IEDC

Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference

Modern Science, New Challenges and Perspectives

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Birmingham, United Kingdom
October 31, 2026

International
Scientific Conference

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Proceedings

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UDC 001.1 DOI: https://doi.org/10.64076/iedc261031

ISBN 978-1-291-48804-3

Modern Science, New Challenges and Perspectives: Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference (Birmingham, United Kingdom, 31 October 2026). Lulu Press, Inc., 2026.

The collection includes the proceedings of the International Scientific Conference "Modern Science, New Challenges and Perspectives", which took place on 31 October 2026. This collection is intended for scientists, educators, students, government officials, business representatives, and the general public.

Working language of the conference: English.

The conference proceedings are published in the original language and as submitted by the authors. The collection has been formatted and prepared for publication in a unified style, without altering the content of individual contributions. The authors are fully responsible for the accuracy of the facts, proper names, quotations, statistical data, industry terminology, and other information presented in their materials.

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UDC 658:005.21 DOI: https://doi.org/10.64076/iedc261031.03

Fundamental Principles of Enterprise Management in a World of Four Deficits

Oleksii Haharinov
Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, Kharkiv
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3886-8388

Abstract. *This paper presents an author's conceptual interpretation of enterprise management in a world characterized by four interconnected deficits: meaning, understanding, trust, and humanity. It examines their implications for managerial decision-making and identifies strategic management, organizational learning, transparency, and corporate values as key mechanisms for mitigating their negative effects under uncertainty.*
Keywords: *enterprise management, systemic management, four deficits, strategic management, uncertainty, systemic excellence.*

The approach to managing an enterprise is influenced by past experience, the current situation, the management style, the overall systemic state of the business entity, and expectations regarding the future. This is one aspect.

On the other hand, the vast majority of models for managing an enterprise - the fundamental unit of any economic system within modern states or their unions - stem from a particular worldview. Broadly speaking, in terms of dominant paradigms, the contemporary worldview can be characterized as "material-technical": the economy dictates politics. This has led to the devaluation of ethics and morality across all spheres of life - most notably in decision-making processes at every level of the socio-economic and political hierarchy - and has generated crises that are driving us toward an intensifying global systemic crisis. For instance, M. Lawrence et al. [1] describe a global "polycrisis" as the interplay of crises across various systems; through causal links and feedback mechanisms, these crises can reinforce one another. Meanwhile, K. Richardson et al. [2], in their research on planetary boundaries, found that six of the nine identified thresholds have already been breached - a fact that underscores the magnitude of the environmental challenges facing modern civilization.

These observations highlight the urgent need for a systemic analysis of the state of the modern world, as well as a fundamental rethinking of the principles used to manage artificial organizational systems - specifically economic entities such as "enterprises." All of this shapes the environment in which human life unfolds - including the management of enterprises - and can be characterized by four dominant deficits: a deficit of meaning, a deficit of understanding, a deficit of trust, and a deficit of humanity. This interpretation reflects the author’s perspective on the state of the

modern world - including the context of economic interconnections and the management of business entities - grounded in an analysis of reality, a systems approach, and practical experience working with enterprises. This description is conceptual in nature and warrants further in-depth study regarding how these deficits manifest across different states, economic systems, business organizations, or individual enterprises.

It is difficult to determine which of these four deficits is the root cause and which is the consequence; however, they are undeniably interconnected, forming a reinforcing feedback loop - which, depending on the focus of intervention, could also function as a balancing loop. The key question concerns the nature of these feedback loops - whether they are positive or negative - in terms of their impact on human life, individual strategic potential, and the implications for future generations regarding the possibility of achieving a better future (for instance, within the framework of sustainable development).

At the next stage, a deficit of meaning gives rise to a multiplicity of divergent, often conflicting, meanings at the individual level. The content of these meanings depends on one’s worldview, the individual’s level of development, and the state of the external environment in which life unfolds. While individualization is a strategically positive trend, in the face of a "deficit of meaning," this process accelerates the onset of bifurcations and gives rise to tragic events and consequences - a phenomenon clearly observable today. This represents a specific type of transformation: from above, there is a drive to tighten control by reducing diversity, while from below (horizontally), diversity is increasing - primarily through a focus on individualization. This creates a widening gap - a "scissors" effect - that could lead to a loss of control across the various organizational levels within the hierarchy of actors engaged in socio-economic and political activity. This situation is exacerbated by a "deficit of understanding," driven by the accelerating pace of change within the human-made world - changes primarily rooted in technological advancements, such as artificial intelligence and the transition to Industry 5.0 - as well as challenges related to security, climate, demographics, and the ecological.

The threatening nature of the external environment and the speed at which it changes - impacting the life of every individual -combined with the aforementioned deficits of meaning and understanding, trigger survival strategies and a "fend for myself" behavioral model (or, to invoke Hobbes, a state where "man is a wolf to man"). At the core of this lies a "deficit of humanity." Within the feedback loops of a world defined by these four deficits, this deficit can function as both a cause and an effect. This depends on the chosen temporal frame of reference and the leverage points used to intervene - ultimately shaping how these factors influence our daily lives and the future of the world as a whole.

What does this imply for enterprise management? On one hand, it introduces significant complexity, heightened risk, and renders the very act of management increasingly problematic. On the other hand, it offers a certain opportunity in terms of leverage and influence - depending on the specific object being managed and the depth of one's understanding of cause-and-effect relationships.

Trust is the foundation of economic growth. A lack of trust inevitably drives up transaction costs and complicates the overall management of an enterprise. This is partly linked to the "post-truth" world in which we now find ourselves - a world whose emergence and development we have, in fact, facilitated through our own actions or inaction.

To address the problem of a trust deficit, management must focus on the following areas: transparency regarding areas of responsibility, operational policies and processes, incentive structures, and communication systems. This is a crucial aspect of overcoming a lack of trust - both within the organization...

To address the issue of a trust deficit, enterprise management must focus on several key areas. Transparency regarding areas of responsibility, operational regulations and processes, incentive systems, and communication frameworks is essential for overcoming a lack of trust - both within the organization and in interactions with external partners. Furthermore, the completeness, timeliness, and accuracy of information exchange - across both horizontal and vertical channels - are crucial. Sincerity in communicating with staff also becomes a vital prerequisite for alleviating stress caused by the destructive impact of the external environment, particularly given the current climate of upheaval and the influence of the information landscape. For instance, even when management does not know how to resolve a specific issue, it is still necessary to communicate with staff in a timely manner and be honest about the fact that an answer is not yet available, but that a solution is being sought.

A deficit of understanding is overcome by focusing on lifelong learning and the development of a corporate learning system based on the following progression: information - knowledge - understanding - application - analysis/synthesis - wisdom - creation. In situations where information is insufficient, incomplete, or untimely - or where the necessary understanding is lacking - one must proceed by formulating and testing hypotheses, while simultaneously addressing the need for information, knowledge, and understanding.

A deficit of meaning can be overcome by focusing on strategic management - establishing a strategic foundation through key strategic guideposts (a value system, mission, and vision) - as well as by developing a strategy for times of uncertainty. It is best to involve the entire team in crafting this strategy, employ agile management to achieve it, and review it in a timely manner.

A deficit of humanity is overcome through a constructive system of corporate values, which manifests in the principles of interaction with an enterprise's internal and

external stakeholders, as well as in constructive decision-making principles and corporate social responsibility.

Indeed, overcoming all these deficiencies is challenging; however, the enterprise certainly possesses levers to mitigate them through corporate governance - an approach rooted in systemic management and an understanding of the specific nuances of managing a business entity amidst a highly uncertain external environment. Certain aspects of this - including the path toward systemic excellence - are explored in the author's previous works [3–4].

In the author's view, conceptualizing the fundamental principles of enterprise management within a "world of four deficits" is a critical issue for the survival, continued operation, and development of business entities - in a world where old rules are increasingly ineffective, while new ones have yet to emerge. The paper proposes a conceptual interpretation of these four interconnected deficits and identifies corresponding areas for managerial intervention at the enterprise level.

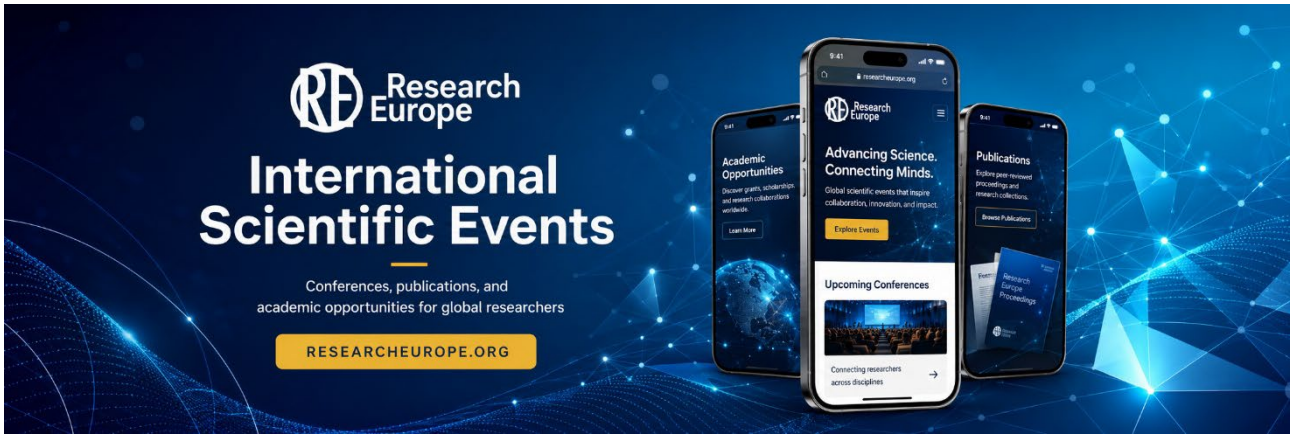
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