

Artículo de investigación

Project management in Russian book trade: barriers and development prospects

La gestión de proyectos en el comercio de libros en Rusia: barreras y perspectivas de desarrollo
Gerenciamento de projetos no comércio de livros na Rússia: barreiras e perspectivas de desenvolvimento

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Written by:

Natalia V. Medvedeva (Corresponding Author)¹⁸⁶

Ekaterina A. Vetrova¹⁸⁷

Tatiana A. Evstratova¹⁸⁸

Elena E. Kabanova¹⁸⁹

Valeria N. Lapun¹⁹⁰

Abstract

The development of book-selling industry is one of the sources for new economy development - knowledge economy. However, in modern Russian conditions of high crisis uncertainty, the book industry experiences serious difficulties, and the Russian book-selling network is declining every year. One of the anti-crisis measures for book-selling companies is the finding of some ways to improve project management at an enterprise. The purpose of the article is to identify the key barriers to the implementation of project management at the enterprises of the book-selling industry in Russia, as well as to determine the prospects of a project management system development in this area. The empirical base consists of study results conducted in 2018 at the enterprises of the Russian modern general-purpose bookstores of the book-selling industry. On the basis of the conducted research, they identified the main problems that Russian book-selling enterprises face when they implement project management: an insufficient formalization of project management processes; the uncertainty of project manager status caused by the lack of real powers; the lack of participant motivation system in project activities based on the results of an employee performance evaluation; low level of communication management and the lack of a clear interaction interface between various functional units and

Resumen

El desarrollo de la industria de la venta de libros es una de las fuentes para el desarrollo de nuevas economías: la economía del conocimiento. Sin embargo, en las condiciones modernas rusas de alta incertidumbre de crisis, la industria del libro experimenta serias dificultades, y la red rusa de venta de libros disminuye cada año. Una de las medidas contra la crisis para las empresas vendedoras de libros es encontrar algunas formas de mejorar la gestión de proyectos en una empresa. El propósito del artículo es identificar las barreras clave para la implementación de la gestión de proyectos en las empresas de la industria de venta de libros en Rusia, así como determinar las perspectivas de desarrollo de un sistema de gestión de proyectos en esta área. La base empírica consiste en resultados de estudios realizados en 2018 en las empresas de las modernas librerías de propósito general rusas de la industria de la venta de libros.

Sobre la base de la investigación realizada, identificaron los principales problemas que enfrentan las empresas rusas de venta de libros cuando implementan la gestión de proyectos: una formalización insuficiente de los procesos de gestión de proyectos; la incertidumbre del estatus de gerente de proyecto causada por la falta de poderes reales; la falta de un sistema de motivación de los participantes en las actividades del proyecto basado en los resultados de la

¹⁸⁶ Russian State Social University, 12922, Moscow, Wilhelm Pieck str., 4, p. 1. associate professor of the department of management and administrative management, associate professor, candidate of sociological sciences; Email: nmedvedeva1984@mail.ru

¹⁸⁷ Russian State Social University, 12922, Moscow, Wilhelm Pieck str., 4, p. 1. associate professor of the department of management and administrative management, associate professor, candidate of Economic Sciences; Email: eavetrova@ya.ru

¹⁸⁸ Russian State Social University, 12922, Moscow, Wilhelm Pieck str., 4, p. 1. associate professor of the department of management and administrative management, associate professor, candidate of sociological sciences; Email: doroshenkot@yandex.ru

¹⁸⁹ Russian State Social University, 12922, Moscow, Wilhelm Pieck str., 4, p. 1. associate professor of the department of management and administrative management, associate professor, candidate of sociological sciences; Email: cool90@list.ru

¹⁹⁰ Russian State Social University, 12922, Moscow, Wilhelm Pieck str., 4, p. 1. Student; Email: Lapun.v@yandex.ru

groups, etc. To minimize the likelihood of identified problems during project implementation, a special attention should be paid to the organization of a formalized management system (the creation of project offices), taking into account the interests of all project participants, clearly define the organizational structure and align management procedures, and use recognized methodology - project management standards that will facilitate the formation of a team focused on a particular result.

Keywords: project management, book business, book industry, project activity, project management system, project office.

evaluación del desempeño de un empleado; bajo nivel de gestión de la comunicación y la falta de una interfaz de interacción clara entre varias unidades funcionales y grupos, etc. Para minimizar la probabilidad de problemas identificados durante la implementación del proyecto, se debe prestar especial atención a la organización de un sistema de gestión formalizado (la creación de las oficinas de proyectos), teniendo en cuenta los intereses de todos los participantes del proyecto, definen claramente la estructura organizativa y alinean los procedimientos de gestión, y utilizan una metodología reconocida: normas de gestión de proyectos que facilitarán la formación de un equipo centrado en un resultado particular.

Palabras claves: gestión de proyectos, negocio de libros, industria del libro, actividad de proyectos, sistema de gestión de proyectos, oficina de proyectos

Resumo

O desenvolvimento da indústria de livros vendidos é uma das fontes para o desenvolvimento da nova economia - a economia do conhecimento. No entanto, nas condições russas modernas de alta incerteza de crise, a indústria de livros experimenta sérias dificuldades, e a rede russa de venda de livros está declinando a cada ano. Uma das medidas anti-crise para as empresas de venda de livros é a descoberta de algumas maneiras de melhorar o gerenciamento de projetos em uma empresa. O objetivo do artigo é identificar as principais barreiras para a implementação do gerenciamento de projetos nas empresas da indústria de vendas de livros na Rússia, bem como determinar as perspectivas de desenvolvimento de um sistema de gerenciamento de projetos nessa área. A base empírica consiste nos resultados do estudo realizado em 2018 nas empresas das modernas livrarias russas de uso geral da indústria de venda de livros.

Com base na pesquisa realizada, eles identificaram os principais problemas que as empresas russas de venda de livros enfrentam quando implementam o gerenciamento de projetos: uma formalização insuficiente dos processos de gerenciamento de projetos; a incerteza do status do gerente de projetos causada pela falta de poderes reais; a falta de sistema de motivação dos participantes nas atividades do projeto com base nos resultados de uma avaliação de desempenho do funcionário; baixo nível de gerenciamento de comunicação e falta de uma interface de interação clara entre várias unidades funcionais e grupos, etc. Para minimizar a probabilidade de problemas identificados durante a implementação do projeto, uma atenção especial deve ser dada à organização de um sistema de gestão formalizado (a criação dos escritórios do projeto), levando em conta os interesses de todos os participantes do projeto, definir claramente a estrutura organizacional e alinhar procedimentos de gestão, e usar metodologia reconhecida - padrões de gerenciamento de projetos que facilitarão a formação de uma equipe focada em um resultado particular.

Palavras-chave: gerenciamento de projetos, negócios de livros, indústria de livros, atividade de projeto, sistema de gerenciamento de projetos, escritório de projetos.

Introduction

In modern Russia, the level of crisis uncertainty with its many risks and threats reaches a high value. The country faced serious economic challenges once again: an unstable ruble exchange rate, a significant reduction of investment, the decline of consumer real incomes and an increasing number of bankruptcies among companies.

Publishing is one of the most important sources to raise the intellectual culture of society and shape the infrastructure for the development of a new economy, according to the level and the development quality of which one can judge the degree of the country readiness to accept new trends (Roy O.M., 2014). However, the crisis affected the book industry as well: negative

dynamics emerged in it even before 2014, and with the onset of the crisis, the sale volumes declined even more. Besides, the risk of bankruptcy has increased: for example, from 2008 to 2017 Russian book-selling network decreased approximately from 3 thousand to 1.5 thousand retail stores (Russian book market). In such conditions, an important task for enterprises, including booksellers, is the ability to minimize costs and risks, and increase their competitiveness in the market. This can be done, among other things, by improving the management of the performed project activities: competent project management can reduce the company project management costs, increase the efficiency of work and meet project deadlines, reduce risks and minimize the costs beyond the approved budget. Thus, one of the anti-crisis measures in book trade companies is to find some ways to improve project management at an enterprise.

The implementation of projects on new store opening requires significant time, labor and financial costs, and therefore the issue of project activity management efficiency improvement and bringing the project management to a new organization level becomes especially important for booksellers. In the context of market globalization, the organizations focused on their competitiveness increase pay a special attention to project management (Rodney et al, 2015).

Management, intellectual competence (Androniceanua, 2014), management support (Miklosika, 2015), the reliance on digital technologies (Whyte et al., 2016) are the crucial success factors in the process of Project Management introduction and implementation.

Currently, new project management principles, methods and technologies are being developed (Tahri & Drissi-Kaitouni, 2015). A special attention is paid to the project management of unexpected events (Usher & Whitty, 2017), to the analysis of corrupt project contexts (Locatelli et al., 2017). The application of project management methods and tools allows to achieve required results and also saves money, time, material resources, reduces risk, increases the reliability of successful project implementation (Serra & Kunc, 2015, Marmier et al, 2013). Thus, practice shows that the use of project management methods usually helps to save up to 10% of capital investments and reduce the project duration by about 20% (Company PM Expert).

The targets of strategic development of Russia determine the need for an intensive development of innovation and, thus, the modernization of the management approach, the use of international project management experience, most adapted to the market economy challenges. At present, the tendency of transition to project-oriented management in domestic practice is becoming more and more obvious (Matraeva & Vasiutina, 2018). This management shifts the focus of attention from individual parameters of single projects to a comprehensive consideration of all project characteristics and the project perception as an element of an interconnected program of projects. In this regard, the further development and the improvement of project management technology are relevant to the management theory and practice.

The management issues of book enterprises are not widely studied in the works of Russian researchers. Mostly they are described in the works of such authors as A.N. Pavlov, N.V. Averina, M.S. Tolkacheva and others, who, as a rule, pay attention to certain aspects of a book-selling enterprise management: inventory management, financial management, marketing policy management, etc. At the same time, there is a lack of scientific papers considering the issues of project management concerning book-selling firms. Due to the fact that book distribution activities occupy an important place in the market and, moreover, it has a special social significance for the development of Russian citizen cultural level, and the toughening of competition in this area necessitates an intensive development of company innovative activities, the project management study at the Russian book-selling enterprises is regarded as necessary.

The purpose of the article is to identify the key barriers of project management implementation at the enterprises of the book-selling industry in Russia, as well as to determine the prospects of project management system development in this area.

Methods

The empirical base consists of study results conducted in 2018 at the federal network enterprises of modern general-purpose bookstores of the Russian book-selling industry. The company has been operating in the book-selling market for over 25 years and currently includes over 425 bookstores of various formats in Moscow and the regions. The sample included 116 experts (the employees of the company

directly involved in project activities). The subject of the survey “Barriers and prospects of project management introduction at book-selling enterprises”. The purpose of the study was to identify the state of the project management system at book-selling enterprises, as well as the key barriers to the active introduction of this system. Using the content analysis, they determined the shortcomings of the project management system at book-selling enterprise. In the course of the study, they used both general theoretical methods (analysis and synthesis, comparison, synthesis, theoretical modeling) and empirical methods (analysis of documents).

Main part

- Role and importance of project management among booksellers. Project management methodology has long been widely used in Europe and the United States, in all areas of focused and project-oriented activities. According to the International Project Management Association (IPMA), the use of modern project management methodology and tools makes it possible to save 20–30% of time and almost 15–20% of money spent on projects and programs. However, project management technologies in Russia have not found yet such a widespread use, and most companies, including the book-selling industry, are just starting to think about the implementation of project management in their activities.

Regarding the details of project management in the framework of book-selling enterprises, it should be noted that project management is currently used mainly by large firms - industry leaders. The use of project management by small retail stores is not widespread (Kochkina, 2017). Project management has ample opportunities for use in various aspects of bookselling business. Large book-selling companies start to apply project management in the following areas of their activity: creation, increase and modernization of warehouses, stores, branches, equipment and software; the use of reengineering systems in order to re-plan the book-selling enterprise management systems, improve the quality of the services, reduce costs, increase the speed of customer service, improve the inventory management of books, etc. (Tolkacheva, 2015).

All project participants gain significant benefits from the use of project management. The owners and the managers of book-selling enterprises seek to increase the company competitiveness, receive additional profits and improved manageability. Therefore, project management is

an effective and a convenient tool to solve many tasks of a book-selling enterprise, and now more and more book-selling enterprises realize the benefits that a project approach can bring.

Despite this, the application of the project approach at book-selling enterprises is not always effective in current Russian conditions. This is largely due to the differentiation of organizations in terms of maturity and the degree of readiness to implement project management standards.

Research Results

The assessment of the studied Company maturity level was carried out according to the areas of knowledge described in ANSI PMI PMBOK project management standard. The structural and the functional analysis of the considered Company revealed that from the point of view of project management, the organizational structure of the Company can be characterized as a weak matrix structure. Despite the fact that project managers are formally responsible for the execution of projects on time, within budget and with proper quality, they are not allocated to a separate department (which is typical of strong matrix structures), and the actual functions of the project manager correspond more closely to the coordinator's functions than to the manager's. This is due both to the lack of real levers of influence among project managers within the Company, and to the lack of practice of singling out specific performers to the project team. The interaction between the employees of the Company divisions during the implementation of projects is carried out through functional managers. All requests for the implementation of project works are sent from the Project Manager directly to the head of the functional unit, who independently determines the sequence of the requested tasks and assigns a specific task performer. The communication plan is not developed in the projects. The need for communication is determined by the fact of problems and depends on the specific situation during the project. The Company uses the local versions of MS Project as project management software. Information is entered into the system locally by each Project Manager. In this regard, the Company has data integration difficulty from various projects. The system maintains scheduling, however, the accounting for resources and labor costs and the tracking of the project budget execution is not performed in MS Project. Not all employees of the Company are trained to work with MS Project.

The expert assessment of the Company maturity level, carried out in the areas of knowledge described by ANSI PMI PMBOK project management standard, indicates that the project management knowledge areas are developed to

different degrees in the Company. The most developed areas are time management, quality management and supply management, the least developed ones are human resource management and communications management (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. The maturity level of project management processes in the Company

In order to identify the level of project management development at the enterprises of the book-selling industry, they conducted the survey of employees of 10 book-selling network enterprises directly involved in the project activity (the sample consisted of 116 people).

The conducted questionnaire revealed the opinion of the Company employees on the state of project management in the Company, as well as their expectations and concerns about future changes.

The opinion of the staff regarding the general state of the project management system in the Company is the following one: more than half of the respondents (52%) consider the state of the project management in the Company as satisfactory; 28% of employees rate it as "good"; 18% of respondents consider it unsatisfactory. And only 2% believe that the Company project management is organized perfectly. (fig.2).

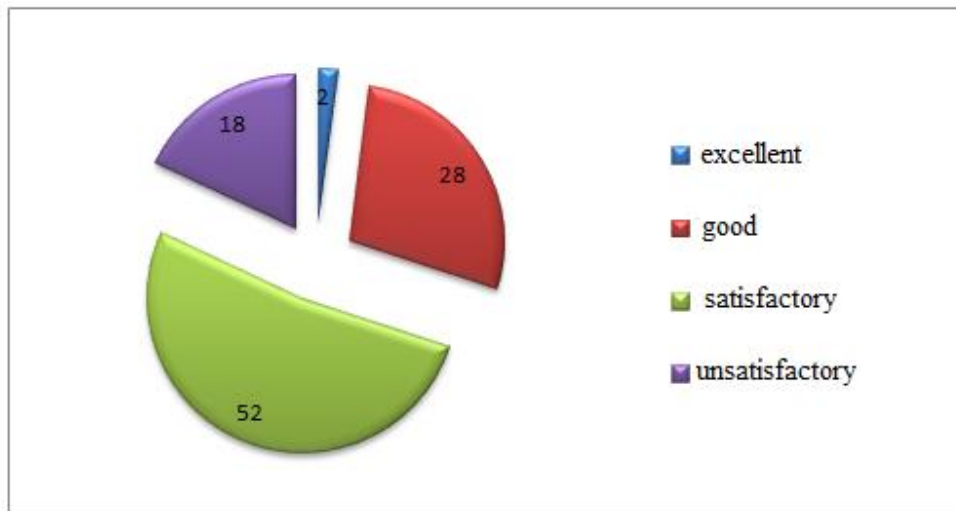


Fig. 2. The opinion of employees about the state Project Management System in the Company

The results indicate that employees cope with the project activities in general, see it as relatively comfortable, but realize that it has several disadvantages.

The processing of survey participant written responses was carried out using content analysis and allowed us to identify eight most frequent employee complaints: the authority and the

responsibility are not clearly distributed in the company (88.6%), the reporting system is not sufficiently effective (77.1%), the company does not apply uniform project management standards (71.4%), there is no single project team (54.3%), there is poor interaction between company departments and the project working group (45.7%), etc. (Fig. 3).

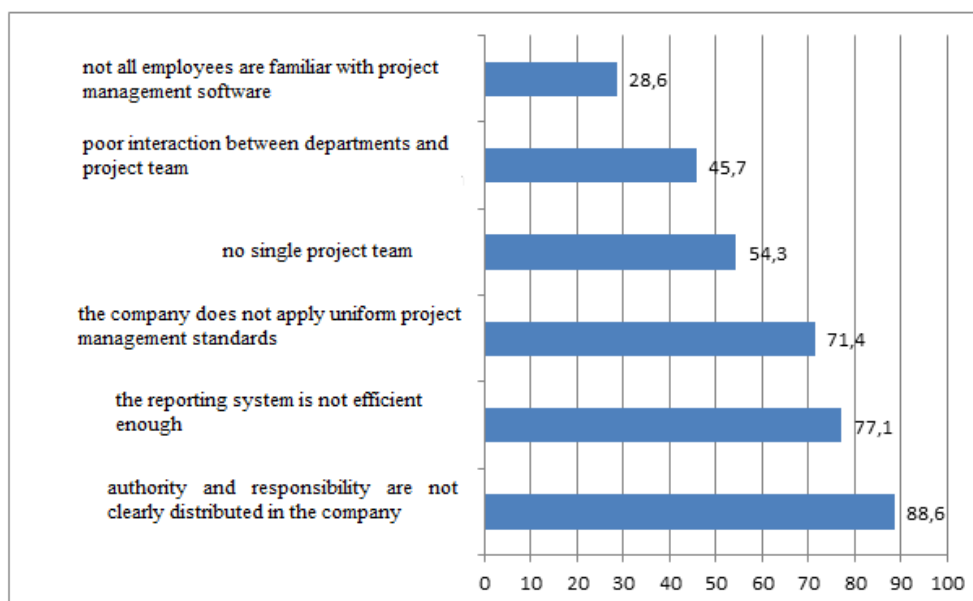


Figure 3. Disadvantages of the project management system, noted by the Company employees

The obtained data suggests that employees are aware of the lack of clarity, methodological uniformity, project activity regulation and training to work with project management

software in the Company. However, employees have some concerns speaking about the changes that may be made to the project management system in the Company (Fig. 4).

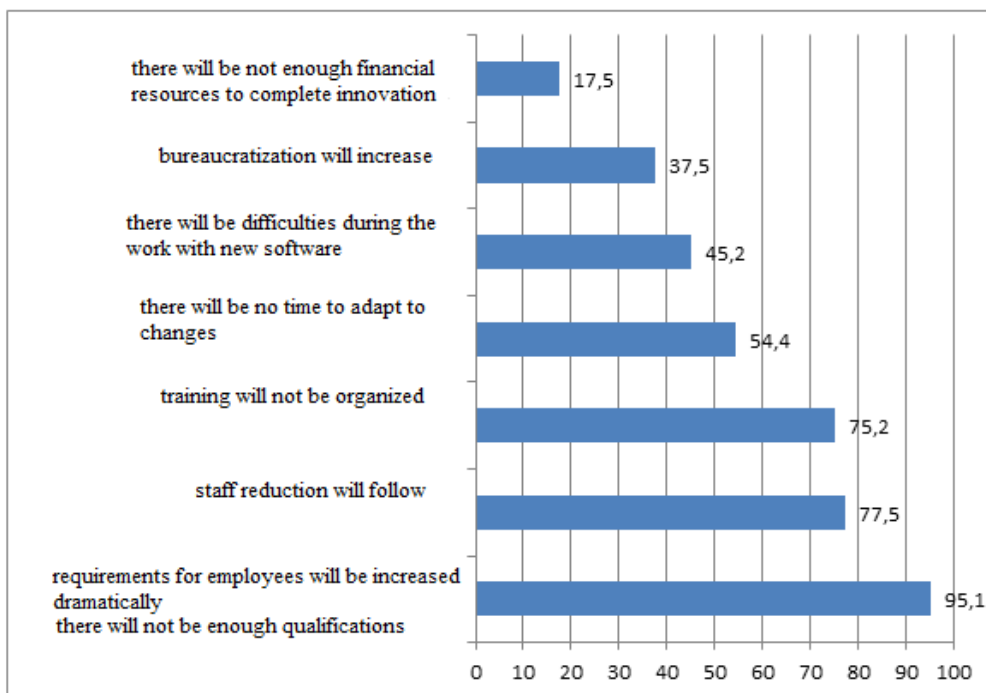


Figure 4. The risks of change introduction in the project management system, according to Company employees

The main risks that may arise from the introduction of changes in the project management system are associated by employees with a sharp increase of requirements for employees, which may cause a further reduction of staff in the organization. The lack of qualifications and the lack of possible training also act as the main concerns of the respondents. Besides, the lack of the necessary time to adapt to changes and possible difficulties that may arise during the work with new software, cause concern to the Company employees.

The survey of the Company employees showed that the direct participants of the project activity noted a number of shortcomings in the project management system, but at the same time they had concerns about the introduction of changes to the project management system in the Company.

Discussion

Based on the study, it was revealed that the level of the Company maturity in the project management system is initial one. The company is at the first level of project management maturity, when the organization management is

familiar with the basic concepts of project management at the level of common sense, and is aware of project management importance in the organization. The Company as a whole lacks uniform standards and principles of project management, the main project management processes are not formalized and function on an informal level. Project documentation is not standardized and takes into account only certain aspects of project management. The systems of indicators are informal. These theses are confirmed by the results of the Company employee questionnaire survey, who rated the overall state of the project management system in the Company as satisfactory (52% of respondents), and noted "the instability of various kinds of reports receipt", "the lack of stable uniform standards", etc.

The Company was successful in such areas of knowledge as time management, quality management and supply management. However, at the same time, personnel management and communication management are the least developed areas in the Company. This is due to the fact that many project management processes are not defined. In particular, there is no procedure for making changes to projects and

redefining project priorities; There are almost no processes for recruitment, a project team development, and a project team management.

Also, one of the limiting factors for the development of a project management system is the uncertainty of project manager status caused by the insufficient amount of project manager real authority, who is formally responsible for the project (in accordance with the job description), but cannot affect either the quality of work or the deadlines. He has no opportunities for staff motivation and the optimization of human resource use. Thus, the reduction of a project manager influence on project management processes leads to the reduction of responsibility concerning the project results.

The lack of a motivation system for project participants based on the results of an employee performance evaluation is also the barrier to the development and the enhancement of such a direction as personnel management within project management.

Besides, communications management is at a low level, since there is a poor interaction among all project activity participants. The performers are not directly involved in important project management processes (project planning and decision-making), there is no clearly defined interaction interface (with feedback) between different functional units and groups.

The creation of synergies between different business units, between business and projects, and between different projects is a stumbling block for many organizations (Matthey, 2005). The lack of a clear distribution of powers and responsibilities was noted in the employee survey as the main problem of the project management system. This was stated by 88.5% of the Company employees. To optimize such an aspect of project management as the management of communications in an organization, it is necessary to regulate the creation of a matrix distributing the responsibility for each project; to develop a template and regulate the frequency of project status report distribution to all interested parties; to ensure the receipt of information on the progress of the project created by the Project Office from various sources - from Project Managers, from Contractors - the employees of the Company, from contractor companies; to determine the interaction processes (deadlines and the list of documentation) with the functional units directly involved in the project and supporting the project activity (financial

department, accounting department, administrative and economic department).

Separately, it is worth noting that there are some concerns among the Company employees regarding the introduction of changes to the project management system. Despite the fact that they evaluate the project management system as satisfactory concerning the organization and are aware of the numerous difficulties in this area, most employees are not ready for active changes. As a rule, their main concerns are related to the possible lack of qualifications and, accordingly, their inability to meet new qualification requirements. Perhaps these concerns are related to the fact that not all company employees are trained to work with project management software, thus, not everyone takes an active part in the project management system. One of the key risks for the company employees is also the fear of being dismissed due to downsizing and the fear that training will not be organized. Rather high risks of this kind indicate that the Company does not pay enough attention to the issues of staff motivation and development. Therefore, a special place should be given to the aspects of personnel management in the organization development strategy. International management certification for Project Management Professional (PMP) projects must be included in professional development planning for project managers. The PMP certificate is one of the most recognized professional certificates in the field of project management. His title ensures that his owner has extensive knowledge of project management and has at least 3 years of successful experience in project management, and also complies with the Code of Professional Ethics (Mirzamasoumzade & Mollasadeghi, 2013; Yazdekhashti et al, 2015).

Thus, the further development of the Company requires the use of a modern, efficient project management model, which is constantly being improved and allows to obtain market advantages by optimizing the use and the redistribution of internal and external resources, as well as the availability of sufficient and reliable information to make management decisions in the course of project activities. In this regard, there is a need to pay more attention to the human factor in the project management process in order to achieve the best results (Rumesera & Emsleyb, 2016), and the partnership approach allows you to create new opportunities for social development (Frolova et al, 2018; Laureano et al, 2018).

In order to pass the implementation of project management changes with minimal risk, it is

necessary to create a project office in the Company, which is a structural unit whose main goal is to plan, monitor and manage each program and project simultaneously with everyone else in such a way as to ensure their effective fulfillment and the achievement of an established goal (Pavlov, 2017; Kurbanov et al., 2017). The modern concept of project management makes project management office one of the main places that coordinates the work of departments responsible for project provision with critical resources, guided by corporate strategies and policies. As practice shows, the organizations in which project bureaus were formed, projects are implemented more efficiently as a rule (Bridges & Crawford, 2000).

The analysis of the Company strengths and weaknesses suggests that the strengths of the Project Office creation are much more weighty than the costs of such a decision, and therefore, the formation of the Project Office at book-selling enterprises seems appropriate. According to the results of the interview and the analysis of the Company employee opinions, the main risks of a Project Office creation in the Company include the fear that the Project Office will not be used for its intended purpose - there will be duplication of activities among project managers or it will turn into a fiscal authority. The lack of consensus on the structure of the project office and their role hinders the establishment of official standards for project management offices (Hobbs, 2008). In order to level this risk, a special attention should be paid to the observance of the plan for the project management system transformation at the enterprise, as well as to the proper distribution of functions and powers; It is necessary to develop the responsibility matrix that takes into account the specifics of the duties performed by the project staff and the project and the program managers.

Summary

The analysis of large enterprises within the federal network of modern general-purpose bookstores in the Russian book-selling industry indicates that the Company is at the first level of project management maturity: management and employees realize the importance of the project approach, they are aware of its basic principles. At the same time, the most vulnerable areas of project management are personnel management and communication management. On the basis of the conducted research, the main problems were revealed that Russian book-selling enterprises face during project management introduction: fragmentary implementation of project

management standards and principles; an insufficient formalization of project management processes; the lack of clear project documentation standardization; the uncertainty of project manager status caused by the lack of real powers; the lack of participant motivation system in project activities based on the results of an employee performance evaluation; low level of communication management and the lack of a clear, defined interface of interaction between various functional units and groups. To solve the identified problems in the modern Russian conditions, it is necessary to implement the project approach more actively, which will ensure orderliness, flexibility, transparency and openness of the company activities, will increase the professional competence of staff and management and will develop the communication space of the company.

To minimize the likelihood of problems occurring during project implementation, it is necessary to pay an increased attention to a formalized management system organization that takes into account the interests of all project participants, clearly define the organizational structure and agree on management procedures, and use recognized methodologies - project management standards. The creation of a project office in such companies would be appropriate if its activity is focused on function planning and monitoring for all the projects being implemented. At the same time, the functions and the responsibilities of this structural unit should be clear to all participants of the project activities, which will contribute to the formation of a single team, focused on a specific result.

Thanks to the creation of project offices in book-selling enterprises and the introduction of an integrated project management system, positive changes are possible in all areas of project management. Thus, an active development of the bookselling industry based on the project approach will contribute to the development of the knowledge economy.

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