
FROM A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE TO EFFECTIVE CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract: The general dissatisfaction with the functioning of the public sector has caused a gradual need for reforms in the public administration and, above all, for effective public management, aimed at finding tools for effective change management and adequate response to crisis situations. In such a context, this process is undoubtedly linked to the current situation and the crisis of confidence in the public sector, as well as to the ongoing efforts of global governance in search of solutions to increase security in various areas of social and economic life are challenges of a new kind. The study presents the author's vision for balanced change management, focusing on the search for innovative solutions aimed at specific and focused goals and goal setting.

Why is there talk of a crisis of confidence in public sector governance worldwide? What are the challenges associated with this growing trend? Undoubtedly, the public sector is making serious efforts of focused management in the search for solutions in the field of increasing security in various areas of social and economic life which are challenges of the new era. And more. How can governments tackle long-standing problems and innovate using next-generation solutions - such as artificial intelligence and automation - in pragmatic and risk-taking ways? The digital revolution in the public sector is just beginning and can help governments be more innovative to improve the experience of citizens, better engage employees and achieve a step change in operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Authoritative research and analysis reveals that artificial intelligence has the potential to achieve additional global economic activity of about \$ 13 trillion by 2030, or about 16 percent higher cumulative GDP than today. In addition, we believe that automation alone can increase global productivity growth by 0.8 to 1.4 percent per year.

Keywords: crisis; management; public sector; changes; resistance to change; security

"No one is more blind than one who does not want to see." / Stephen King /

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a consensus that the public sector creates rather than solves societal problems, and that government programs and policies lower rather than raise living standards. (Vasilev, Stefanova & Angelova, 2017, p. 13) But is this perceptual phenomenon not related to the ever-increasing expectations of citizens and businesses? This answer is not unequivocal and definite, but it definitely has a strong organizational charge for finding new solutions. (<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/operations/our-insights/risk-resilience-and-rebalancing-in-global-value-chainslast>)

On the other hand, public management lags behind society's expectations in many ways. Moreover, as Prof. Georgi Manolov notes, "... a political problem of Bulgarian society in general undoubtedly manifests itself in the gaping huge gap between the elite and the masses, rich and poor, literate and illiterate, which continues to grow to this day. "(Manolov, 2019, p.21)

Public opinion, on the one hand, largely states that the public sector is not capable of pursuing policies that are adequate to expectations. According to this view, the signs of failure are everywhere - crime, drug addiction, terrorism, homeless people, high taxes, the decline of public schools and hospitals, corruption among senior government officials and others. Terrorism, for example, has reached pandemic proportions, such as according to some leading authors in this field /J. Bakalov; P. Marinov et al./ This is undoubtedly detrimental to the development of public management. As Bakalov notes, "Some of these problems stem from the fact that governments speak different 'languages' when it comes to countering extremism and violence." (Bakalov, 2019, p. 138)

The general irritation from the functioning of the public sector has caused the need for reforms in the public administration and, above all, for effective public management, aimed at seeking tools for effective change management and adequate response to crisis situations.

2. FOR NEW CHALLENGES IN GOVERNANCE, CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND THE ROLE OF CHANGE

Prominent authorities declare that a "revolution" is taking place in managerial thinking, a revolution that makes possible new achievements in quality and productivity in both the public and private sectors. Instead of looking for unification and control, managers are already talking about adaptability, creativity and shared power (participatory

management). And the results in developed democracies are impressive. (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235998788_The_Management_of_Change_in_Public_Organisations_A_Literature_Review) In our country, public management is a product of a nascent democracy with all the ensuing negative consequences: lack of laws and regulations, unprepared for the transition administration, strong political confrontation, replacement of civil servants and others. (Vasilev, Stefanova & Angelova, 2017, p. 13)

Main Reasons that Give Rise to Resistance to Change

Resistance to change is a natural management process. People also change, their appearance, qualities, expectations, their attitudes. (Vasilev, Efremovski & Georgiev, 2018; p. 486-488) As Klaus Schwab points out in his seminal work, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*: "... changes are now historic in terms of size, speed and scope.". (Schwab, 2016, p.14-15) From the point of view of the organization, the implementation of a change has an impact on the goals, values and expectations of individuals, which in turn creates resistance. Resistance to change is a response to the real or imagined loss of a familiar environment and benefits. (Ribarska, 2004, p. 86-95)

Factors of Resistance to Change in an Organizational Context

Undoubtedly, establishing the reasons why people resist change is important to consider the specific factors that affect the level of resistance in individuals. (Ribarska & Vasilev, 2009; p. 132-133)

Common factors that have a direct impact on the level of resistance provided by staff in the administrative organization are:

- Authoritarian and undemocratic style of leadership;
- Lack of experience in implementing the changes;
- Differences between the established organizational culture and the new requirements for the work;
- Excessive focus on the expected change, without adequate management actions;
- The speed of change is at a high level;
- Weak internal communication in the organization;
- Negative previous experience with changes;
- The system for goal setting and staff evaluation is underdeveloped

Methods for Overcoming Resistance to Change in the Context of Crisis Management

Resistance to change is largely a response to the stress caused by uncertainty and the threat to the future. Therefore, reducing and overcoming resistance to change implies taking into account behavioral reactions, symptoms and consequences of stress, as well as analyzing organizational practices from previous periods and cases. In addition, a step-by-step approach takes more time, and the unit concerned may desperately need to act quickly, which is especially true for public administrations. (Vasilev, Kresnaliyska & Chorbadzhiyska, 2017, p. 250)

Very often organizations make frequent and continuous changes, without clearly shared views on the purpose and meaning of change, without a willingness to accept and participate in change and without visible results and improvements, which are presented in increasingly innovative ways. (<https://www.zendesk.com/blog/change-management-models/>) All this creates additional tension and requires overwork from the person's camp and therefore a burnout is likely to occur (Vasilev, 2009; p.41-42) or experiences of mental "burnout", fatigue and exhaustion from change. Another similar phenomenon is the so-called *borough effect*, which is also associated with the reaction of employees in the direction of behavior leading to resistance to change in the organization (Vasilev & Chorbadzhiyska, 2009; p.27-28) and is generally associated with a self-exclusion of the employee from everyday work.

In their classic development, Kotter and Schlesinger offer six basic methods (techniques) for overcoming resistance. (Schlesinger & Kotter, 1979) Each of the methods has both advantages and disadvantages and is suitable in certain circumstances: *Training and communication; Participation and inclusion; Facilitation; Negotiations and reaching an agreement; Manipulation and co-optation and Explicit and hidden coercion.*

Kotter and Schlesinger emphasize that the listed techniques can be combined. The choice in a given situation must depend on the likely reaction of those interested in the change and on the long-term consequences of overcoming the resistance and solving the problems in this way.

We would emphasize the need to update this well-established model of overcoming resistance to change. We want to believe that recent years have shown that the role of information and smart technologies is becoming increasingly important in public management. Something more. They establish themselves as leaders in every change. Therefore, in our opinion, a key component in overcoming resistance to change are technological innovations, of course with proper testing and communication. There are dozens of examples of effective solutions in this direction. (<https://www.techwire.net/news/focus-on-issues-stay-ready-to-pivot-sacramento.html>) It is currently accepted that this model can be nuanced or changed according to the specifics of the organization and its staff. (<https://www.quickbase.com/blog/10-best-practices-in-change-management>)

The effective implementation of the common EU mechanism for the adoption and application of the principles of good governance, on the other hand, should set policy priorities for good governance, namely: (Vasilev, Stefanova & Angelova, 2017, p. 37)

- Conceptual development of the ideas of public administration, strategic development and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector on the basis of current scientific publications - the public administration should give an example of a well-functioning connection between science and practice;
- The stimulation and introduction of innovations in the activity of the public sector, incl. the introduction of not so new ideas in international practice, which have not yet been introduced in the public sector;
- Creating, analyzing and disseminating good practices (benchmarking); (Ribarska & Vasilev, 2009)
- Increasing the competencies of politicians, administration and public groups regarding good governance, which leads to legal regulations and actions for their enforcement and reinforcement;
- Periodic analysis and evaluation of the degree of application of the principles of good governance and the development of proposals for their enrichment through Internet-based platforms; work with stakeholders; scientific publications, forums and others. (Peycheva, 2016, p.13-14)

Doris and John Naismith emphasize: "Undoubtedly, almost everyone would like to have a map to help him chart his path in a predictable environment called the future. And indeed, with more or less imagination and interpretation, the available information allows us to outline a relatively accurate picture of what will be". (Naismith & Naismith, 2018)

3. CONCLUSION

We support the thesis that "the transition from the model of the traditional civil servant, aimed at the rule of law, to that of a public manager both proactive and responsible, obsessed with the obligations to achieve results is an essential feature of modern public administration. (Arabadjiski, 2014; p.144-145) In order to reach such levels of attitude towards work, in our opinion, it is necessary to move to a new level in the effectiveness of change management. A level that can calmly and confidently relate to how and how effectively public organizations provide opportunities for employees to reach their full potential. (Vasilev & Georgiev, 2019; p.176-177)

Crisis management in the modern organization is undoubtedly in a new situation. The challenges presented in the report are an attempt to bring out some ideas on the topic and to focus attention on the upcoming challenge for the public administration.

Finally, as the American writer Stephen King notes, "People's minds are like wells ... deep wells full of fresh water. And sometimes, if a thought is too unpleasant to bear, the person with the thought in question locks it in a heavy box and throws it into this well of his. He listens to the rumble and the box disappears ... But even the deepest well has a bottom! And just because something is out of sight doesn't mean it's gone. It is still there and lies at the bottom ... "

The search for innovative approaches, methods and solutions aimed at overcoming the crisis of confidence in the public sector are probably the "stones in the well" of public sector governance. This new paradigm of innovation, dynamism and innovation in governance is a challenge that will affect the development of society as a whole in a modern world, like a colorful carpet woven of crises, problems, pandemics and insecurity!

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