

Problems of intercultural communication in temporary project teams in Ukraine

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Abstract. The paper deals with the problems of managing intercultural communication in implementing temporary complex projects. The essence and tasks of communication in difficult temporary project teams are explained. The author describes the main peculiarities of intercultural communication in Ukraine and CIS countries. The problems in managing intercultural communication in implementing temporary complex projects are given on the example of designing and construction of the Lviv stadium "Arena Lviv".

Key words: intercultural communication, temporary complex projects, temporary project teams, managing intercultural communication.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, due to Ukraine's independence obtaining, with the expansion of its international relations with other countries and multinational population of Ukraine, a special theoretical and practical interest is paid to the problems of intercultural communication, especially in global business and complex international projects. The impetus for the research was also the fact that in different countries the business had to use local employees, who were characterized by a peculiar cultural competence, which complicated the activities of multinational companies, that is why they began to study and implement mechanisms of intercultural communication. Contemporary processes of globalization and democratization stressed the issue of intercultural communication at the international level as well as within national (multinational) states.

The interesting fact is that the access to Ukraine's past as well as to the history of its ethnic composition

was fully or almost closed, and the existing information, which sometimes appeared, was not complete and quite controversial. Hence, the scientific problem reflects the conflict between the achieved levels of sociological knowledge about the features of intercultural communication in multinational temporary project and need for building the successful intercultural relations through communication in it.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

It should be noted that different theoretical and methodological aspects of the described problem are being researched quite actively by the global and domestic social science.

Anthropologist Edward T. Hall [1] is generally acknowledged to be the founder of the scholarly field of intercultural communication during the 1951-1955 periods when he was at the Foreign Service Institute of the U.S. Department of States. The 1954 year may be considered as the date of birth of intercultural communication as an academic discipline that was the date of Hall Edward T. & Trager George L. [8,9] "The Analysis of Culture" Publishing. The authors in this paper proposed for the first time the term "intercultural communication" for the general use, which reflected, in their view, a special area of human relations. Later, the main provisions and ideas of intercultural communication were more fully developed in E. Hall famous work "The Silent Language" [7] where the author showed a close relationship between culture and communication. It is believed that E. Hall is a founder of intercultural communication as a separate discipline. At

his book *“Understanding Cultural Differences”* Edward T. Hall [8] noted: “For the past thirty years we have conducted research in the field of intercultural communication: designing programs for the selection and training of people working in foreign cultures, consulting to international business, and writing books and articles on the intercultural process. We specialize in identifying the nonverbal components of intercultural communication – the unspoken signals and assumptions that flow from human psychology and national character, elements critical to success in business.”

The profound basis for the study of modern communications is the theory of communicative action of Jürgen Habermas [2], which makes it possible to understand the fundamental features of intercultural communication. It is important to use the data for building successful cross-cultural relationships through communication in complex temporary project teams.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Depending on the nature of the tasks, project teams can be formed on a permanent or temporary basis. Regular project teams are created for the long term and move from one project to another almost at full composition. Temporary project teams are created in a complex and uncertain situations associated with multiple unpredictable circumstances, according to which it is necessary to quickly change the decision. They are formed according to specific objectives of the project and are completed by functional departments of the company staff and are disbanded after completion of the performed works.

Because of unpredictability and high work riskiness of temporary project teams, it is more difficult to create and manage them. The process is more complicated in the case when specialists from different countries are involved at the intersection of several disciplines and work on the projects realization. In order to make decisions and achieve goals, managers need highly skilled, often unique specialists from different spheres, who often may be found abroad while planning and implementation of complex and unique projects [5].

In practice, temporary project teams are formed for the construction of the original objects building, innovative products development for emergency operations realization and medical services providing as a result of emergency situations of industrial or natural origin etc. For example, the 57th annual song contest "Eurovision 2012" was held in Azerbaijan capital Baku on the stage of recently built sports - concert complex Baku Crystal Hall. This new, multi-functional hall was built in record short time - for 8 months. Typically, 4 - 5 years are needed for the process of building design and construction with the size of a football stadium. In order to complete the project on time, works on the design, engineering and construction were carried out in parallel. "Baku Crystal Hall» is built in the form of steel

structure, consisting of three independent parts: a modular stadium, roof and internal membrane of exterior. Roof weighs about 2,400 tons. Hall is built according to German and European standards for sports and concert halls. This building – is the outcome of many organizations work: the general contractor of German company ALPINE Bau Deutschland AG, GMP International GmbH, a multinational company NUSSLI AG with its headquarters in Switzerland, as well as dozens of contractors and consultants [3].

Intercultural communication as a special kind of converse involves communication between speakers of different languages and different cultures [11]. The comparison of languages and cultures reveals not only a general, universal, but specific, national, original, which is stimulated by differences in the history of nations development. Intercultural communication deals with understanding and agreement which means: to understand something alien and at the same time to be understood while talking in a foreign language.

The peculiar feature of geopolitical position of Ukraine is that it is defined by its location in the zone between East and West (between Western European and Eastern European cultures), between the Catholic and Orthodox branches of Christianity. During centuries, two types of European culture - western and eastern were formed. The synthesis of these two traditions was the most clearly manifested in the period of Kievan Rus' and the Cossack state.

The geopolitical position of Ukraine as a specific zone between different culturological systems of East and West, South and North contributed to the fact that Ukraine organically absorbed the values of different cultures, and this opens up great opportunities for both its domestic development and gaining a worthy place in the international community.

The historical influence of different cultures on the development of Ukrainian society contributed to the fact that a system of interconnected regions was formed in Ukraine into one integrity with specific historical, economic, geographic, demographic and cultural characteristics. The structure of population of Ukraine are includes: Ukrainian 77.8%, Russian 17.3%, Romanian 0.8% (including Moldovan 0.5%), Belarusian 0.6%, Crimean Tatar 0.5%, Bulgarian 0.4%, Hungarian 0.3%, Polish 0.3%, Jewish 0.2%, Greeks 0.2% and other 1.6% (including Muslim Bulgarians, otherwise known as Torbesh and a microcosm of Gotlander Swedes of Gammalsvenskby) [14].

Ukraine is the major source of migrants in many of the European Union Member States. During the 1990s and early 2000s, Ukraine's sputtering economy and political instability contributed to rising emigration, especially to nearby Poland and Hungary, but also to other States such as Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Israel, Russia and Canada. Although estimates vary, approximately two to three million Ukrainian citizens

are currently working abroad, most of them illegally, in construction, service, housekeeping, and agriculture industries.

By the early 2000s, Ukrainian embassies reported that 300,000 Ukrainian citizens were working in Poland, 200,000 in Italy, approximately 200,000 in the Czech Republic, 150,000 in Portugal, 100,000 in Spain, 35,000 in Turkey, 20,000 in the United States and small significant numbers in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. The largest numbers of Ukrainian workers abroad, about one million, are in the Russian Federation. Since 1992, 232,072 persons born in Ukraine have immigrated to the US. These features should be considered in the whole system of state building, including the development and implementation of complex projects of national scale [14].

The problem of regional unity of Ukraine has great international significance. The geopolitical position of Ukraine holds her responsible for the construction of a common "European home" and the new world order as a whole, because if Ukraine for some reason becomes a zone of social and political tension, or even conflicts, the hope for a comfortable "European House" is vain. Analyzing different approaches to Ukraine regionalization, we believe that it is appropriate to take into account the specifics of business conducting in regions, taking as basis the national and regional peculiarities of the nation mentality.

An interesting phenomenon which is observed in Ukraine, in Russia and other post-socialist countries is a "Blat". There is a wide range of social networking across all business contacts at those countries. This is apparent as social networking has evolved from a Russian and Ukrainian cultural tradition, called Blat, which has been important, historically, involving the use of personal contacts to acquire resources. *Blat* is a system of networking, embedded within Russian and Ukrainian culture, which relies on informal, personal contacts which, when employed in business, provides the potential to gain competitive advantage [4]. *Blat* has been practiced for centuries in post-socialist countries and it still has deep roots in culture and the economy. *Blat* is built into the Russian hierarchical social structures and is especially relevant in dealings with tax authorities, customs offices, banks, and regional administration and is still important in doing business, more generally in temporary projects teams. The authors distinguish *Blat* as being in two forms in contemporary Russia and Ukraine [4]:

- 1) Traditional *Blat* that provides for informal networking based on trust and long-term personal relationships,
- 2) Modern *Blat* based on utilizing uni-directional power and domination within the networks.

Using data from a sample of 100 Russian and Ukrainian businesses, the authors find that traditional

Blat is positively correlated with innovation and organizational performance; while modern *Blat* is negatively correlated with performance. A possible negative impact of *Blat* should be considered when managing temporary complex intercultural projects.

Each member of the temporary transnational project is a carrier of their specific culture or subculture, which includes a variety of features: ideological, linguistic, ethno-national, religious and so on. Therefore, it is clear that at the meeting of different cultures representatives each of them will act in accordance with their cultural norms.

Today this moment is supported by various ethnic groups in their efforts to self-identify, maintain their traditional roots, not to be dissolved in a multinational public space. However, the coexistence of ethnic groups in a social and cultural space imposes a stamp on communication models between them, on their cultural and behavioral practices [3].

Among many factors that cause impact on the communication of different cultures representatives, a special place is the desire to come to mutual understanding with each other, create, in the conditions of general life problems, (socio-economic, socio-political, socio-cultural, etc.) the optimal intercultural communicative competence, namely the ability to implement effective communication in intercultural contexts. Ukrainian scientists discussed such problems, for example the theoretical approaches to communications management in IT industry of Ukraine are explained by Semenyshyn V. and Oleksiv I. [18].

With the formation of temporary project teams of national level of objectives and scale – the variability of communication and status characteristics of the different cultural environments representatives is observed. Taking into consideration the ethno-cultural identity and specific interpretation of messages in such projects it is impossible to avoid cross-functional and international conflicts. Representatives of the various functional units usually speak in different professional language, they have different settings and knowledge, values and priorities, and therefore it is not easy for them to cooperate [12]. If ordinary employee from one unit is equal with the head of the other unit, it is impossible to preserve the hierarchical system. And when we talk about international team, employees often work in different countries, and spend their part time communicating through information and communication technologies. Due to the time difference and language barriers, various misunderstandings, inconsistencies and failures often occur. In addition, employees do not have time to adapt to the new colleagues methods of work, their characteristics and work habits. The absence of the formed professional relationships in temporary project complicates the work - people sometimes do not even know each other's names (for example, in cases of saving projects during disaster or emergency medical

operations in large hospitals where doctors, nurses and technicians who work on a sliding scale should act as a single entity: quickly understand what to do and ideally make a whole set of measures) [4]. Therefore, it is difficult for projects members to communicate and negotiate in the temporary cross- functional and international groups [17].

Thus, if the organization should implement something she had never done and probably will not do in the future, a common structure of the project working group does not fit. Because it is impossible to definitively predict which knowledge and skills will be needed, also we can not exclude that the circumstances may change during the performance of work. The hardest and the most important for project managers is to establish close cooperation and constant communication, to help participants to find common ground. Under these conditions, the project manager must be able to not only manage a team, but also to set operational teams and provide them with conditions for work. It is necessary to rank the tasks according to the sequence that involve inverse interdependence, and explain when professionals or subgroup must meet - directly or online - to agree future steps, identifying necessary resources, analyzing of the problem and decisions-making.

With the implementation of large projects on a national scale it is important to consider the existing features of intercultural communication in the Ukrainian business as a way of sharing knowledge, ideas, beliefs, concepts, emotions, etc., and a set of common cultural values and norms of the business organization in the host country. An example of conflicts that may arise in the implementation of major national projects is the construction of a football stadium in Lviv for the matches of the European Football Championship 2012. Today, with the number of seats for spectators "Arena Lviv" takes 4th place in Ukraine, with the illumination of pitch- the first place [5].

Design and construction of the Lviv stadium "Arena Lviv" was accompanied by scandal situations and ambiguity. In particular, for the order of the Lviv city authorities in 2007, the German company «Hochtief Construction» developed a project of the new arena. According to the plans of German architects – the stadium was designed for 32,000 spectators, the construction was planned to be completed by 2010. The cost of the stadium was estimated at 70 million 400 thousand euros. In early 2008 the German company «Hochtief» was replaced by Austrian company «AlpineBau». The developer of the stadium project acted "Design Bureau Albert Wimmer," which projected the stadium to host the final part of the European Football Championship 2008 in Austria. Lviv firm "Arnica" worked together with Austrians. Later in the year and a half after the announcement of the host of Euro 2012 the construction work has not started, and the

Austrian company «AlpineBau» refused to carry out the orders of Lviv authorities in early October 2008. The parties did not agree on the amount of funding, as 85 million euros proposed by city authority, was not enough for a company that wanted to bring their own vehicles to the city and Austrians builders, which greatly would have increased the estimate [5]. The information about the negotiations between the leaders of the city and a corporation IUD (Industrial Union of Donbass) was announced in November 2008. Mariupol JSC "Design and Construction Company «Azovinteks»" was executant and contractor of works. Ministry of Regional Development and Construction chose this company among 3 candidates - other potential project implementers were architectural firm of Yuriy Seriogin (representative of the German company "Hohtif") and Turkish company "Yeditepe" [7]. 22 firms participated for comparison, in the competition for the construction of Euro 2012 National Stadium in Warsaw in 2008, including elected Executive - Consortium JEMS Architekci-Dawos [18].

As a result, Lviv stadium is the third most expensive stadium in the history of Ukraine (after the "Olympic" and " Donbass-Arena"). According to the order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On approval of the corrected project and the title of structure "Building of a stadium in Stryyska street - Ring Road in Lviv" dated on March 28, 2012 № 167 -r total construction budget amounted 2,944,692 UAH or approximately 375 million \$ [3].

Thus, the lack of the processes understanding of intercultural communication features in Ukrainian business as a way of sharing knowledge and a set of common cultural values and norms of business conditions management in Ukraine, foreign companies could not get the project of building the stadium, even with its technical processing and commercially attractive proposals.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Intercultural communication in the framework of international temporal project is characterized by peculiarities of communicant's national character, the specifics of their emotional composition, cultural-specific features of thinking etc. Communication in such projects between workers happens also within the same culture (inner cultural communication).

2. The hardest and the most important for project managers are to establish close cooperation and constant communication, help participants to find common ground. Under these conditions, the project manager must be able to not only to manage a team classically, but also gain operational teams and provide them with conditions for work. The emphasis is made on tasks ranking according to priorities, organizing participants meetings - directly or online - to agree future steps, planning and distribution of resources, analyzing problems and making appropriate management decisions.

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