

CONSULTING AS THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT OF BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT

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***Resume:** The article deals with the issue of the psychological problem of business consulting. The author analyzes different definitions of the concept “consulting” and highlights the main aim of the organizational consulting. The author describes the organizational consulting as the combination of three components: the customer – the organization – the environment, and states that the main goal of consulting is to optimize the interaction of all elements in the system. The main idea of the consulting is not only the solution of actual existing problems of business organizations, but also the acquisition of skills of analysis, evaluation, and solutions to clients' problems in order to give them the path of existing problems solutions in the future has been described in the article.*

***Key words:** organizational consulting, business systems, staff management, organizational psychology, customers, business environment, psychological component, ultimate goal, pre-project, post-project stage.*

1. Introduction

In recent years, we have seen that the problem of psychological features of interaction between the organization and its customers has become quite important and urgent. The development of national psychology in this period has been characterized by practical necessity of organizations associated with the provision of various kinds of psychological help.

Organizational consulting, that is developing in different directions, covers both the business systems themselves, as well as carrying out psychological consulting directly to the individual, who is not directly connected with the organization itself, but functioning in a business environment.

In this regard, let's consider the concept of “consulting”, interpreted by some authors.

1.1. The concept of the consulting. If we start with some definitions of the concept “consulting”, we can state that the advice to management and staff of organization-clients is interpreted differently by researches.

For example, E. de Haan believes that consulting is a “temporal relations of cooperation between the client or the organization-client and the consultant, the aim of which is to improve the customer's situation.”

D. Weinberg in his book “The Secrets of Consulting” writes that advice – “the art of influencing people at their request.” Consulting by Gerald Weinberg, is no longer perceived as the technology that is implemented to formalize procedures. It is necessary to mention that in consulting the important determining element is the influence of psychology as an important component of the consultant.

Edgar Schein, in his book “Advice on the Process” states that consulting is “the creation of the relationship with the client, allowing the client to feel, understand and act on events to improve the situation described by the client.” According to the definition of E. Schein about the psychological business consulting tasks – the main thing is the creation of advisory relationship [7].

Defining management consulting, Y Lapygin, the author of a textbook for high schools “Fundamentals of Management Consulting”, quoted by A. Prigozhin: “Management consultancy - a kind of an expert in the management of help.” It means according to this definition, that a management consultant is an expert, who provides consultations, advice, projects growth of organizational performance and promotes the implementation of these projects.

L. Tobias, illustrating his ideas with practical examples shows that counseling executives, senior managers are aimed at solving the problems of the organization-clients in general, without taking into account features and data in management psychology, organizational psychology and management psychology [6].

According to definition, given by V. Dudchenko, “Consultant – is first and foremost an innovator, the inventor, the initiator of the changes to which the client can respond”. If the customer does not respond, the advisor offers not to forget the following: “The main strength of the negotiator - the ability at any time to take advantage from the negotiations.” Moreover,

V. Dudchenko provides not only a list of features for effective development of the organization, but also tells what should be the features of the client with whom the consultant will cooperate during the process of consulting. This image reflects the aspiration of the client in a successful future and his focus on innovations.

Thus, describing organizational consulting, based on citations of different versions of definitions, it is necessary to generalize its main features.

Therefore, considering the diversity of definitions in almost all of them we can see the psychological basis or psychological component. Consequently, there is an assumption that the customer-leaders tend to associate their difficulties primarily with psychological problems, and secondly – to address specific organizational or business problems to the consultant, although not all of them are aware of this tendency.

In general, the diversity of the definitions is the evidence of different interests that prompted the authors of each definition highlight a particular aspect of consulting.

Thus, the only thing in common is that we can select among a variety of definitions of organizational consulting is the idea that it is impossible to separate it from the psychological work with the client. In all versions, we can see the psychological component of the activities of organizational consultants.

2. A system of consulting. After analyzing the study on the subject of different authors, we are inclined to think that the object of consultation should be considered as a system that consists of the following elements: the customer – the organization – the environment, as well as the main goal of consulting – to optimize the successful interaction of all elements in the system.

To study the issues related to the business consulting, in our opinion, it is necessary first of all to consider what is the management consulting as a whole [1].

2.1. Management consulting. Management consulting involves the use of active methods of impact and it is aimed at assisting in the management of the organization.

Moreover, management consulting requires knowledge not only in the field of organizational psychology and the psychology of management, but also in economics, finance, law and often it needs engineering, technical and technological knowledge.

The ultimate goal of consulting is to help the client implement progressive changes in his organization. The consultant helps identify and resolve specific technical issues and at the same time, human problems and aspects of organizational changes.

2.2. The main objectives of the consulting. The main objective of the consultancy is to identify and find solutions to existing problems. Consulting services are provided both in the form of one-time consultation, and in the form of consulting projects. There are many divisions of the consulting process steps.

Any advice includes the following main stages:

- 1) diagnosis or identification of problems;
- 2) development of solutions;
- 3) implementation of solutions.

However, for example, A. Posadsky notes that the consulting process, apart from the pre-design process, includes also pre-project and post-project stage [5].

The pre-design stage is the recognition of the presence of the client's problem for solution with the help of consultants. This recognition is the result of two-way process: on the one hand - the customer is aware of the presence of his problems, on the other - the formation of the manager wishes to entrust the development of problem solution to consultants.

The important point for the post-project stage is the analysis of developments in the organization that needed consulting, dealing with a possible extension of the project in connection with new issues – identified in the process of the project implementation, or as a result of achieving by the organization a new business position after project implementation [1].

Consulting project may be implemented from several days to several months as an integrated approach, which takes into account the relationship between different aspects of the business company or enterprise.

3. Consulting process

Consultation process is a method of developing and changing organizations. The aim of this method is to increase the productivity and / or improve the psychological climate in the organization, that can be achieved with the assistance of an independent external consultant. The focus is not only the solution of current problems of business organization, but also the acquisition of skills of analysis, evaluation, and solutions to clients' problems. In this sense, the consultant has to perform two tasks: on the one hand – to follow the decision of existing problems, on the other – to show the path of finding solutions to existing problems in the future.

While consulting, the organization-client is providing consultants with the necessary information, oversees its activities, acquiring its recommendations and taking into account the appropriate management decisions. In addition, the client (or the organization-client) can participate in the development of recommendations. In specific projects or on various

stages of the consulting process a combination of different types of consulting can be used [2].

In Western countries, we can see mainly the process and expert-process consulting, while in Ukraine the expert and expert-teaching consulting is being widely used.

Consulting begins with the fact that some conditions will be deemed unsatisfactory, and it is possible to fix them. The work is finished when this condition has changed, that can be regarded as an improvement. This process includes the interaction of different types of business activity, affects the technological, economic, financial, legal, social, political and other aspects of the business organization. All changes are conceived and carried out with the help of a consultant, who should contribute to improving the quality of leadership and efficiency of the organization at the end of the consulting process.

3.1. Consulting tasks.

There are some typical tasks for consulting, depending on the quality or level of the situation the organization-client has faced:

1. The task of remedying the situation, that is becoming worse;
2. The challenge to improve the situation which already exists;
3. The challenge for the creation of an entirely new situation.

It is necessary to mention the two sides of the possible changes in the organization-client:

1. The technical aspect regarding the nature of administrative or commercial issues, with which the organization-client is facing; consulting is the way of the analysis and problem solutions;
2. The human relationship, i.e., the relationship between consultant and client, the reaction of people in the organization-client changes.

Consultant helps in the planning of these relationships and their implementation.

There are different levels of changes [3]:

1. changes in the environment;
2. organizational changes:
 - a) the basic structure;
 - b) tasks and activities;
 - c) the technology;
 - d) administrative structures and processes;
 - e) the organizational culture;
 - f) the overall performance of the organization;
 - g) people.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is necessary to stress that good consulting shows how to cope with two parts of changes in the organization. These problems are interrelated and the consultant should understand this peculiarity while providing business consulting. Changes should be the primary meaning of organization consulting. Various forms of consulting tasks have one common goal – to help the organization in planning and implementing its positive changes.

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