers of Commerce: a new Management. The Balanced Scorecard approach for Spanish Chambers

Chambers of Commerce are one of the most widespread multi-sector business organizations in the world. They are characterized by three main features: they are non-profit making, they bring together various sectors within a single territory (city, region, state) and they are self-managed.

In Spain, Chambers are advisory bodies to the Administration, and represent the general interest of the local business. They pay special attention to SMEs. The strategic approach to the activities of Chambers, as well as their direction and management, will affect this interest.

For approximately a decade, Public Administrations, public companies and entities and social organizations, have begun to be aware of the benefits of renouncing the traditional management through the exclusively economic data. Progressively, they have begun to apply a more comprehensive form of management, reflecting internal and external data. Of course, the economic and financial aspects are not neglected, but this is done within an overall strategic framework. To this end, the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) tool, devised by Robert Kaplan and David Norton through value chain analysis, seems to be generally accepted as an effective instrument.

There is little literature on the treatment of this instrument in organizations of corporate or public interest: professional associations, fishermen's associations, cooperatives, foundations, port administrations, universities, city councils and other local administrations, etc. But even greater is the deficiency of studies in the case of application to Chambers of Commerce.

The aim of this work is to propose a strategic map and a detailed, though not exhaustive, table of what could be the framework of indicators that would guide the management and control of the functions of a Chamber of Commerce.

After a review of the literature on the application of this instrument in entities that defend a public or corporate interest, we move on to make a portrait of what a Chamber of Commerce is, its typologies in Europe, and its characteristics in Spain. It also reflects the regulatory changes experienced in the economic and financial regime of these entities.

In this context, the question of what's the meaning of management of a Chamber of Commerce under the philosophy of the CMI is answered. It could be said that success in public sector companies and non-profit organizations is not based on good financial results, but on improving the usefulness

of their activity for society (Niven 2003). Thus, the traditional architecture of the WCC must be changed by elevating the role of the mission and clients and reducing the influence of financial indicators. However, the great economic crisis experienced in recent years has meant that the public sector, or public law entities, have also had to pay special attention to obtaining, generating and using scarce financial resources.

Within the current legal framework, and given that the Chambers are public bodies that must be concerned with obtaining the funds to finance themselves, two possibilities are open for the design of the WCC: to draw it up with the characteristics of a public sector entity, or to implement it on the basis of the general model, with the financial perspective as the main objective. Based on the models of Niven (2003) and David and Lastra (2007), a proposal is made for the Chambers of Commerce.

The strategic map is designed under a specific cause and effect methodology among the four perspectives -which correspond to the four key approaches: clients and users, economic-financial, internal processes and resources and capacities-, strategies, objectives and indicators. This provides 'an excellent tool for the validation and presentation of the organization's results' (Vega & Lluglla, 2019:9), which is 'intuitively very attractive' (Kaplan, 2003, in De Waal, 2003:1).

The strategic lines (vertical dimension) represent the means for achieving the strategic objectives set by the organization. The action plan will be based on them. These lines are: to evaluate the needs and expectations of customers and stakeholders, to evaluate and review the strategy, adjusting the organization and the distribution of functions and responsibilities, to evaluate the economic-financial management, and to improve the Chamber's Catalogue of Services.

As main results of the study, two proposals are made in the application of the CMI philosophy to the Chambers of Commerce:

1. New Process Map. It is created on the basis of the six main functions assigned to a Chamber of Commerce in Spain, which are: creation and consolidation of companies, training, internationalization, technological modernization, information and representation, and others (such as conflict mediation).

2. Scoreboard. A distinction is made between Strategic Planning, Services, Economic Evaluation and Stakeholders indicators, following the four perspectives. Indicators are established for each one of the referred functions.

- Creation and Consolidation of Companies function: 24 indicators are proposed, classified into three aspects: Companies attended, Business promotion activities and Support activities for local companies.
- Training function: 36 indicators are proposed, classified into five aspects: Training for the unemployed, Training for the employed, Income and training costs for the unemployed, Efficiency in training for the unemployed and Efficiency in training for the employed.
- Internationalization function: 26 indicators, classified into three aspects: Support activities for internationalization, Income and costs of internationalization and Efficiency in internationalization.

- Technological Modernization function: 27 indicators, classified into four aspects: Initiatives to support the technological modernization of local companies, Training for technological modernization, Income and costs of technological modernization and Efficiency in technological modernization.
- Information and Representation function: 41 indicators, classified into six aspects: Infrastructures, Economic-Business Policy, Environment and Strategy, Participation in Public Administration, Participation in Private Entities and Income and Costs in Information and Representation.

There are basically two limitations to the job. On the one hand, although the Process Map is built on perspectives, functions, lines of action, etc., by its own conception of a graphic guide it does not include each and every one of the chamber actions and the flows between them. On the other hand, the chart of indicators is logically not exhaustive, as has been pointed out, and does not reflect all the possible activities derived from the functions of a Chamber of Commerce.

Chambers of Commerce in Spain are public-law corporations that combine public-administrative powers with the defense of the interests of the associated entities. The modification of the traditional continental model of organization of Chambers, in force since 1911, has meant an important organizational change that has affected their financial security. Chambers have been able to react to this process by increasing the services provided to their users and the control and management thereof.

The tool to be used for the management of the new context can be the BSC model, through the design and establishment of a strategic map and an adapted set of indicators, a model of efficiency demonstrated by a wide literature in business corporations, as well as, in the last years, in corporate entities and public administrations, as it has been referenced in this work. The path of the Chambers in this transformation is long, and not exempt of complexities, given the characteristics of these organizations. Nevertheless, the authors of this work consider that it is the only one, based on the new rules of the game imposed by the regulations and the environment, that will allow them to know themselves well in all the dimensions of the scope of their strategy, and to use that knowledge for their internal and external efficiency. In this evolution, the implementation of a management system based on indicators will allow them to measure the results of their management in order to make their activities profitable and to add value to their associates, betting on a continuous improvement in the development of all their processes.

The originality of this work lies in the fact that it covers an important gap in the literature, especially as far as Chambers of Commerce are concerned. It is intended to cover this gap with a double proposal of management tools for them, under the philosophy of the BSC. Not only is a strategic map provided, but also an extensive list of indicators, classified by function, and under a codification model that enables the Chamber to better manage them by computer.

Our contribution also has a broader scope, since any 'study on the design and implementation of these innovations [the BSC model] in specific organizations allows us to contribute to strengthening the process of dissemination and adoption of such management practices' (Aparisi, Giner & Ripoll, 2009: 207-208).

KEYWORDS: Balanced Scorecard; Chamber of Commerce; Strategy; Strategic map; Management indicators in public organizations; Territorial development; Socioeconomic environment.

1. Introducción

Agruparse en comunidad y organizarse ha sido la forma más eficiente de conseguir los intereses del colectivo. Cuando lo que se defienden son intereses de carácter público, las organizaciones suelen presentarse en forma de órganos de la Administración (Ministerios, Consejerías, órganos locales, internacionales, etc.) o como Administraciones de carácter corporativo público. Dentro de estas últimas quedarían encuadradas las Cámaras de Comercio (Gorordo, 2005). En este contexto, podemos decir que las Cámaras de Comercio constituyen una de las organizaciones empresariales de tipo multisectorial más extendidas en el mundo¹, caracterizadas por carecer de fines lucrativos, agrupar diversos sectores dentro de su ámbito territorial específico de actuación (ciudad, comarca, región, Estado) y ser autogestionadas.

Su origen en España se remonta al Real Decreto de 9 de abril de 1886 (Blanco, 1945), por el que se crean diversas asociaciones voluntarias de comerciantes, industriales y navieros². Las Cámaras adquirieron el carácter de establecimientos públicos en 1901, a través del Real Decreto de 21 de junio³.

1.- Solo la Cámara de España reúne a 85 cámaras nacionales y 42 cámaras en países de los cinco continentes, dando servicios a 325.856 empresas (en línea: <https://www.camara.es/la-camara-de-espana/la-camara-de-espana-en-cifras> [visto el 09 de marzo de 2020]). En nuestro país hay 15 cámaras de 16 países europeos, que cubren a más de 7.000 empresas (en línea: <http://www.camaraseuropeas.com/es/> [visto el 09 de marzo de 2020]). Eurochambres, la Asociación de Cámaras de Comercio e Industria Europeas, cuenta con 45 miembros, con una red de 1.700 cámaras, y representa a más de 20 millones de empresas en Europa, siendo PYME más del 93% de las mismas (en línea: <https://www.camara.es/acerca-de-eurochambres> [visto el 09 de marzo de 2020]). En todos los países del mundo, con excepción de Nauru, Timor Oriental y Vaticano, existen cámaras de comercio (Informe "Cámaras de Comercio en Europa y en el Mundo", 2011:13).

2.- A propuesta del Ministro de Fomento, y de acuerdo con el Consejo de Ministros, he tenido a bien disponer: Artículo 1. Las asociaciones de carácter permanente que usando de su libertad constitucional funden los comerciantes, industriales, navieros y Capitanes de la Marina mercante de altura se considerarán como Cámaras oficiales de Comercio, Industria y Navegación para los efectos de este decreto... (Gaceta de Madrid, nº 102, Tomo II, del 12 de abril de 1886, p:110).

3.- Gaceta de Madrid nº 172.