

COMPETENCE DIMENSIONS OF MANAGER – CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

The paper includes the discussion of the key managerial skills, as shown by the classics of organization sciences and contemporary development processes. There is no doubt that modern and effective manager must improve his skills. As already classics pointed out, the importance of these skills varies depending on the level of management. The role of technical skills is particularly important at the lowest level of management, and conceptual skills at the highest one. However, managers at all levels of management must possess strong interpersonal skills, without which human resources cannot be effectively managed

KEY WORDS:

management-organization -competences-manager-challenges

INTRODUCTION

Managerial skills are associated with skills related to professional and social activity. The former are combined with skills that are required of managers at various levels of management and their continuous development and improvement. The latter, social skills of the manager, are associated with the search and selection of people, especially for managerial positions, as well as with the shaping of human relationships.

The importance of manager's innate abilities and leadership skills have already been noticed by classics of organization sciences. Thus, Frederick W. Taylor separated the management skills of technical competences. He noted that with increasing levels of management in the organization the importance of management skills increases, as well. And since studies of

Henri Fayol efficient and effective management skills of managers are systematically analyzed and evaluated, which led to the creation of various typologies. One of the earlier typology of management skills (managerial) is classified by Robert L. Katz (1974). He distinguished the technical, social and conceptual managerial skills.

The role and importance of selected groups of managerial skills vary depending on the hierarchical level of management. This is the thesis of this paper. And so technical skills are required in solving specific operational tasks or to train employees and requires them to first-line managers (technical management level). Social skills (interpersonal skills) are important in shaping the appropriate relationship of manager with subordinates, customers, partners and other institutions. These skills, in particular, are required for middle level managers at the organizational level of management. At the highest hierarchical level of management (strategic), in turn, conceptual skills of manager play the most important role, since they are essential in planning, organizing activities, motivate employees and creative problem solving or in long-term, as well as in establishing and maintaining a variety of relationships with the environment - or society.

MANAGERIAL SKILLS

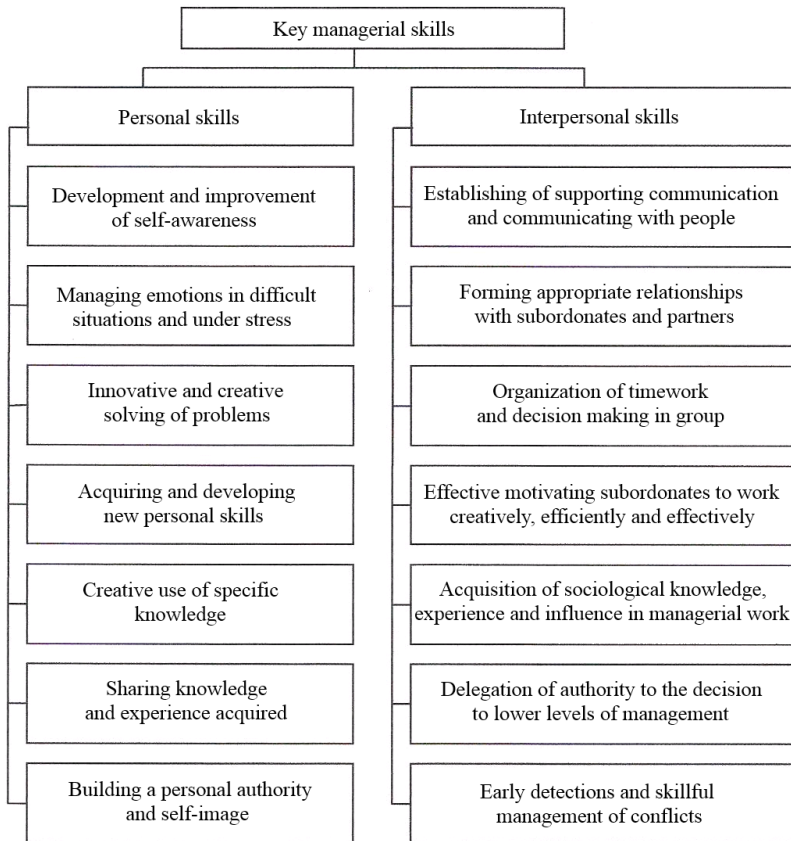
The list of managerial skills is open since the new phenomenons and processes, like globalization, make new dimensions visible. We have distinguished and synthetically described fourteen key managerial skills (see Figure 1). This proposal is an extension of a well known study by D. Whetten and K. Cameron (2002), which is recognized as one of the most innovative. They have singled out nine key management skills, grouping them into two categories: personal skills (improving self-awareness, managing stress, creative problem solving) and interpersonal skills (establishing communication in support of acquiring the knowledge and influence, conflict management, effective delegation, motivating others, group decision making).

Isolating and development of personal managerial skills needs a deeper understanding of their own emotions and behaviour, and thus self-knowledge. Those skills manifest themselves in direct contact with employees, customers and other partners of the organization. For the management of personal skills we may include:

- development and improvement of self-awareness,

- managing emotions in difficult situations and under stress,
- innovative and creative solving of problems,
- acquiring and developing new personal skills,
- creative use of specific knowledge,
- sharing knowledge and experience acquired,
- building a personal authority and self-image.

Figure 1. Key managerial skills



Distinction and, in turn, development of managerial interpersonal skills are necessary, because they allow manager to establish and maintain appropriate relationships and to organize cooperation and collaboration with employees, other members of the organization and its customers, contractors and other partners and institutions, which facilitates and streamlines of own tasks. As the interpersonal skills of manager should be considered:

- establishing of supporting communication and communicating with people,
- forming of appropriate relationships with subordinates and partners,
- organization of teamwork and decision making in group,
- effective motivating subordinates to work creatively, efficiently and effectively,
- acquisition of sociological knowledge, experience and influence in managerial work,
- delegation of authority to the decision to lower levels of management,
- early detections and skilful management of conflicts.

Development and improvement of self-awareness - classified as manager personal skills - requires mainly the identification, in-depth analysis and assessment of their personal strengths and weaknesses, as well as conscious consideration of their potential for managerial work. Managing emotions in difficult situations and under stress associated with the skills to reduce tension and emotional coping make the way to improve self-awareness. Innovative and creative solving of problems combine analytical and rational thinking with a creative one, to be effective in an innovative way to solve problems arising in the management process. Acquiring and developing new personal skills requires skill acquisition, completion and assembly of the new development of specialized skills, especially personal managerial skills, promoting innovation, improving processes, creating new opportunities and development of certain habits, which are necessary to the acceptable fulfilment of duties in the work of manager.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Depending on the needs, every manager should have knowledge of facts arising from the activities of the organization, and should know what

knowledge will help to build a competitive advantage to his organization for current or future markets.

Creative use of specific knowledge requires that the manager has not only a keen interest in all the news and creatively benefits of that knowledge and expertise. He should also benefit from the intellectual resources of both individual employees and teams of employees in profit-making organization. Sharing knowledge and experience requires the manager transfers the expertise and experience to his subordinates, especially to lower-level managers, creates real opportunities for creative work of subordinates, as well as encourages them to self-study and become familiar with the broader new solutions for issues related to The workplace. As The result the skills of individual employees and work teams are converted into stocks of knowledge, serving the entire organization, increases the subordinates' experience and promote the implementation of the management practices of any innovation.

Building a personal authority and self-image are important personal skills for each manager that affects significantly the effectiveness of management. Manager should have - in addition to the formal authority that gives him the right to order (command), but not always forcing obedience - the personal authority. He implements it by expanding and improving knowledge and managerial skills, tactful conduct, truthfulness, justice, honesty, kindness, manners and other positive personal characteristics, as well as by the use of management methods and techniques, and the manifestation of management style adequate to the circumstances and conditions of management. These qualities and actions, gaining of work experience (professional) and developing leadership skills, as well as use of social influence are also conducive to creating a positive self-image of manager.

Efficient management is an art of clear and concise formulation of goals and skillful communicating with people. In the group of interpersonal skills, it is important to establish a communication and support effective communication with people, requiring the manager's ability to organize an efficient system to communicate with others quickly and effectively receiving and imparting information to employees and partners of the organizations, their understanding and influencing their behaviour, listening carefully to others, to formulate a concise and logical presentation of thoughts and issues to be resolved. A professional manager wants to fulfil effectively the functions of management and to carry out tasks that should try to achieve communication constructive within organization. Forming

of appropriate relationships with subordinates and partners, organization of teamwork and group decision-making requires from manager to establish transparent rules for forming professional relationships with subordinates and relations with partners of the organization. This also includes the ability to organize and conduct meetings, public presentation of the problems, their solutions, ideas, etc. Manager implements majority of the objectives and tasks, not by his personal performance, but through other people, subordinates. So one of the essential skills that are required from a contemporary manager is the ability to effectively motivate and encourage subordinates to creative, efficient and effective work, using appropriately chosen set of motivation tools. Manager must have such an influence over subordinates, that they behaved in accordance with his expectations to achieve objectives and tasks of the organization. Acquisition of sociological knowledge, experience and influence in managerial work requires the ability to verify the expertise gained in practical activity, the consolidation of skills and habits useful in managerial work, the acquisition of social influence and authority of others in order to enhance management performance.

Ability to effectively delegate decision rights to lower levels of management requires the ability to identify management problems and to determine what tasks, when and to whom to allocate them, you can delegate authority, competence and responsibility which will be appropriate to the tasks assigned in order to apply efficient and effective management. Employees of organizations have different wishes, needs and expectations, and therefore represent different attitudes toward the organization, which may be contrary to its purpose and carry it towards many conflict situations. No doubt, some of them are unavoidable and can significantly reduce the effectiveness of activities, if in due time cannot be identified, their causes identified and resolved. Therefore, an important skill of manager is to detect, resolve and eliminate conflict.

Professional model of a contemporary manager as presented above, provides key personal and interpersonal management skills that can be learned during training by developing new attitudes and behaviours. The importance of knowledge and team management skills to the efficiency and effectiveness of management is increasing steadily. This is due to the intensification of the processes of globalization as well as increasing complexity of technological processes as well as economic, social, environmental and cultural development in contemporary organizations. Furthermore

the emerging of information society brings about new challenges due to improving the competitiveness of the economy and society, where knowledge and intellectual resources of individuals and teams of human workers are most significant.

AN EFFECTIVE MANAGER

Each manager should have conceptual thinking skills allowing to see the relationship between various elements of the system, as well as forward-thinking to embrace the whole space of management issues. He should also have an ability to summarize the information on both the strategic and operational sense, combining analytical skills with his own intuition and experience as well as balancing private interests and the common good.

An important skill of manager in the context of globalization is the ability to operate in a multicultural environment. It comes due to multicultural shape of modern economy. Contemporary processes arising from increasing freedom of human and capital outplacement make the manager to be open for multicultural values. It might be a conflict between the standardized requirements and human rights coming of the given culture and tradition. The role of the manager is to avoid this kind of a conflict, if any. Globalization of management creates necessity to think in terms of intercultural and taking into account the fact that other cultural values may not necessarily be the same, in which he is educated. Manager's job requires continuous improvement of his knowledge and expertise, to acquire and develop new management skills. Thus the manager must constantly be ready to accept new ideas, technology, design, good business practices and cultural values, he must seek opportunities for permanent learning. The duty of managers is to establish standards required by the values and behaviours. Hence it is necessary to the continuous improvement associated with in-depth knowledge of the institution and its area of operation, striving to make the supreme sacrifice in the work and its effectiveness, the responsibility for their actions and the work of subordinates, sensitivity to human affairs, human relations and intercultural problems, tolerance of different cultures and encourage and support the development of colleagues and subordinates. From the manager, as underlines P.F. Drucker (1994), it is expected to be above all that will do what needs to be. And it simply means that we expect from him performance in action.

Centre for Creative Leadership in the U.S. formulated a set of characteristics (abilities), of an effective manager, basing on two decades experience in cooperation with thousands of executives representing various organizations. They are as follows:

- increased awareness of his potential, a comprehensive knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses, how they are perceived by others and how to interact with others;
- encouraging others to provide feedback, which results in self-knowledge, helpful when revising activities;
- the desire to gain knowledge, which allows to change own perspective of looking and dealing, stimulates creativity and allows to think about things in a different way;
- work-life integration, leadership and life are closely linked very strongly;
- requirements of families and local communities should be integrated with the requirements of the job, the manager - the leader must ensure that he feels confident at all these areas, and correlate them with each other;
- respect for difference of other people to operate effectively in an environment manager - leader must be aware of and sensitive to existing differences between people and situations, sensitivity to differences in language, in customs, habits and culture and value systems espoused by other people.

Manager's job is characterized by many attributes, including that it is "very interesting, attractive financial terms, provide social position, allows the realization of his own ambition, can take the challenges, is creative, it allows for great freedom of action, releases creativity. On the other hand, however, the manager's job is extremely stressful, requires good health, assertiveness and resilience.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

The leadership skills consist, between others, of technical, interpersonal and conceptual skills.

Technical skills are necessary to perform work (profession) or to understand how a particular work is done within the institution. Engineers, designers, technologists, accountants and other professionals have the technical skills necessary to perform the relevant work and occupations.

They come to the basic technical skills, finishing in the way of relevant higher education. Then, they gain experience in real situations at work, perfecting their skills until they become truly effective managers, technologists, specialists in accounting, etc. according to their qualifications. Similarly, for example, top-level manager responsible for marketing management in a large organization is likely to begin a job as a sales manager. So that technical skills are required to understand or deal with specific tasks (work).

Manager's interpersonal skills are the skills of cooperation and interaction with people and influencing them. Managers spend much time in meetings and conversations with people, both within the organization and beyond. For these reasons, the manager must have the capacity to contact and communicate with individuals and employee teams, understanding them and effectively motivate. As a manager, promoted at work, he must be able to work effectively with subordinates and other managers, as well as persons on the higher levels of management of the institution. Due to the multiplicity and diversity of roles that managers must play, they should be able to work with suppliers, cooperatives, investors, customers and other partners outside the organization. Thus, an interpersonal skill is the ability to organize effective communication - networking and collaboration, understanding the needs and motivate such individuals and work teams for creative, efficient and effective work.

Conceptual skills involve the manager's ability to analyze and solve problems, anticipate future events and make informed decisions. Managers should have a specific intellectual potential, which allows them to perceive the complexity of the functioning of institutions and the volatility of the elements of its environment, to understand how the individual, the organization of the various components work together to combine into one solid, functional integrity and recognize it in a comprehensive manner. Such an approach allows to think and act strategically, in a large scale and longer time horizons and take decisions for the organization as a whole. Thus, conceptual skills are the skills associated with the imagination and the ability for abstract thinking.

FINAL REMARKS AND CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to develop a universal silhouette (model) of an effective manager, even some authors do their best to shape simplified model. Ki-

nicki and Kreitner (2011), for example, state that manager's success is simply: potential x motivation x possibilities.

The potential is a general and specialized knowledge, managerial skills and experience. Managers must be sufficiently motivated to develop their careers, expand their knowledge and skills, gaining experience. For smooth functioning and success in business it is also necessary to have certain capabilities, i.e. a specific position, an open career path, qualified personnel and adequate technical facilities and information, and sometimes research facilities.

Finally, as it was shown, hierarchical level of management requires selecting the managerial skills and adjusting them to specific requirements.

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