

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN NON-STATE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Abstract

The functioning of NGO's in the Czech Republic has been influenced by radical changes in the laws in recent years. The revolution in the non-profit sector was caused by the law on social services (108/2006 Coll.) and particularly the civil code (89/2012 Coll.), which regulates particular forms of non-state non-profit organizations in a new way, and also defines the concept of public benefit. Organizations in the non-profit sector are struggling with a variety of problems. These include the lack of funds, high rate of staff turnover and uncertainty. Still many remain in the non-profit sector, in particular those who have drawn comparison with the work in the public or profit area. The reason may be the modern communication and motivational manager strategies, encouraging creative, credible and free work environment. The objective of this text is to provide a survey study from the non-profit sector in the Czech Republic and to answer these questions: What are the communication and motivational strategies that can make employee satisfaction in the NGO increase? What non-financial tools are used? What communication errors can managers make? What communication procedures are effective in order to increase the attractiveness of the work and credibility of a non-profit organization?

Key words

communication, non-profit sector, motivational strategies, communication errors

Introduction

The functioning of NGO's in the Czech Republic has been influenced by radical changes in the laws in recent years. The revolution in the non-profit sector was caused by the law on social services (108/2006 Coll.) which defined particular social services, implemented their registration and unified financing. What was also important was the setting of professional requirements and clear division of highly qualified social workers and social services workers. The latter work only in a direct care and their special education is a 150-hour course as a minimum. The civil code (89/2012 Coll.) regulates particular forms of non-state non-

profit organizations in a new way, and also defines the concept of public benefit. The mission of the publicly beneficial organization is to contribute to the general well-being of the society. Only persons with a clear record using their assets acquired from honest sources can affect decision making in the organization. With regard to the publicly beneficial character the NGO's have the opportunity to receive grants from public sources and use other benefits (e.g. tax relief).

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The objective of this text is to provide a survey study from the non-profit sector in the Czech Republic and to answer these questions: What are the communication and motivational strategies that can make employee satisfaction in the NGO increase? What non-financial tools are used? What communication errors can managers make? What communication procedures are effective in order to increase the attractiveness of the work and credibility of a non-profit organization? The aim of the text is a special focus on non-financial resources in the non-profit sector, not the analysis of financing.

In the following text we are going to briefly describe particular forms of NGO's in the Czech Republic. In the main part of the text there are presented effective communication strategies and management faults. The conclusion includes a list of factors significantly affecting the attractiveness, credibility and transparency of the NGO.

1. New Forms of NGO's in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic a new civil code has been introduced since January 1st 2014. Besides other things it brings a number of changes in the non-profit sector. Some legal forms of NGO's have been changed, their rights and obligations, the purpose and scope of activities. The most widespread form of NGO's until 2014 was a civil association. The law on Association of citizens, which regulated this legal form, was completely revoked. Civil associations have not ceased to exist, they have automatically transformed to the so-called associations regulated by the new civil code and other regulations. The purpose of the association is to associate citizens with common interest (activity oriented inwards – for the association members). It can be established by three people who agree on the articles of association. The association comes into existence on the

date of registration in a public register. If the association is developing another activity, for example business, the profit goes back to the association. The second option of the civil association transformation was a change in the public benefit society, which was possible until December 31st 2013. Since 2014 new publicly beneficial societies can no longer be established. The curiosity is that all publicly beneficial societies exist in accordance with the revoked law on publicly beneficial societies. Publicly beneficial societies are based on wider possibilities of business and easier fundraising from public sources. Naturally they have to do an annual audit. Potential profit is used to support the society and its public benefits. The idea of publicly beneficial companies was revolutionary with regard to the development of social entrepreneurship. Combining public services and profit is slowly developing in the Czech Republic. A modern form of beneficial companies is the institute, which may also do business and even establish a commercial company. The profit is used for the development of the institute. A new civil code also regulates the foundation and endowment funds, both typical NGO forms, bringing together the assets for a specific purpose. A social cooperative is another type of NGO. It implements publicly beneficial activities with the aim to promote social cohesion and work integration of disabled people. The profit from the business may, however, be distributed among the members of the social cooperatives, therefore it is not a typical NGO. Social cooperatives are also specifically regulated by the act on business corporations. Among NGO's rank also churches and religious communities regulated by the act on churches and religious communities (3/2002 Sb.).

The new civil code is the first legal norm in the Czech Republic which finally defines public benefit (§ 146). The mission of the publicly beneficial organization is to contribute to the general well-being of the society. Only persons with a clear record using their assets acquired from honest sources can affect decision making in the organization. With regard to the publicly beneficial character the NGO's have the oppor-

tunity to receive grants from public sources and use other benefits (e.g. tax relief).

2. Effective Communication Strategies in NGO's

The requirements on communication skills of the manager and the entire team are growing in the context of new communication technologies, globalization and diversification of the workforce. The attractiveness of a nonprofit organization, its corporate identity and image are closely related to communication strategies. Employees usually evaluate communication in the organization as effective, provided that they have an access to information and can communicate openly with superiors. If there are positive attitudes and relationships reinforced, they all know their objectives and competencies and often receive feedbacks /1/. A modern NGO works on the principle of sharing objectives precisely set in combination with self-realization and a certain degree of freedom. Thanks to the managerial communication strategies the workers realize their personal share on the attractiveness of the organization.

2.1 The NGO manager's Personality

The communication strategy of the organization is based on the manager's preferences, or more precisely, individual teams' managers' preferences. Communication skills belong to the basic equipment of the person responsible for the formulation and implementation of the objectives, the methods of objectives implementation and coordination of the whole team. Effective communication rises from relevant education and managerial experience. Of course it depends on the size of the organization and the complexity of the tasks. Only intuitive management communication, however, is not generally sufficient. The non-profit sector attracts significant, often talented personalities. Working with them, however, is challenging due to the coordination of roles and the team's emotional tuning. Sometimes for the senior positions in the large organizations there are selected personalities with evident professional and human qualities, however, they lack the necessary management education. In the past

this was a problem concerning church institutions in the Czech Republic. Some religious non-profit organizations then fought with the fatigue and turnover of the staff who left the organization in advanced stages of burnout. A successful manager should consciously use management methods and choose such communication strategies, the consequences of which he can predict. In the following text we are going to describe selected effective communication and motivational strategies and focus on what is specific on a well-working team.

2.1.1 Forms of Managerial Communication

The basic form of a managerial communication is a personal interview. In general, direct communication is more effective than indirect or mediated communication. It allows quick and clear communication of information and also brings the incentive (disincentive) potential through non-verbal communication. The interview should be thought out and prepared in advance, similar way presenting Blanchard and Johnson /2/. A subordinate person should be informed about the interview in advance and a manager should plan what to communicate and how so that the communication may end positively. The interview should not last too long and should be factual.

Apart from face to face communication during the personal interviews, meetings and discussions with the team, the telephone, email, skype or chat are also widely used. Thanks to these options there may take place e.g. electronic meetings. On the one hand these modern communication methods make work easier, on the other hand, however, they place high demands on the boundary setting as each person can be easily available. In larger organizations communication is also held by circulars and annual meetings. In NGO's providing social services it is popular to combine annual presentation of good practice examples in a form of a party. In practice the lack of standardized communication creates space for non-standardized communications, dependent on emotions, i.e. spying, slander and exaggeration. Effective managerial communication is based on Epstein's communication scheme i.e.

the principle of direct and clear communication. Clear information leading directly to the recipient is a guarantee of comprehensibility and knowledge in the organization. The way of communicating and principles of providing feedbacks is presented in chapter. 2.3.2.

2.2 The Specifics of a Well-functioning Team

The character of the team is based on the objectives, focus, size, and other specifics of a particular organization. Some patterns are general, they are applied both in the non-profit/profit sectors and state/ non-state sectors. It can be concluded that NGO's tend to be more flexible as to the implementation of new procedures and communication strategies. Given the publicly beneficial character and a higher rate of a non-financial motivation in the non-profit sector, the emphasis is put on the credibility of the team members inwards and outwards and a good working atmosphere. What is the composition of a well functioning team? In terms of the number it is the teams composed of five up to eleven persons that are effective in practice.

In large organizations the staff is divided into smaller teams so that the team size may allow barrier-free exchange of information and experience. In small organizations the number may be lower, however, the emphasis is put on other rules of making the team. These include the principle of the head – arms – the heart. The team should be composed of persons with excellent cognitive skills (original ideas, know-how) and people who implement these ideas and put them into practice. Sufficient attention should be paid to the selective procedure.

In the Czech Republic the assesment centre methods have been increasingly applied. Applicants for the team work are observed during two-to three-day stay and classified by interactive psychodiagnostic methods. Traditional methods include a CV analysis, interview, questionnaire or work eligibility test. Self assessment is also important. In larger organizations HR officers often use graphologic analysis. Team diversity is supported by a number of arguments and research studies. What is inspiring are scientific studies revealing the Apollo syndrome /3/. It revealed the fact that

teams made up of excessively intelligent individuals are a real disaster for team work. These "mensané" usually have long and destructive debates and they fail to realize their ideas. They have high analytical abilities but lower degree of creativity and cooperation.

All team members should honor the motto "Together we achieve more" (Together – Everybody – Achieves – More) and feature certain general characteristics. These include expertise (knowledge , qualifications), the ability of cooperation and mutual recognition (non-rivalry), the ability of open communication and receiving feedback and loyalty to the NGO's priorities and respect for its rules. The team benefits rather from the ability to compromise, a certain degree of discreetness and humility than the genius (real or presumed) and tendency to promote their personality dramatically. Krüger /4/ describes the synergetic potential of a successful team, summarizing it in three areas: the organization (objectives and binding regulations), qualification (knowledge and skills) and cooperation (trust and loyalty).

2.3 Team Motivation and Communication in NGO's

Despite the lack of finance in the non-profit sector there are reasons that encourage workers' high work performance and satisfaction. A direct correlation between work performance and satisfaction in personnel management is well known. As the authors of the bestseller "Minute Manager" state the people who feel good also reach good results. People learn best from success. One of the good manager's tasks is to catch their subordinates doing well. Praise as well as admonition is to be immediate and fast. It always relates to the activity, never the personality of the worker /5/.

According to Herzberg /6/ among the main motivating factors for achieving the objectives are recognition, promotion, meaningfulness of work, possibility of personal growth and responsibility. It is interesting that the amount of salary as well as the certainty of work and workplace relationships is considered as rather maintenance factors. Yet these are necessary to maintain reasonable satisfaction, however not

the essence of motivation. In relation to the non-profit sector in the Czech Republic it can be stated that finance and assurance are problematic. However there is often a good focus and space for personal growth. The meaningfulness of work is naturally associated with the public interest nature of NGO's. Pavol Frič, Czech professor /7/ carried out quantitative sociological studies in the field of the non-profit sector, particularly in social services. He found out that 93% of respondents prefer the service of the needed to the profitable business. The majority of respondents agreed with the idea that NGO's are the pioneers in the uncovering of new problems and solutions. The important characteristics of NGO's workers include democratic attitudes, the sense of community work, reciprocity and trust. Frič summarizes his findings in the password "mission, pioneering and solidarity."

Similarly Novotný and Lukeš /8/ state on the basis of their research „Motivation and NGO Managing“ that the main motivational factors are meaningfulness of the work, belief and life mission, freedom and gaining new experience. It is a different motivation than the financial one which is dominating in the non-profit sector. Yet it cannot be said that financial motivation is not important.

The team manager should know well the inner motivation of their subordinates which always stems from their personal needs. It may be the need for self-realization, professional or personal growth, excellence, recognition, stability, meaningfulness or order. Plamínek /9/ suggests the so-called golden rule of motivation, i.e. adjusting the tasks to the staff, not the staff to the tasks. The author presumes the fact that there is no universal incentive that would be interesting for every worker the same way with the exception of financial rewards. As a key principle of motivation he perceives also the saturation of the worker's needs so that at least occasionally they could be looking forward to pleasing tasks and manage better the less satisfactory work. Surprisingly, Plamínek /10/ (2011) emphasizes that the motivating factor is also a fear of the unpleasant. The assessment of the worker's incentive field, i.e. their present mood and satisfaction in personal

life, is also significant. In practice, however, it cannot be recommended to create a very large space for venting personal problems and moods as there is a high risk of time misuse disadvantaging tasks performance. The manager cannot hold the role of a personal custodian or even a therapist. There must be a clear boundary. It is recommended to create standardized support meeting, whose purpose is to understand the work performance in the context of workers' personal needs. Such standardized meetings are not in the Czech NGO's commonplace, sharing problems and emotions usually take place more spontaneously. What is common in organizations providing social services is a supervision. In terms of style what is often motivational in NGO's is a non-directive management, provided well-balanced, active team. Directive management is appropriate in extreme, crisis situations when there is a risk of disorganization and panic. The advantage is as long as the team manager is able to choose from a wider range of leadership styles. In practice, however, it is true that the atmosphere of tension and fear raises workers' emergency actions, not creativity and performing objectives in high quality /11/.

2.3.1 Work with the Objectives as a Motivational Factor

Correct targeting and the ability to lead the team to the target is one of the manager's capabilities. Workers' identification with the objectives increases their motivation. Any project, whether it is the construction of the house, the provision of publicly beneficial services, or writing school work must be precisely targeted. Otherwise, there is a risk that the work will not have a system, direction or quality outcome and the high potential of the team may be completely thwarted. The result is a strong demotivation of workers.

In the NGO's in the Czech Republic the objectives are commonly formulated according to the traditional methods of SMART (specific, significant, simple, measurable motivational, achievable, agreed, realistic, timed, time-limited). In the context of the work with objectives we use a variety of techniques, for exam-

ple Occamov's razor, mind mapping or a fish bone diagram. Using Occamov's razor makes it possible to reduce the objective to the core and formulate it very narrowly and easily. Objectives that are too general provide the risk of endless chaining, often with a vague result. Mind mapping is an increasingly popular technique where participants of the working group visualize their ideas using the minimum number of images and words. This leads to a more explicit illustration of the problem, its structuring and understanding relationships within the idea. Fishbone diagram (Ishikawa) allows to separate the causes and effects of the problem and find a clear structure of the problem. This problem (result) is drawn as a fish bone linking various factors affecting the problem as the ribs. This technique helps to formulate new objectives based on the analysis of the problem. In general it is effective to begin with less ambitious objectives, since the experience of success increases the motivation of the team. However, a very easy availability is not appropriate.

2.3.2 Principle of Providing Feedback

Feedback is one of the manager's main communication tools. If the manager leads their team to the openness, he or she provides not only the feedback to the subordinates, but also receives the feedback from them. This way is not a common practice in the NGO's but it is happening. On the contrary in the profit sector and public sphere this is rather an exception. Inappropriately provided feedback has its emotional risks, therefore it is good to follow some principles.

The feedback should activate, not destroy. It should be factual, definite and emotionally neutral. The feedback should be presented in a polite way, with respect to the worker's need for self-respect and sense of partner communication. What is evaluated is always the activity, not the worker's personality. Other principles include: good timing (preferably immediately after completion of the task), the balance of compliments and criticism (start and end positively) and provide space for the explanation and searching for better solutions. Blanchard and Johnson (1993) emphasize the

need for frequent and very quick feedback. If it is necessary to admonish, it is good to inform the team that the results of the work will be evaluated openly. The authors recommend to admonish workers as soon as possible, be factual and name the feelings related to mistakes which were made. After a short pause, it is appropriate to give the worker hand or touch them another way, recall the positive results of the work and appreciate the worker's personality.

2.3.3 Management of Communication Mistakes

"The manager should not be an egocentric individual always accenting their personality, opinions and thoughts. A modern type of the manager is focused on the others, he or she can listen to them, coordinate their activities and develop their ideas, respect various interests, predict their behaviour, understand and get along with them. Obedience is not always and in all circumstances the most demanded quality." /12/. In Bohemia there was published a book dealing with 10 most expensive managerial mistakes /13/. At this point we select only those relating to inappropriate communication and which have not been presented in this article: the effort to increase the authority by familiar behaviour, unclear specification of competences, discrepancy between the tasks and competences, improper delegation of tasks and decision-making, discrepancy between the confusion of aims and activities, excessive checking (macromanagement), unwillingness to accept other opinions and underestimating non-financial motivation. Furthermore, it can be stated together with Barker and Cole /14/, that certain demotivation of workers is caused by inconsistent feedback, alternating views of the manager, his or her interest in workers' views and their subsequent ignoring or ascribing mistakes to the team and success to themselves. Apart from this the authors recommend managers not to leave work on time while the others are working overtime.

3. Corporate Identity and Image

In the previous chapters there were presented communication management strategies that

affect the employees' motivation to work in NGO's. It was a strategy aimed at internal work. Equally important factors in the non-profit sector are those affecting the attractiveness of the organization externally, i.e. corporate identity and image. They influence the development of NGO's, increase the number of the services users, supporters and donors. There is a correlation between the NGO's reputation and motivation of employees to work there. The aim of this article is not to analyze the issue of fundraising, public relations or human resources in the whole range. At this point we will summarize only partial aspects affecting corporate identity and corporate image.

Corporate identity relates to what a non-profit organization is like or wants to be, this is a desirable image based on the mission and objectives of the organization. It includes the internal structure, for example, the organizational environment, internal communication and culture within the organization. At the same time it strongly affects the external presentation of the organization, influencing the name, logo, website and design /15/. At the time when NGO's in the Czech Republic are struggling for their existence, decisive indicators of survival are credibility and trust. Organizations indicate this to their current and potential clients as well as employees through effective/ineffective communication and results of their work. What specific work policies are used in the environment of the Czech NGO's? Above all it is the principle of visibility, i.e., quality work with the results and their availability. The results should be clearly presented to all interested parties (employees, clients, donors and the public). What is also necessary is continuous reflection, evaluation and work with clients' feedbacks.

While the corporate identity is related to desirable positive characteristics of the organization, the positive corporate image corresponds with the image that this organization really evokes in the working group and the public, based on the corporate culture, real values and standards of conduct in particular situations. Proclaimed corporate identity often gets into a dispute with personal ideals of individual

workers, however, there are so called standards of non-acceptance. Corporate culture is also affected by the unwritten rules and customs, for example gender-based nature. Legal norms strongly influence the corporate culture as well. Above all in social service practice there are contradictions between the laws and morally best solution of complicated social situations (the traditional dilemma of obligation whether to report or not report offense). Negative impact on the corporate culture may also represent political and economic pressures. NGO's are often dependent on other subjects and may be forced to make compromises, which are not in accordance with their corporate identity or culture /16/.

Conclusion

The objective of this text was to provide a survey study from the non-profit sector in the Czech Republic and to answer these questions: What are the communication and motivational strategies that can make employee satisfaction in the NGO increase? What non-financial tools are used? What communication errors can managers make? What communication procedures are effective in order to increase the attractiveness of the work and credibility of a non-profit organization?

In the previous text we presented the latest information from the non-profit sector in the Czech Republic. We focused on the factors that influence effective team communication. A modern NGO works on the principle of sharing objectives precisely set in combination with self-realization and a certain degree of freedom. Thanks to the managerial communication strategies the workers realize their personal share on the attractiveness of the organization. High work performance and satisfaction may relate to various non-financial motivations (pioneering, self-realization, intellectual rewards, prestige of the NGO and others). As the Latin proverb says, a good reputation is better than money.

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 3. Zákon č. 108/2006 Sb., o sociálních službách.

KOMUNIKACIJSKE STRATEGIJE U NEDRŽAVNIM I NEPROFITNIM ORGANIZACIJAMA U ČEŠKOJ

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Sažetak

Funkcioniranje NGO-a u Češkoj je bilo pod utjecajem radikalnih promjena u zakonima u posljednjih nekoliko godina. Revoluciju u neprofitnom sektoru izazvao je Zakon o socijalnim uslugama (108/2006 Coll.) i osobito civilni kod (89/2012 Coll.), koji regulira pojedine oblike nedržavnih neprofitnih organizacija na novi način, a također definira pojam općeg dobra. Organizacije u neprofitnom sektoru bore se s raznim problemima. To uključuje nedostatak sredstava, visoku stopu promjene osoblja i nesigurnost. Mnogi još uvijek ostaju u neprofitnom sektoru, posebno oni koji uspoređuju rad u javnom ili privatnom sektoru. Razlog može biti moderna komunikacija i motivacijsko upravljanje strategijama, poticanje kreativnog, vjerodostojnog i slobodnog radnog okruženja. Cilj ovog rada je da se izradi istraživanje neprofitnog sektora u Republici Češkoj i odgovoriti na ova pitanja: Koje su komunikacijske i motivacijske strategije kojime se može povećati zadovoljstvo zaposlenika u NGO-u? Koji se nefinancijski alati mogu koristiti? Koje komunikacijske pogreške menadžeri mogu učiniti? Koje su komunikacijske procedure učinkovite u cilju povećanja atraktivnosti rad u sektoru i kredibilitetu neprofitnih organizacije?

Ključne riječi

komunikacija, neprofitni sektor, motivacijska strategija, komunikacijske pogreške