

# **.IN SEARCHING FOR A LEADER. STUDY CASE: CONTINENTAL AUTOMOTIVE TIMISOARA ROMANIA**

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## **Abstract:**

*Being a leader is not a job, it is a calling.*

*It is about passion, confidence, dedication, energy and committed.*

*A leader must know how to guide his team to challenging situations and sometimes the company depends on the decision he takes.*

*The main propose of this paper work is to identify and analyze the particular ways of leadership style within a multinational company from west part of Romania, highlighting how the leaders are perceived by the employees, what are the most powerful qualities of a Romanian's leader which can inspire and motivate the employees for performance .*

Key words: *leadership, communication, trustworthiness, commitment to excellence*

JEL classification: M12, M50, M53

## **INTRODUCTION**

The global development of world economy has led to the improvement and development of business and the emergence of people who with its innovative approach, intelligence, and its will rise business processes to a higher level. In recent decades, until now these people are almost identified with firms and companies in which they work, simply because the whole process of development is based on them, they willingly and using words motivate employees to identify with the companies in which they work. These people are leaders or the contemporary leaders of the development.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Due to globalization, companies are changing their structure and competing in a bigger arena. Most of these organizations used to think of capital simply as shares, cash, investments, or some sort of wealth. Over the years, these organizations have changed their views and have added employee development and performance management as a strategic business priority to set them apart from their competition.

In this context, leadership plays a significant role in employee performance and productivity because when a good leader support his employees, they will be more willing to perform and overcome their duties in a more efficient and effective way.

Having a variety of definitions and interpretations, leadership could be 'getting others to follow' by setting a clear vision and persuading employees into accepting and understanding the future of the company or as a combination of certain traits, skills and knowledge.

It is difficult to give an accurate meaning because it involves activities with groups, dealing with different types of behavior.

Building the relationship between a leader and his/her followers requires an appreciation from the leader for the personal values of those who would be willing to give their energy and talents to accomplish shared organizational objectives (Bass, 1985).

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Being a leader is not a job, it is a calling. It is about passion, confidence, dedication, energy and committed within the employees. When employees are engaged, they are emotionally connected to others and cognitively vigilant to the direction of the team and when employees know what to expect, have the resources to complete their work, participate in opportunities for growth and feedback, and feel that they contribute significantly to the organization.

- **Something about leadership styles**

Leadership is less about your needs, and more about the needs of the people and the organization you are leading. Leadership styles are not something to be tried on like so many suits, to see which fits. Rather, they should be adapted to the particular demands of the situation, the particular requirements of the people involved and the particular challenges facing the organization.

Daniel Goleman describes six different styles of leadership (Goleman et al, 2013). In his opinion, the most effective leaders can move among these styles, adopting the one that meets the needs of the moment. They can all become part of the leader's repertoire.

**Visionary.** This style is most appropriate when an organization needs a new direction. Its goal is to move people towards a new set of shared dreams. "Visionary leaders articulate where a group is going, but not how it will get there – setting people free to innovate, experiment, take calculated risks," write Goleman and his coauthors.

**Coaching.** This one-on-one style focuses on developing individuals, showing them how to improve their performance, and helping to connect their goals to the goals of the organization. Coaching works best, Goleman writes, "with employees who show initiative and want more professional development." But it can backfire if it's perceived as "micromanaging" an employee, and undermines his or her self-confidence.

**Affiliative.** This style emphasizes the importance of team work, and creates harmony in a group by connecting people to each other. Goleman argues this approach is particularly valuable "when trying to heighten team harmony, increase morale, improve communication or repair broken trust in an organization." But he warns against using it alone, since its emphasis on group praise can allow poor performance to go uncorrected. "Employees may perceive," he writes, "that mediocrity is tolerated."

**Democratic.** This style draws on people's knowledge and skills, and creates a group commitment to the resulting goals. It works best when the direction the organization should take is unclear, and the leader needs to tap the collective wisdom of the group. Goleman warns that this consensus-building approach can be disastrous in times of crisis, when urgent events demand quick decisions.

**Pacesetting.** In this style, the leader sets high standards for performance. He or she is "obsessive about doing things better and faster, and asks the same of everyone." But Goleman warns this style should be used sparingly, because it can undercut morale and make people feel as if they are failing.

**Commanding.** This is classic model of "military" style leadership – probably the most often used, but the least often effective. Because it rarely involves praise and frequently employs criticism, it undercuts morale and job satisfaction. Goleman argues it is only effective in a crisis, when an urgent turnaround is needed. Even the modern military has come to recognize its limited usefulness.

Depending upon the circumstances, leaders will use different leadership styles. The most affective leaders know how to adapt their style to every different and unique situation that can arise and face to the challenges of the environmental conditions. They know how to generate viable business approaches and maintain organizational stability.

For achieve performance at organizational level, leaders understand there is more than just motivating their employees, they have to focus towards creating an environment

of engagement. This means a complex process, that requires time to fully develop it being supportive and offering the right vision regarding long term goals. Knowing how to increase satisfaction and the level of engagement help prevent having a disengaged workforce.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present paper work aim is to identify and analyze the particular ways of leadership style within a very important company from west part of Romania, highlighting how the leaders are perceived by the employees, what are the most powerful qualities of a Romanian's leader which can inspire and motivate the employees for performance.

The company is Continental, a German automotive manufacturing company which is the world's fourth-largest tire manufacturer. Our research is realized on Continental Automotive Timisoara, Romania, IT department.

In this respect, the purpose of our study case is to find the existence of the leadership components in company Continental Automotive Timisoara and to highlight the most powerful qualities of the Continental leaders.

The research method used was the questionnaire survey and the research tool, questionnaire. The questionnaire has 10 questions and it was distributed to 34 employees where from 4 with managerial position and 30 with executive position.

The people questioned represent 90% of the employees from IT department, Continental Automotive Timisoara. Data processing was done using Excel in Microsoft Office.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

After analyzing the data and interpreting the results, were found interesting aspects regarding the most powerful qualities of the Continental Automotive Timisoara leaders and leadership style implemented here.

Question nr. 1:

Employee	Does your leader help you understand the new assignments and procedures?
Leader	Do you help your employees understand the new assignments and procedures?

One of the characteristics of a great leader is the ability to help their employees when it comes to assignments and procedures. Every leader should tell the employees which are their responsibilities and what to do to receive great results.

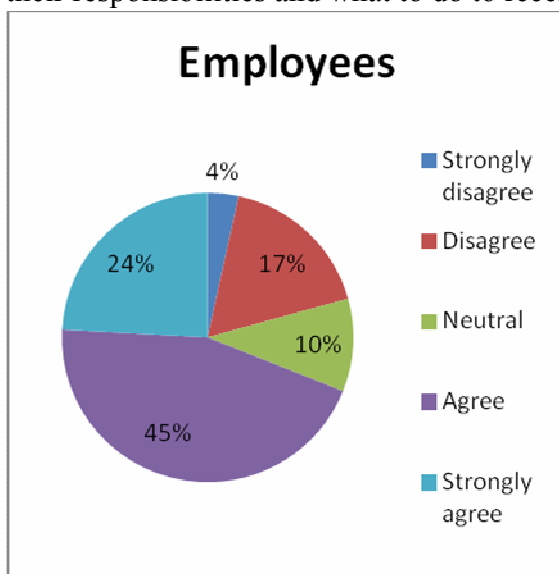


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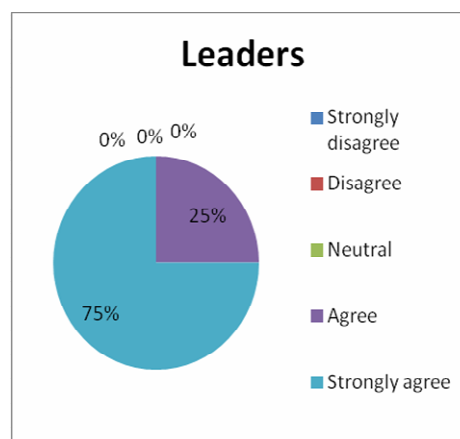


Fig.1.2.

These results represent a positive aspect because when the employees understand the tasks they have to execute, the chance that they feel frustrated because they do not know what to do at the workplace, is about to decrease.

These answers also represent a positive aspect because managers are disposed to give a hand to the employees and they fulfill their responsibilities as a good and devoted leader.

Question nr. 2

Employee	Does your leader take prompt decisions relating to your work?
Leader	Do you take prompt decisions relating to your employees' work?

The changes that might arise in business challenge the companies to be more flexible and to be more focused on adopting new innovative ideas which might assure them an advantage in the business world competition. They should be more proactive than reactive. All these elements are survival elements for a company. This kind of situation constrain the leaders to take prompt decisions without affecting their quality.

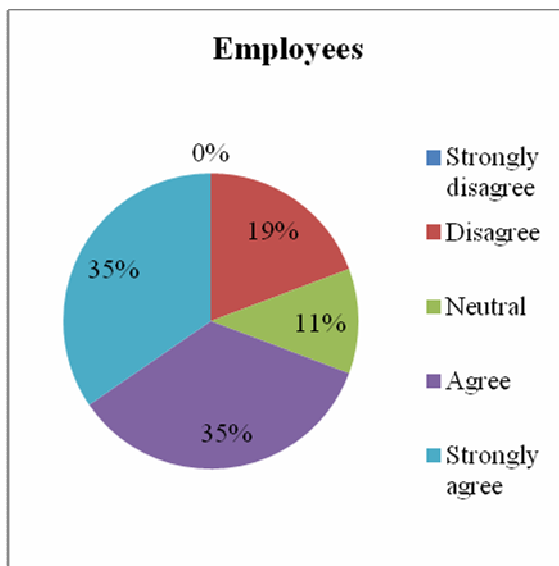


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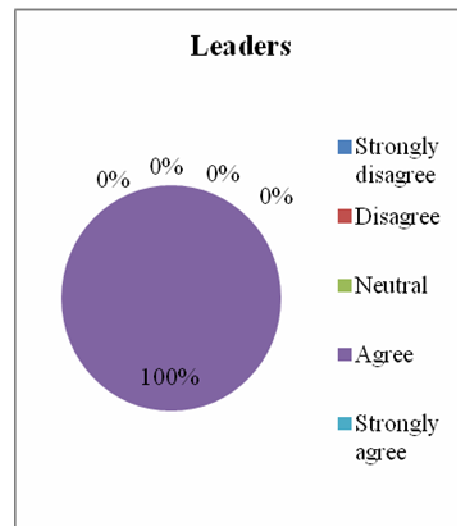


Fig. 2.2.

The employees' answers shows that the majority are satisfied with the prompt decisions that their leader takes, but a percent of 19 disagree with them. Perhaps they believe that the quality of the decisions is affected by external factors.

As stated above, all the leaders questioned said that they had agreed with the second question from the questionnaire.

There is a discrepancy between the answers of the employees and the managers in as far as 5 of the employees would not rather say that the leader's decisions are prompt.

Question nr. 3

Employee	Does your leader decide the specific objectives of your post?
Leader	Do you decide the specific objectives for your employees?

The specific objectives determined by the leader for the employees have a huge influence in the development of a company because these objectives can stimulate and excite the employee in reaching his goals. Deciding the objectives both the employee and the manager at the same table, working together to conceive them can make the employee understand exactly which is his role in the company and what exactly he has to work for.

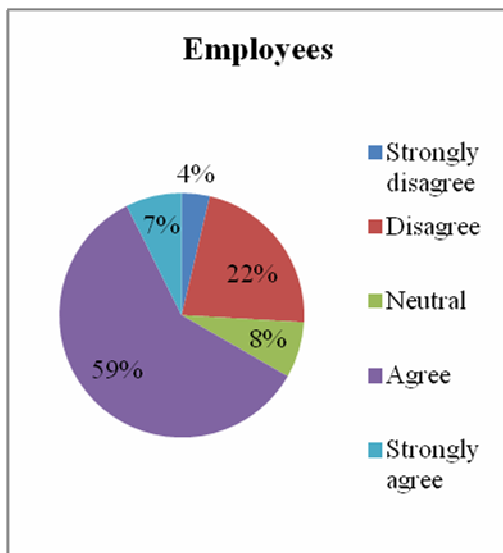


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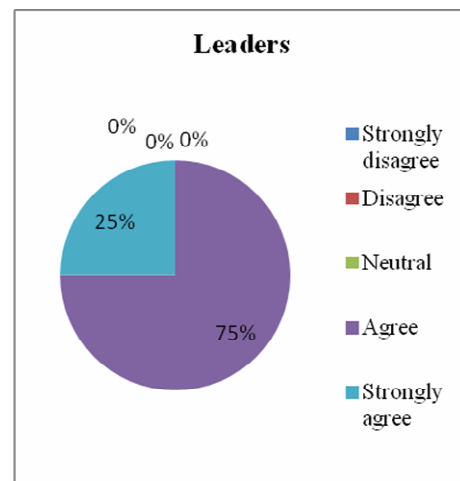


Fig.3.2.

The information we received shows that more than half of the employees believe that they receive specific objectives of their post while the others feel that little information about the objectives of their post was given to them by the leader.

In comparison with what the employees answered, the leaders claimed that they decide the specific objectives with the consult of their employees.

There is a difference between what both sides answered and it might occurred because of the incapacity of the leaders to give specific targets to the employees. Even if they are right-minded, some of the employees are not getting the message properly.

Question nr. 4

Employee	Does you leader give you the responsibility and the authority of taking decisions to fulfill your duties independently?
Leader	Do you give to your employees the responsibility and the authority of taking decisions to fulfill their duties independently?

Delegation is the tool the employees use to share different task to his team members. Nowadays, in modern companies it is commonly used the authority delegation. It is considered to be very efficient. Some of the modern leaders use this type of delegation because they want their employees to feel important and trusted.

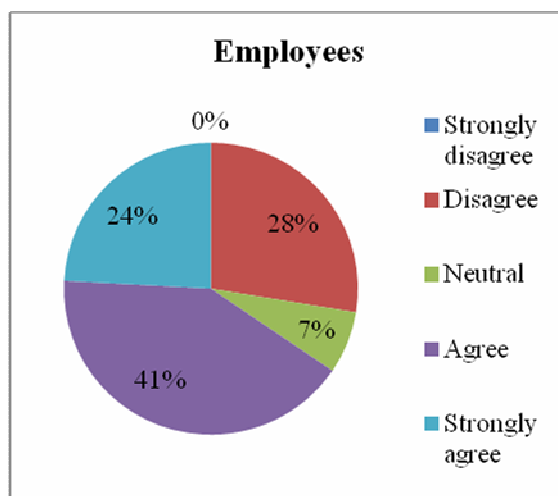


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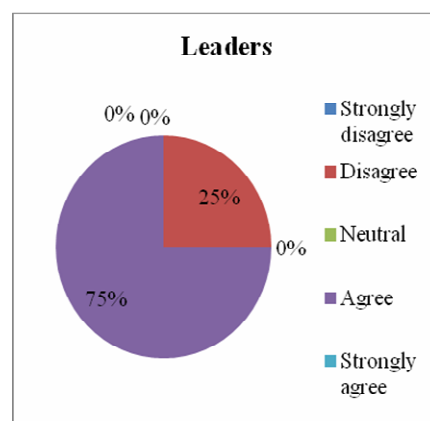


Fig.4.2.

As we can see the 28% of the Continental ( IT department) employees do not agree with the question. This means that they do not feel independent enough at the workplace.

Even though, the majority affirmed that their leader gives them the responsibility and the authority they need to take decisions and to fulfill their duties independently.

All the questioned leaders agreed and strongly agreed with this question. This means that they believe they give the employees the authority they need to do their jobs independently.

There is a contradiction between the answers of both sides and the reason might be the employees' desire for more independency from the leader.

Question nr. 5

Employee	Does you leader put effort into making the group remarkable through great results?
Leader	Do you put effort into making the group remarkable through their great results?

This question refers to the engagement of the leaders in planning the work in the department. The leader represents an inspiring model for the subordinates.

He is the one who promote the enthusiasm, the one who take risks and also the one who makes sure that the workplace is charged with positive emotions, so that the employees can work in an a pleasant atmosphere.

The leader builds the team and bring the team spirit among the employees, he highlights their abilities and this is how the leader bring out into relief his team.

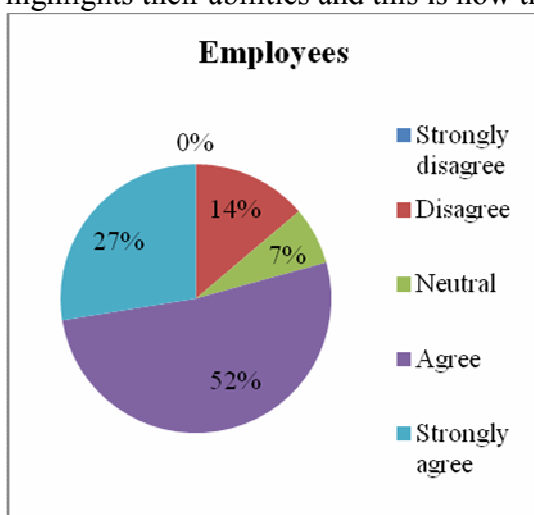


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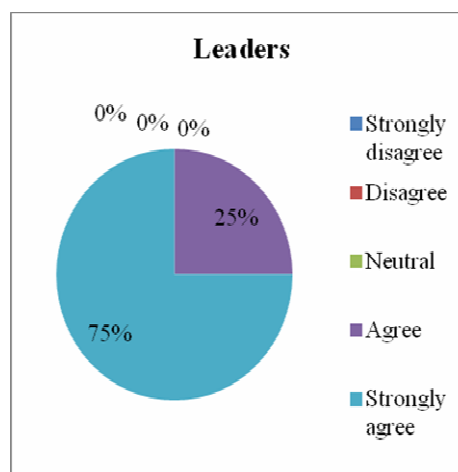


Fig. 5.2.

A percentage of 14% do not believe that their leader put effort into making the group remarkable and this is why they disagreed the question. 7% are neutral and the rest appreciate the work of their leader.

These answers show that the leaders are involved in planning the work of the department and that they pay close attention to the results obtained by the group. The leaders are interested in developing both the team and each member of it.

Question nr. 6

Employee	Does you manager help you improve your professional performances?
Leader	Do you help your employees improve their professional performances?

Improving the employees' professional performances means developing the company. Not only that the leader must inform the employees about their professional results, but he also must give them advice to improve them. This might happen only if the leaders are open-minded, communicate with the employees and are involved in helping the employees grow.

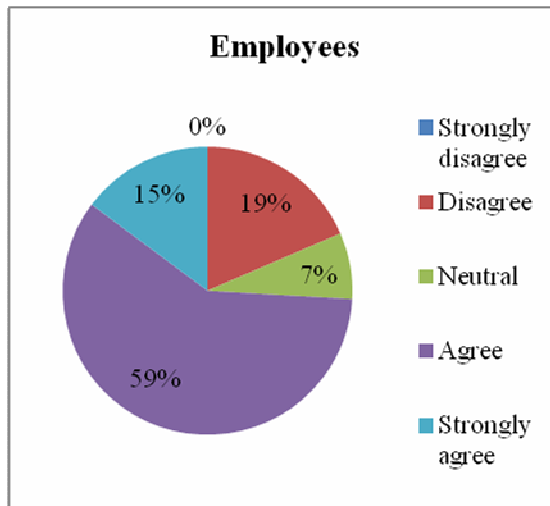


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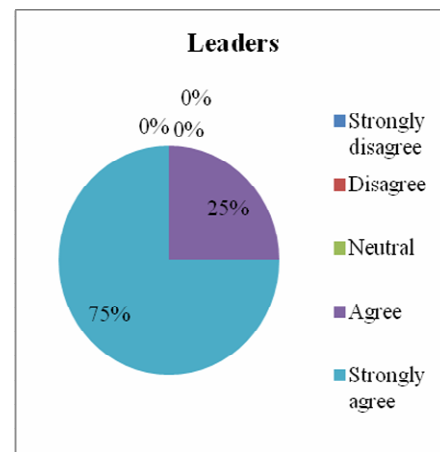


Fig.6.2.

In the main, in the IT department of Continental Timisoara the employees are satisfied with the way the leader help them develop. A small part of them think that the leader should try to help them more than he does.

These answers show that the leaders inform the employees about their professional results and they give them advice to become better employees and this way the company will develop.

Question nr. 7

Employee	Does your leader express his critics in a right and objective way?
Leader	Do you express your critics in a right and objective way?

The leader is the one who has to explain to all the employees the tasks they have to fulfill, he is the one who assigns the specific objectives for every post together with the employees. He also gives feedback to the employees for their work and sometimes this is a difficult moment. The leader must know how to give the feedback to the employees. It had to be given in an objective way and is has to motivate the employee to become greater, not to deter him.

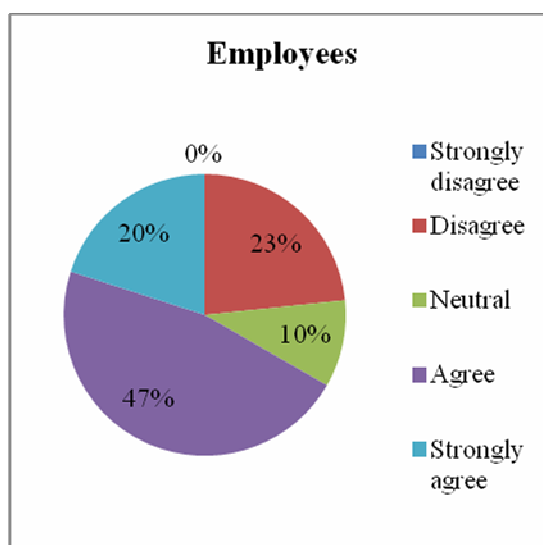


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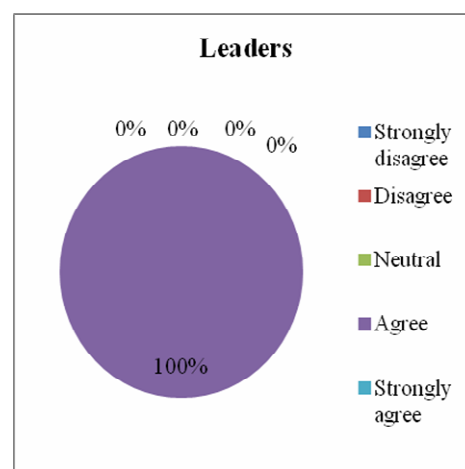


Fig.7.2.

For the most part, the questioned employees agreed with the question. 23 percent of them would like their leader to be more cautious while giving feedback and to be fairer.

The managers have the desire to motivate the employees and try to express their critics in a right way and this is a positive aspect of the company.

Question nr. 8

Employee	Does your leader take into consideration your personal opinion?
Leader	Do you take into consideration the personal opinion of your employees?

This question highlights an important quality of a leader, more exactly the trust that the leader gives to his employees. Taking into consideration the personal opinion of the employees gives them more self-confidence, which is very important for the development of the company. The uninvolved employee, in the activity of the organization, will determine a decline of the performance of the organization, the employees will not be motivated and satisfied of what are they doing. Therefore, taking into consideration the opinion of the employees is essential for the success of the organization, especially in this period, when the economical changes from business are very fast and unpredictable.

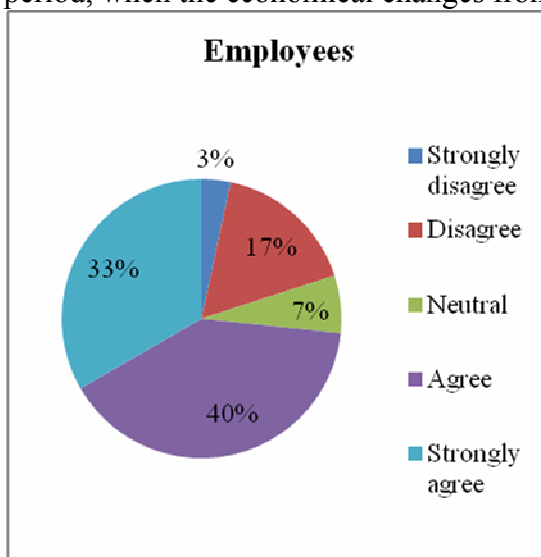


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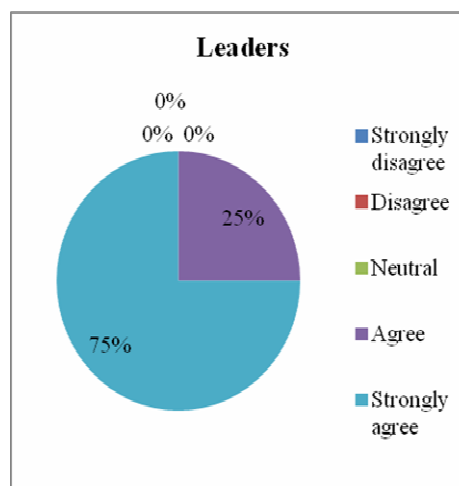


Fig. 8.2.

A percentage of 73% consider that their leaders take into consideration their personal opinions (40% agree; 33% strongly agree), but exist 20% that do not consider that their leaders take into consideration their personal opinions (17% disagree, 3% strongly disagree).

The circumstance that the opinion of over a half of the employees coincides with the opinion of the leaders, shows that the leadership style is a good one.

Question nr. 9

Employee	Does your leader treat you respectfully and thoughtfully?
Leader	Do you treat your employees respectfully and thoughtfully?

An extremely important aspect for the employee is to be treated respectfully and carefully by the manager. There are leaders who through their actions and their words make the employees feel aggrieved. In this way, the employees will not contribute to brainstorming or to activities at the workplace. As result, the performance of the company will decrease and the employees will be less motivated and they might leave the company.



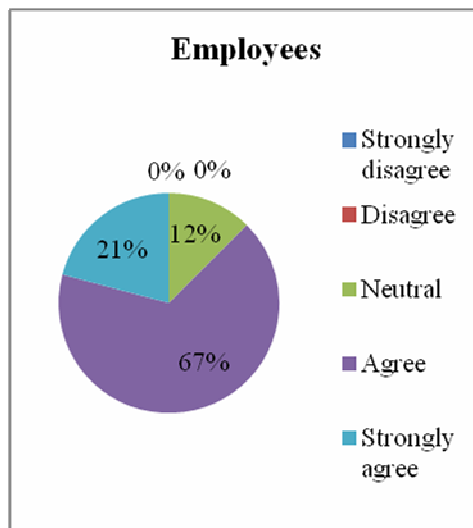


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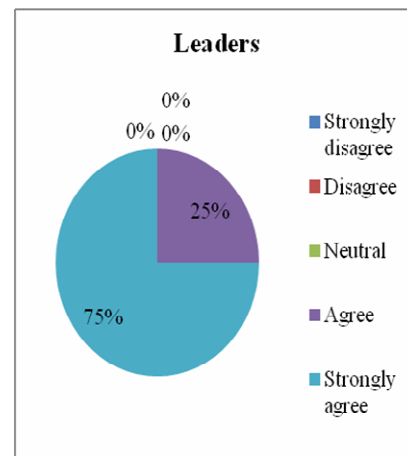


Fig. 9.2.

The employees of Continental feel respected by the leaders and this is the reason why there was no employee to disagree the question.

The leaders of Continental are focused on making the employees feel appreciated and respected. A percent of 25 agreed and a percent of 75 strongly agreed the question.

Question nr. 10

Employee	Does your manager intervene in workplace conflicts?
Leader	Do you intervene in workplace conflicts?

A conflict appears whenever exist disaccord between two or more persons. A conflict may have even positive effects (when it comes to benefic effects for work, relation, building a big step to development), and also negative effects (when it deteriorate the interpersonal and group relations, darkening the process and development). A leader must adopt an assertive attitude. An assertive person, has self-confidence, thinks positive, earns the respect of others, know how to negotiate for solving a conflict. A leader must know how to manage a conflict and to brave openly any conflict.

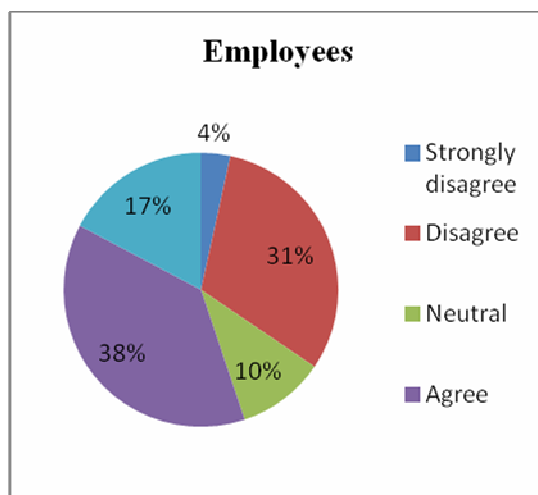


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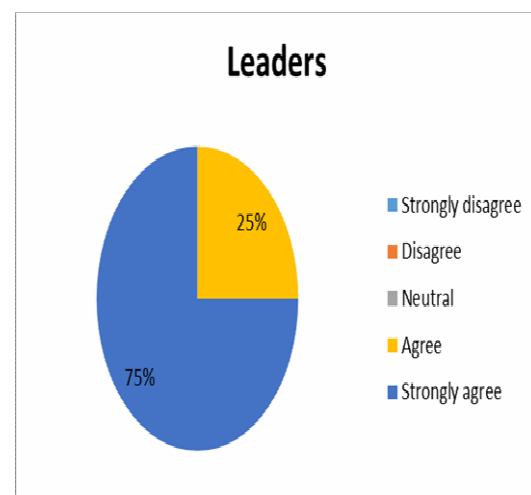


Fig. 10.2.

In the IT department, we observed that the leader's opinion coincides in majority percentage with the opinion of their employees regarding the conflicts defusing from organization.

## **CONCLUSION**

After the interpretation based on the questionnaire distributed to the leaders and employees in IT department from Continental Automotive Timisoara, we obtained a general view over existence of the leadership components and what are the main characteristics of the Continental Automotive Timisoara leaders.

The leaders are involved in employees development and this generated a high level of motivation and loyalty within the personnel. The communication between the leaders and employees is important in this company and they build a relationship based on trust. This highlights the good relation between the leader and his employees and shows us the great level of communication and the relations between them. (Q2; Q3; Q7; Q8; Q10). The leaders help the employees understanding the tasks, offers them a pleasant atmosphere at work and give them a fair feedback and with this they can help their employees to change their perception which they have about the organization. (Q1; Q4; Q5; Q9). The organization offer good opportunities of development of the professional career and leaders help their employees to improve their professional performances. (Q6).

Within this research we discover some qualities that characterized the leaders at Continental Automotive Timisoara. These qualities are: trustworthiness, commitment to excellence, being careful in encouraging and supporting the professional development of the employees.

The Continental Automotive Timisoara leader is a positive model for his team and he shares the passion for achieving the goals with his group members.

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