

# Social Psychology

Klueva N.V.

## Management training and its impact on organizational development

*The article discusses psychological problems of organizing internal company education at Russian enterprises. The characteristics of the organizational principles of the internal company educational system are given, which include the system principle, uniqueness principle, technology principle, principle of investigation by action and learning through action, etc. Two types of education are distinguished: focused and interdisciplinary. The article offers a detailed description of methodological and theoretical foundations regarding the work of a psychologist as an external consultant who works with organization in the interdisciplinary education mode. These foundations include innovation methodology, process-oriented consulting, project approach, and andragogy. The article also presents the results of the author's consulting work with executives of industrial enterprises.*

**Key words:** *psychological consultancy of organizational development, a psychologist-consultant, a system of internal company education, management consultancy, organizational development, innovation methodology, process-oriented consulting, focused education (project approach), andragogy, technologies of adults' education.*

“The only job worth to be done by a consultant is the one that makes clients and their personnel be better managers”.

L. Urvik.

Psychology from our point of view is a tool to self-understanding and development of subjective personality growth. An organization in this concern is a collective subject having its own values, objectives and features to contact the external environment. Psychology involves a person and an organization into a self-changing process. Psychology faces “the purpose to explore and to demonstrate all possible ways for human and

world development. It is the most important of possible spirit growth mediators". [3,c.327]. To fill in the human's life with an existential value is possible only if to give him back his integrity which doesn't represent the sum of object – parts, but requires a subject to be involved in a self-development process. M.K. Mamardashvili described philosophy as an involvement into being. Psychology also involves a human in events moving, it is focused on "life-revealing process". A psychologist describes in knowledge one's individuality as well as favors its growth, appropriate way of its existence. We think that *a psychologist in respect of business structures* tends to form within a personality and organization an ability to solve problems independently and to determine their future development. A lot of consultants nowadays follow the idea of "*organizational development through human resource development*". According to L. Urvik, one of the leading experts in management consultancy, the only job worth to be done by a consultant is the one that makes clients and their personnel be better managers [16]. This approach is focused on the development of self-creative organizational strengths and is based on either personnel or managers' experience. It contributes to creating of a conventional reality, matching individual and group interests, values and objectives.

The base of a psychologist's work as a consultant in management and organizational development is a start-up of self-organization and self-development mechanisms. *Patterns of our work include the cooperation of a psychologist with key-managers and methods that let us integrate research, training and practice (innovative methodology).*

The priority in psychologists' work has to be given not to methods of collecting sociological and psychological data, but to in-depth going into participants' understanding of strategy and tactics of organizational development, personal meaning of their professional activities, accepting or refusing company's values, mutual analysis of work methods through various organizational forms of reflecting environment.

Our experience and results of our research make it possible to formulate a range of typical features related to the activities of executives, their attitude to personnel [5-7, 16]:

1. Dependence on samples, rules and regulations that have been installed in Russian business as well as on basic changes in economical and social life in Russia. A try to solve problems with the help of past experience can be explained by the fact that majority of executives are not ready to work in a highly unstable environment. The use of this past experience is a try to protect themselves from being incapable to meet this uncertainty and to

work with it. A fear of uncertain situations leads to more formal rules, rejection of creative ideas and finally to stagnation of executive's personality and organization as a whole.

2. Moving responsibility to the others. While realizing that executive's efficiency is decreasing, the following scheme starts working - "we are not allowed to work", "in this country it is not possible to do anything" etc).
3. Focus on short-term objectives instead of strategic perspectives. Difficulties appear in the sphere of strategic planning when it is important to analyze internal and external environment, to find out resources of personnel, to formulate the mission of an organization, its strategic objectives and tasks.
4. Predominance of female origin in organizational management. Prigojin A.I. notes that our culture refers to "male type" based on cult of "great performances", self-sacrifice, and heroic spirit. From there comes inflexibility in human relations (15). In Western Europe on behavioral level the relationships are friendlier; nevertheless people are ready to compete. Winning of the one doesn't mean fail of the others – this important idea didn't find acceptance in Russian business. For some employees the "female" orientation is typical – inactivity, lack of energy, unpretentious needs.
5. At the same time a lot of executives cultivate certain communicative standards based on values of relationship, care and support. The rise of a conflict in the organization is interpreted by executives as a disturbance of "normal" processes. Consequences of such a policy are understandable – acting without development, quietness against reasonable exactingness.
6. Value "fuzziness" of executives. At the heart of human's behaviour are his basic life expectancies, i.e. points of view which are defended by executives. Uncertainty of directions among executives and employees lead to impossibility to build common notional environment of professional activities. In the base of this environment is a convergence, i.e. the system of agreements about what is acceptable for the present group of people. We underline this convergence because without agreements the organization can not exist.
7. Uncertainty in personal goals. For many executives it is hard to describe his or her personal and professional goals, to design short-term or long-term career. Sayings like "as it will go", "I don't know what to expect", "I am not sure it depends on me"

show how low the subjectivity of executives is to be responsible for events happening in his/her life.

8. Executives have difficulties to mobilize their personnel to solve common problems. There is a pronounced problem to be incapable to delegate responsibilities to employees. Behind it can be seen fear to lose power and control over the situation. At the same time this fear to lose power ends with a refusal to attract personnel to manage the organization. Prevailing type of organizational and managerial coordination is coordination-plan instead of coordination-feedback. That is why prevailing management style is based on communication type “from top to bottom”. Another management style based on “horizontal” communication type has just started to be introduced in organizations.

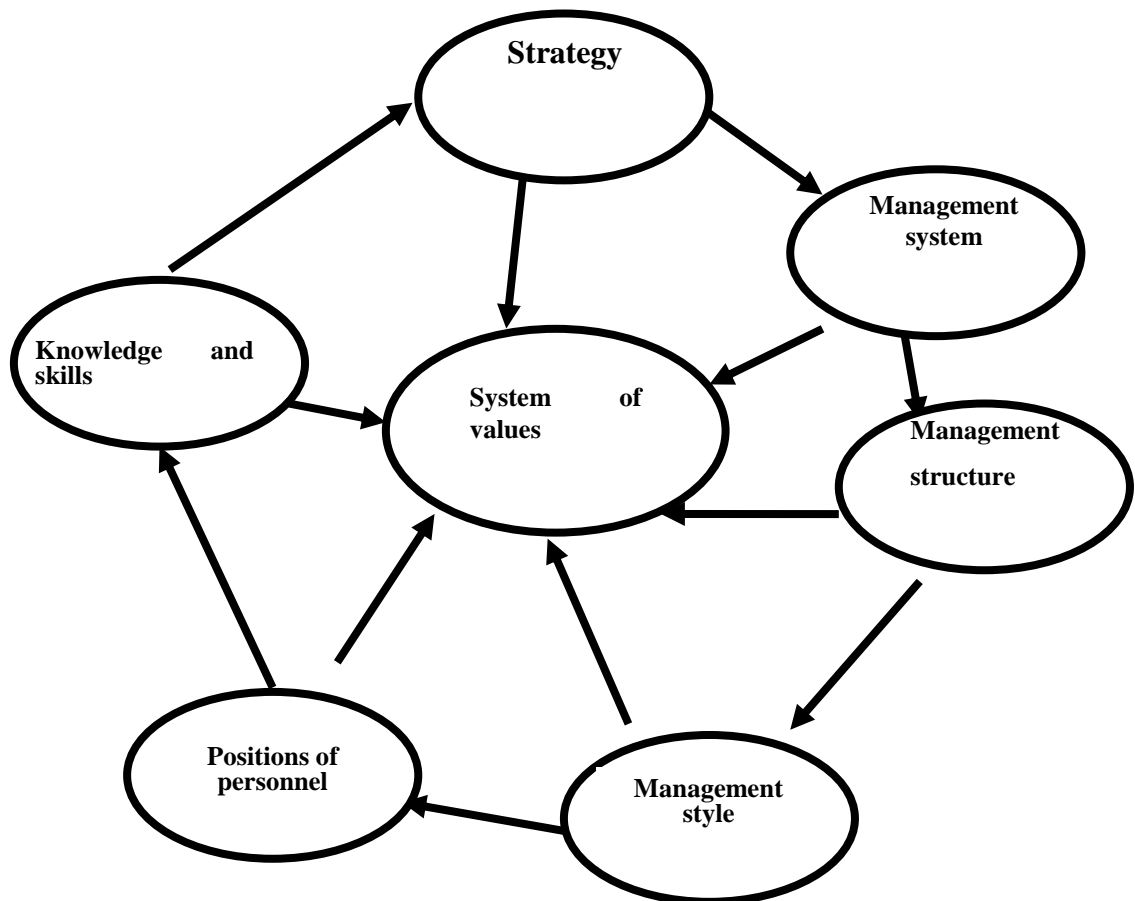
Meanwhile a lot of executives realized one of the most important objectives – increase of company’s competence based on improving the personnel performance. That is why human resource management is becoming one of the strategic organizational goal together with cost management, information management, quality management and others. The system of in-company training based on the idea of continuous training in professional and socio-psychological competence of personnel can provide an organization with right answers to current and perspective tasks. It takes an important place in human resource management, together with recruitment, selection, appraisal and attestation of personnel, career management, motivation and stimulation systems, introducing shared standards and values of organizational behaviour, etc.

Let us focus on one of the approaches in building-up the system of in-company training which has been designed under the guidance of the author by the group of specialists from Jaroslavl Sate University and Jaroslavl Professional Training Institute. It is supported by experience to work with big industrial enterprises of Jaroslavl city and region [2,8,10].

From our point of view effective in-company training relies upon some basic principles:

- **Change principle.** Any organization which tends to be competitive live in the process of development that has to be supported by human resources able to work out short-term and long-term tasks. In this case organizational training can be reactive (to insure company’s activities) and pro-active (focused on tasks to be raised by organization for the nearest and distant future)

- **System principle** (training covers all aspects of organizational life, its relations with external environment, methods of communication inside the company, attitude of executives towards their employees etc). For us the idea of system principle can be understood through graph 7C presenting main organizational elements. Each of these elements has its own impact on the training.



- **Human values and positive approach principle.** Training structures, internal and external consultants, human resource managers, psychologists who use personal potentials (but not its constraints) are more successful in reaching objectives of human resource and organizational development.
- **Principle of investigation by action and learning through action.** Adults' education assumes to find out real practical problems in professional activities, their investigation, and ways of being solved. We think that the move from action to

knowledge instead of informing about problems arisen is the most reasonable.

- **Principle of uniqueness.** Training programs are built according to organizational uniqueness, its history, its position in the market, organizational culture, experiences to train the personnel (positive or negative).
- **Technology principle.** In modern social psychology of adults' education, practices of management consulting and organizational development there exists already the whole set of efficient techniques (different games, case studies, methods to activate personal resources, project education, trainings etc). That is why the work of a specialist in in-company training must be very technological, and methods used in by one consultant or trainer can be applied by the others.

We distinguish two type of education in working with organizations:

**Focused training:** computer skills, training of technical personal, programs to prepare personnel for obligatory certification etc.

**Interdisciplinary training:** team-building, "Strategic mentality", "Leadership techniques", "Motivations", programs to develop human resource potentials in the frame of employer's development strategy.

In both types of education the psychologist plays a big role. In particular to start the first type of education it is necessary to provide a special training of the trainers based on andragogy, psychology of communication, psychological features of adults as subjects of education, methods of adults' education.

In interdisciplinary education a psychologist can initiate a targeted work to introduce certain programs (leadership or teambuilding, conflict competence of managers) [17]. Besides he or she can provide a socio-psychological review of project work. For example, the success of the project "Elaboration and implementation of quality management system" is based on effective team work, ability of project initiators to become real leaders, to manage conflicts by innovations, to motivate the personnel to be involved in a project.

The article offers a detailed description of methodological and theoretical foundations regarding the work of a psychologist as an external consultant who works with organization in the interdisciplinary education mode.

From our point of view **adults' education is based on:**

- Innovation methodology.
- Process-oriented consulting.
- Project approach.

- Andragogy.

**Innovation methodology** is an instrument of research and development of working systems, social groups as agents of this activity and personality on the account of self-development during creating problem-solving process (1,2,13). Otherwise the nature of education under realization of innovation methodology is the following: while investigating we learn, while learning we develop ourselves.

With the course of innovation education comes:

- Learning to apply new problem-solving technologies (building up an effective thinking),
- Building up socio-psychological competency (development of effective communication skills) to solve problems arisen while building a communication,
- Strengthening of personal potential to break personal difficulties. This mode is the most effective in training the executives, top-managers and managers of all levels (sales managers, in-company training managers, human resource managers etc).

Education based on these principles begins with diagnostic innovation seminar where the participants (with the help of consultants) analyze current and expected situation in their company, learn to formulate the problem, define its cause and reasons. It is important that education develops in conditions of group interaction. It allows to master “here and now” new techniques of building up effective interactions. With this mode a psychologist is a resource person possessing problem-solving means, socially competent and enabling the development of the others.

Experiences in management consultancy (1997-2004) reveal some specific psychological problems [1]:

- Extremely *low level of self-confidence*, of finding the way out of complicated situations, lack of faith in own resources, powers, abilities as well as *bad knowledge of oneself* and own features (very often these characteristics appear in paradox forms – a show of self-confidence, powers, categorical decisions etc); at the same time according to the precise descriptions of authoritarian syndrome, a lot of managers demonstrate *too high readiness to follow the power, to avoid critics while getting advice*;
- Extremely strong *orientation to simple, quick and easy solutions* (even in situations where such an approach is obviously a failure), *unwillingness to go deep into a problem* and readiness to be satisfied without looking at many details;

- Almost total *choice of intellectual, rational ways* to meet problems, to understand oneself, other people and present situations from one side, and total underestimation or ignoring of *emotional, intuitive resources* from the other; exaggerated and inadequate *piety of the word* (especially written) and *neglect of emotions, feelings*.

Taking into account these features, investigations of values and life goals of executives, rules and values of corporate culture, the system of psychological accompaniment of an organization has been elaborated on the basis of existential approach. This program is focused on building shared values, coordinating interests and positions in organizational conventional reality.

It has the following objectives:

- To contribute to behavioural changes when a manager can live more efficiently, be satisfied with his/her life in spite of some existing social restrictions.
- To develop skills of problem overcoming when meeting new circumstances and requirements.
- To strengthen the decision-making process. There are a lot of things one can learn during psychologically-oriented training: independent actions, time and energy management, evaluation of risks, investigation of values in the frame of which the decision is taken, evaluation of personal features, overcoming emotional stress, realizing influence of goals on decision-making process, etc.
- To develop skills of starting and supporting interpersonal communication. Communications with personnel take a great part of executives' time, and many of them have troubles because of low level of their self estimation or lack of social skills.
- To enable the realization and potential growth of executives.
- To build an ability to design his/her professional activity, to develop analytical skills, to analyze key problems.

**Consulting process.** The main idea of psychologist's work to solve important organizational problems is to build a process that will give to the organization a chance to find its best solution. We divided the psychologist's work into steps in order to solve problems in a most efficient way.

- **Entrance.** Meeting with executives, evaluation of readiness for changes, bringing out motivations to cooperate with a psychologist, match of declared problem with the reality, understanding of



possibilities to build up working relations, orientation in executive's and his/her team values. The client appraises experience, knowledge, recommended technology. On this step the technical task, result expectation, mutual responsibilities, terms of payment are precised, the trust between psychologist and client is built.

- **Contract** – process of building up new communication rules between the consultant and the client, of setting the work objective. *Objectives* must be *realistic* (reachable); *specific* (external observer has to understand the expected result); *measurable* (what are the criteria to prove the objective is reached); *adjustable* (it has to be clear if there is a move towards the objective) and *exciting* (customer and client want to achieve it).
- **Diagnostic** – gaining information, its analysis, discussion and presentation of results. On this step one can use interview, questionnaire, testing, analysis of documents, participation in events, financial, marketing and etc. analysis. We note that while working with organizations in most cases we use competencies of different specialists (in marketing, finances, systems, methodology etc.). It allows to overview the organization as a system to start its development process. In our work we prefer to use innovation seminar as a group method of current situation diagnostics. The use of most of above-mentioned methods allows involving personnel in case analysis.
- **Planning of changes** supposes defining different ways of problem solving and planning its activities. This step underlines opportunities and threats of organization and its specific departments, as well as objectives, methods and possible ways to solve the problem. Here are some technologies we use during this step: system and functional analysis, scenario method (A.I. Prigojin), technology of solving complex and poor-structured tasks (V.S. Dudchenko), SWOT – analysis. When building a common view of expected future, good effect is presented by the use of metaphors, body-oriented procedures, and projective drawings.
- **Implementation of suggested changes** – building up a development headquarter and teams to follow the results got during the previous step.
- **Evaluation of efficiency, corrections or revision of changes.**

**Project approach.** A lot of organizations nowadays use a project approach in their personnel training. For example, on designing a new management structure except consultancy, the customer assumes informing

his/her employees (the direct training objective) about modern management approaches. Implementation of cost management system includes training of those people who will take part in designing and implementing this system in their organization. Developing the information security system also has to be supported by relevant personnel competencies. Psychologist working with the organization may moderate the project (6). In this case the psychologist is responsible for the following problems: personnel motivation to be involved in project work; creating conditions for talks (important element of designing and implementing the project is an agreement of all people involved about the share of responsibilities); analysis of threats and development of technologies to overcome them. Otherwise to elaborate and implement the project, it's necessary to "pack" it in a right way, to make it meaningful for employees, in other words to rise its attractiveness. As an example: design and implementation process of ISO system in most companies where we worked was seen as a threat and even provoked hard negative actions in the beginning. That is when setting a strategic task "To implement the quality management system in organization X" it is necessary to have good psychological diagnostic of the organization, to evaluate motivational level of executives and staff, analysis of organizational culture, to find out deep reasons for resistance. That is why we created specific technologies that allow in rather short period of time (6-8 hours) to draw a psychological portrait of an organization. Similar work is done when reforming companies, implementing quality and environment management systems, developing strategic goals, building corporate culture, starting in-company training.

**Andragogy.** "From acting to learning", not on the contrary: it is the approach that we follow in our work with organizations. "Don't give answers to the questions that haven't been asked!" This sentence describes a general idea of andragogy (adults' pedagogy). If a group or developing personality has no questions, it isn't necessary to give answers. Lecturing can be chosen only upon group request. Demand for lectures on psychology of communications, psychology of management, conflictology etc. is quite high. But even if the teacher is very experienced, these lectures can hardly change the points of view or mentality, increase socio-psychological competence of the personality. Informing about self-development problems, professional growth is an important component of our work but only when needed, when it comes clear what a client really wants to know, and he or she will do with it. This approach contradicts with *traditional pedagogical model* in which a trainee is more an object than a subject of training activity. A trainer in our approach together with

the group or a person defines the main parameters of educational process: objectives, content, forms and methods, means and educational resources.

When implementing andragogy approach in adults' education we use a lot of new forms and methods of innovation ("active") education: investigation, playing, imitation, projects, based on principles of problem-orientation, personal activity, integration of theory, practice and learning, development of creativity in group work. The experience of their implementation proves they can provide solutions to educational tasks where traditional education fails:

- Development of investigational attitude to the reality;
- Building up not only cognitive but also professional motives and interests;
- Development of system mentality;
- Training in team thinking, communication on horizontal and vertical levels, individual and group decision-making, responsibility to work and to other people, creativity. (A.A. Verbitski).

Our experience of working with large industrial companies, small and medium businesses showed the efficiency of the above mentioned approach. Almost all our clients increased their market competitiveness, made the system of in-company education become an important component of human resource management, designed and implemented their projects.

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