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Building-up of the Behavioural Competences

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Abstract

Behavioural competences get developed in early childhood and take start from the fairy-tales and stories parents read to kids at bedtime. This paper discusses the conclusions based upon two identical fairy stories - Russian and Arabic. Russian story implies the wealth and success comes magically to one who waits. Arabic / Eastern fairy-tales imply actions and aspiration to obtain benefits. The situation nevertheless may change through development of behavioural competences set by ICB and improvement of other competences necessary for the projects implementation.

Keywords: Behavioural competences; development; training; correction; project management

1. Introduction

In the Republic of Kazakhstan we witness that project management practices and small & medium-sized businesses do not efficiently develop. Any governmental attempt to facilitate business development gives low outcome. Thus, total production by small and medium-sized businesses is barely 20%, mostly in trade. In many European countries this number exceeds 50%.

We will not discuss here the economic reasons that certainly exist and play a significant role. They are expensive credits, corruption, and many other. The bottom critical factor is the people. When a man gets to certain life-level he feels unhappy with living at the expense of others. This is the point to be determined and make a decisive step. But one doubts and hopes for someone to help, or the lottery ticket and fortune, or... The decision is postponed.

Hence as the grown-up person comes to grips with reality, he encounters complexity of decision-

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making, both in terms of starting up business and project implementation, supported by a preferential desire to obtain the state order contract.

Therefore the post-Soviet countries fail to develop small and medium-sized businesses on the base of the European models. This paper discusses probable reasons that impede growth and development in the field of project management and behavioural competencies.

**Nomenclature**

- GDP  Gross Domestic Product
- CIS  Commonwealth of Independent States
- SECs  Social Entrepreneurship Corporations, organisations formed by Government in regions of Kazakhstan in order to provide implementation of complex projects between state, business and community.

1.1. *State policies*

According to official statistics in Kazakhstan, the share of small and medium businesses in the GDP does not exceed the value of 21%.

Table 1. The share of Small & Medium-sized Enterprises in GDP of Kazakhstan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An example of a column heading</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of small and medium-sized enterprises in the gross domestic product, %</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data of the Statistics Agency*

The Kazakhstan top-management strategic direction is to become one of the fifty most competitive countries in the world, which leads to the development of small business as a powerful economic force. In the implementation of the Concept of Transition of Kazakhstan to Sustainable Development for 2007-2024 efficient and sustainable development of small businesses is particularly important, as they establish new economic relations, e.g. with foreign businesses, and stimulate production and innovation.

However, as shown in the Table 1 despite of the state efforts the designated targets are not yet achieved.

The republic created a certain grounds for the development of small and medium businesses. About 1.8 million people are employed in small businesses; representing 23% of total employment in Kazakhstan, of which 50% are entrepreneurs, 25% are small businesses and farms.

State program of development and support of small business in the Republic of Kazakhstan is been implemented, *Social Entrepreneurship Corporations* are established to facilitate close cooperation between the state and business. The Government approved a number of stabilization programs to support the real sector. In general, government policy regarding small and medium businesses can be grouped into six areas:

- Aid to small and medium enterprises;
- Financial support to entrepreneurship;
• Assistance in creating an effective enterprise management system;
• Information support of business;
• Government tax incentives for enterprises;
• Creating a business climate in the society.

A number of surveys were conducted to ascertain the problems of small businesses growth; foreign experts and grants were attracted; a variety of reasons are studied with no visible improvements.

In countries with developed market economy the share of small enterprises is 40 to 60% of GDP. In Kazakhstan and other CIS countries these figures are significantly smaller.

Today the funding is not the main issue as the budget funds are partially returned to the state as unclaimed.

Let’s take a look at this global problem from quite a different point of view, not previously used, and discuss the reasons in terms of project management approach and behavioral competences.

1.2. Lack of project management specialists

Another significant problem in the Republic of is a shortage of project management specialists.

The country has started many interesting and useful initiatives such as “Tax System Reformation”, “Custom System Reformation”, “Industrial Innovative Program Development”, “Program 2030”, and other. Each program contains tens and hundreds of projects; however, the number of certified project managers of all levels is just about 500 people.

Possibly, about two to three thousand of specialists get trained in project management. Compare these numbers to Kazakhstan population of nearly 16 million people.

2. Situation Analysis

The education system in Kazakhstan does not fill the gap in project management specialists because since the collapse of the Soviet system it has not significantly changed, and traditionally focuses on the acquisition of knowledge rather than skills. Development of competencies is an alien presence to the system, where the technical competencies are more or less acceptable. Meanwhile, the behavioral competencies that should be planted in early childhood remain out of place and are not perceived.

Eastern mentality also hampers development of skills such as self-confidence; leadership; focus on results; and other; because it is more important and prestigious to have relatives in power than to promote yourself and your business.

In the paper, we analyze the situation in terms of materials that form the perception of the world. Entrepreneurial skills development can be clearly traced on the example of children's fairy tales. Some of the European, Arab and other foreign stories set the prototype to favorite Russian fairy tales.

Any story can be viewed as a report on the implementation of the project.

2.1. Story of Pinocchio

So, the fairy tale “The Adventures of Pinocchio” by Carlo Collodi became the prototype for the Russian famous story of Burattino. Pinocchio is designed so that all his good intentions end in exactly the opposite result. Here he is touched by the fact that Geppetto sold his only coat to buy a primer, dreaming about how he would learn, then find a job, earn lots of money and buy his father a new jacket “made of gold and silver” but he forgets about his plans when hears of puppet theater show and changes the primer to the tickets.

When he receives five gold coins from the master of the puppet show, Pinocchio however once again
recalls his father but then follows the Fox and the Cat as believes their story of Magic Field, where the five gold coins instantly become twenty five hundred coins. Whenever Pinocchio behaves stupid, stubborn or arrogant he gets into a trouble. This is the way life is teaching the obnoxious kid but he is learning lessons poorly.

Pinocchio has many imperfections but he is kind and of an enterprising temper. In the belly of a huge shark he finds his beloved father and saves him. In order to get a glass of milk for his father he agrees to draw water from a well. And he gives all his savings without the slightest regret just to help good fairy when he finds out that she is ill. Of course, these are the actions of a true man. Pinocchio turned into a “smart, handsome boy with brown hair and blue eyes, with a cheerful, happy face”.

The Russian fairy tale of Burattino written by A.Tolstoy starts with the same story at the beginning but the end of a tale is quite different. An old Turtle opens Burattino’s eyes to his greedy friends and gives him a golden key, which was dropped into a river by a man with a long beard. It’s a key that opens a certain door and it brings happiness.

The heroes pass by underground passage and come to the treasure – it’s an amazingly beautiful theater. It will be a new theater with no director with a whip, a theater where puppets become real actors. All the puppets who have not yet escaped from evil Karabas go to Burattino’s theater, which is full of fun and music, and all hungry artists get a hot lamb broth with garlic.

Let’s compare both situations described. In the tale of Pinocchio, he gets something for his pains, for applied efforts and also obtains experience and learns lessons. Burattino gets the golden key because the old Turtle decided so, and let us not place that to his credit.

2.2. Story of Fisherman

Let’s make the similar comparison of two fairy tales “The Fisherman”. Russian version is written by famous poet Alexander Pushkin, and the Eastern story is represented by Arabic fairy tale.

Fig. 1. “The Fisherman”. Story scheme of the Russian fairy tale
Figure 1 is the schematic content of Russian fairy tale.

The old man, who caught a goldfish, does not take any decision and goes to his wife, the old woman. He tells her how the goldfish suggested to fulfill his wishes. The wife gives directions, and the “bubble” of her desire grows. Communications are carried out through a third party (old woman), which ultimately leads to the miserable result (back where she started with the broken washing tub again!).

This is true for post-Soviet countries in real life. The Government with significant reserves of natural resources persists on receiving oil revenues, and does not develop high technologies, which involve considerable intellectual and technical effort. If the “fisherman” at the start has realized that he lacks knowledge to run business, he would go on learning first, and changes his operational activities to the project activities.

Fig. 2. “The Fisherman”. Story scheme of the Arabic fairy tale

In Figure 2, the same story is represented in the Arabic fairy tale. After several unsuccessful attempts to catch a fish, finally the fisherman pulls out a copper pot, with Ifrit, whose head is in the clouds and feet are on the ground. A fisherman investigates the circumstances of Ifrit’s imprisonment in a copper pot, and makes his own decisions.

In a problematic situation, the fisherman demonstrates abilities to negotiate and seek goals. As a reward he receives a business that provides living to his family for the rest of life.

2.3. Analysis of Fisherman stories

Analysis of the Russian fairy tale leads to the following conclusions:
1. The project is developed in a circle as shown in Figure 3. There is no direct communication. Project
Manager (old fisherman) assumes no responsibility.

2. Schedule of revenues is shown in the Figure 4 (a) and demonstrates that revenues increase and finish with a sharp drop to zero. Business is completed.

3. Project time is lost during the project, while the old fisherman returns home for the advice of an old woman, who represents the actual project manager.

4. Targets are unrealistic. There are no relevant resources for the goal implementation.

5. The interests of the team members are not taken into account.

6. The project manager demonstrates personal qualities such as greed for profit, satisfying the short-term interests to the detriment of long-term goals, craving for power, volatility (the targets are changing several times), the outcome is blurred.

Fig. 3. Communications scheme in Russian fairy tale
Fig. 4. (a) Relation of revenue to time in Russian fairy tale; (b) Relation of revenue to time in Arabian fairy tale
Analysis of the Arabian tale leads to the following conclusions:
1. The project manager, the fisherman, takes responsibility for the decision.
2. Schedule of revenues is shown in the Figure 4 (b) and has variations, but further, after an agreement is achieved, the graph demonstrates smooth increase. Business is growing.
3. Time is used effectively.
4. Emerging problems are solved on the spot.
5. Manager demonstrates the creativity and leadership qualities.

3. Conclusions

So, what can one learn from a Russian fairy tale?
Answer: search for a “goldfish” and then ask for as much as you can and get it all at once.

Russian fairy tale does not teach to obtain competencies necessary for project activities and business development, such as negotiation, creativity, leadership, responsibility, motivation, and personnel management.

Another important aspect of the project management activities also remains beyond the scope of a fairy tale. The planning process has to be done in the beginning. A bad plan always fails. If a bad plan is implemented, the outcomes will differ from what was assumed at the project start.

School program and university education do not correct the attitude and skills of the people because the students just obtain knowledge in certain subjects. As young professionals grow older they try to address the shortage of skills and tools by attending trainings.

To bridge this gap the community of professionals needs a good and effective technique. But the current situation does not support development of techniques. Western technologies are designed to be a logical continuation of western education system. Adaptation of western techniques affects only a limited number of methods and training.

Today the ICB describes behavioral competencies. It would be a significant facilitator to all project activity participants of the post-Soviet territory and enable an organization to empower its workers, if the behavioural competencies description is also supplemented by mastering techniques. As a result, many trainers and teachers will be able to educate managers directly to use methods thereof. Perhaps, this will improve the current situation in regard to building-up of behavioural competencies.

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