INTERPERSONAL CONFLICTS IN THE MANAGEMENT TEAMS

V. Okulich-Kazarin, Ph.D. in Education
Taganrog State Pedagogical University, Russia

This work contains the results of research on the causes of interpersonal conflicts in management teams. It is shown that in companies employing more than 600 people systemic interpersonal conflicts on the lower level of management may occur. At middle management level permanent interpersonal conflicts appear in companies with over 3000 employees.

Keywords: interpersonal conflicts, management team, causes of conflicts, conflicts neutralization, the study of conflicts.

It is known that conflicts between specialists “burn up” to 20% of working time. Conflicts between members of the management teams can lead to bankruptcy of companies, and in any case bring stresses and diseases to participants of such conflicts.

The theoretical basis for this research covers: the theory of transactional analysis, the theory of relations between psychological types of people, psychological theory of formation of small groups. Initial data for statistical processing are obtained from the publications on the theory and practice of modern management. The calculations are made in relation to the USA, as a country with the developed competitive economy.

In the present work, the theoretical and statistical analyses were conducted to identify the causes of interpersonal conflicts in management teams. It is shown that in companies employing more than 600 people systemic interpersonal conflicts on the lower level of management may appear. At middle management level permanent interpersonal conflicts appear in companies with over 3000 employees.

The easiest way to eliminate the system of interpersonal conflicts and their heavy consequences is training managers and managerial reserve to use methods of transactional analysis. Development of pedagogical technologies /1/ must be used in order to activate the right hemisphere of brain of leaders acting at all levels of management. This will create the atmosphere in the company, directed towards the solution of strategic tasks in conditions of the increasing competition.

A more expensive way is careful diagnostics of employees before appointing to the position of the head. Hidden systematic reason of interpersonal conflicts: the typological diversity of management teams on the lower level management.

Below are the results of the research on the typological differences of managers at various levels, exclusively related to management activities.

Typology by C. Jungis is very convenient for practical use /2/. The results of the typological diagnostics of specialists and managers of US institutions are shown in the diagram. Statistical analyses were conducted by the author of this report, according to the data published in the work /3/. Only one parameter of the four pairs of personal preference is used in the analysis. It is the characteristics of the head of the thinking type. This option is most brightly expressed in the management activity and may be associated with the “I-status” of the personality structure by E. Berne /4/.

As shown in the diagram, all types of psyche are equally registered at the level of specialists. However, as you go up the career ladder, the situation is changing. “Thinking” ones become leaders, creating a system of remuneration that takes into account labour productivity, in which those following the schedule and deadlines are more important than those being creative, innovative and planning strategically. This is because the increase of productivity and profits is contributing to such traits as objectivity and responsibility. And for these qualities thinking-type people, of course, get a promotion.

The chart allows speaking about high typological homogeneity of the managerial personnel of middle and top level management. These and further calculations are conducted at the accepted norm of manageability (area control) equal to 7 /5/.

Emergence of formal small groups, typologically different from the majority of managers of lower levels, is theoretically possible if the
The number of members is 600 people and more. The typological diversity in the management of companies with over 600 people, leads to emergence of small psychological groups with alternative personal preferences.

Increasing rate of interpersonal conflicts is the consequence of this process. The intensity of interrelations between "colleagues", which ensures the achievement of current and strategic goals of the organization, has reduced by 10-15%.

Why is this happening?

The number of feeling-managers at the lower level of control is increasing. Informal small psychological groups emerge, in which the state "naughty" is only possible. The mood on the hard work and high performance in such a situation is absent. It may be achieved due to the impact of higher leader (state "boss" against "naughty"). The conflict nature of the interaction due to the significant divergence of positions (on two levels) and pronounced extension of the above said, is presented at the scheme 1 of the following table /6/.

Communications between members of small groups of the feeling-type heads and members of small groups of the thinking-type heads statistically proceed according to the second scheme ("For what reason" and "Teacher") and the third scheme ("Colleague" against "Naughty") of the table.

It can be argued that typologically heads in developing countries differ greatly from the heads in the USA and other advanced economies. However, different levels of maturity of the market structures are not fundamentally important from the point of view of the theory of management. The development of competition, penetration of foreign companies to the markets of developing countries, growing number of joint ventures etc. create the conditions for promotion of people with the dominance of the thinking-type traits to positions of heads in developing countries. And typological uniformity of managers in developing countries will soon be brought to the classical level, shown in the figure.

According to the calculations, emergence of the typologically different formal small groups on the middle level is possible only if the number of members exceeds 3000 people. It is shown that in companies employing more than 600 people systemic interpersonal conflicts on the lower level of management may arise.

Neutralization of the conflicts can be achieved by involving the lower level leaders in the courses on the theory and practice of conflict-free communication.

References:


Information about author:

1. 1. Valeriy Okulich-Kazarin – Ph.D. in Education, Taganrog State Pedagogical University; address: Russia, Taganrog city; e-mail: okvp@yandex.ru