THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF A MANAGER IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Abstract: The article analyzes the professional qualifications, working methods, and scientific approaches to planning the activities of a culture manager. It discusses issues such as building activity on the basis of dialogue, showing interest in employees and community life, involving the team in creative activity, understanding the needs and goals of the collective, maintaining both formal and informal communication with team members, and creating a creative environment within the institution.

Keywords: management, marketing, organization, cultural institution, need, human dignity, freedom of personal choice, trust, environment based on mutual respect, initiative, creative abilities.

The term manager (from English — "to organize, to manage") refers to a specialist or an official who carries out organization and management functions and makes managerial decisions. As a rule, a manager is part of the middle or upper management of an organization and oversees labor relations. However, not all managers perform the same role within an organization; they solve tasks of varying complexity. Managers are often referred to as company managers, although there are also office managers (secretaries), personnel managers, sales managers, and others. In any case, the position of a manager implies the need to make decisions, work with information, allocate existing resources, and coordinate the activities of people, departments, firms, institutions, and specific environments. In the field of culture, there can also be various individuals referred to as managers. First of all, a culture manager may be the head of a cultural institution, a cultural institute, or a governmental body regulating activities in the cultural sphere. Such managers often determine the mission of the organization, form its long-term and short-term goals, make decisions about staff and motivation systems, and organize commercial activities [1:72].

A manager may also carry out part of the management functions within cultural institutions — for example, in marketing solutions, human resource management, etc. In this case, the manager may be an official performing coordination and organizational functions. This includes managers of theaters, museums, and similar institutions. It may also refer to a manager responsible for a specific field of activity within a cultural organization (for example, a public relations manager). The professional qualification of a manager is ensured through special training or obtaining relevant education. Only in this case does the specialist acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities, and thus becomes competent in their field of activity. A manager must be able to manage communication processes and information flow, coordinate activities, organize work with employees, and be ready to perform other functions. An important part of any manager's qualification also includes knowledge of business communication and negotiation, professional and corporate ethics, and conflict management [2:72].

Moreover, a manager must be morally and psychologically prepared to perform managerial and organizational activities within an organization, taking into account the interests of the entire institution. At the same time, there are specific requirements for managers working in specialized areas. In the socio-cultural sphere, for instance, they must possess balanced knowledge about

369

donors, public-private and social partnerships, and the specific features of marketing cultural services. Regardless of where a manager works, they should value professional growth, the ability to make non-standard decisions, strong business motivation, flexible thinking, and the will to make decisions in critical moments.

For a manager, the most essential qualities are communication and organizational skills. Among communication abilities, specialists highlight politeness, good manners, the ability to establish contact with others, proficiency in professional language, and nonverbal communication techniques. Organizational skills include the ability to optimally distribute tasks, organize joint activities, adequately assess oneself and others, and create a "state of success." A manager's activity becomes effective when it focuses on discovering innovations, creating and applying new technologies, engaging in creative work, generating ideas, and developing new forms and methods of work. For managers in the cultural field, the following principles are widely recognized:

- respect for human dignity;
- granting freedom of personal choice;
- trust in individuals and their potential abilities;
- creating an atmosphere of trust based on mutual respect;
- developing initiative, creative abilities, and the capacity to find oneself in a creative team [3:73].

Among recommendations for culture managers, specialists often highlight the following professional competencies:

- building relationships with subordinates on a dialogical basis rather than focusing on formal hierarchy;
- showing interest in employees and community life;
- engaging the creative team in the organization's lifestyle and understanding its needs and goals;
- communicating with team members not only formally but also informally;
- considering that creative professionals require special motivation systems tailored to their specific work characteristics;
- striving to create a creative atmosphere within the teams of cultural institutions [4:73].

A manager in the field of culture must meet a number of requirements. In particular, a culture manager should have socio-cultural and design skills, understand the specifics of cultural and creative work, comprehend the significance of culture and creativity, and possess knowledge of cultural values and heritage. Moreover, an essential part of a manager's professional competence is their economic and legal literacy, as well as a deep understanding of the principles of non-profit organizations and the cultural services market. A culture manager should demonstrate a high level of professionalism in modern management and marketing, as well as a high level of general culture and education [5:18,19].

The importance of professional education disciplines that develop knowledge and skills in areas such as studying the image of cultural managers, branding, fundraising, sponsorship, social marketing, and others is increasing. In addition, a cultural manager is expected to be creative, to find new approaches, to develop the cultural industry, the cultural services and cultural tourism market, and to identify ways of integrating culture with the economy. In the cultural field, for example, managers may carry out their activities in the following structures: cultural institutions, recreation centers, theaters, museums, concert halls, cinema centers, costume rental services,

publishing houses, houses of folk art, and culture and leisure parks. Likewise, they can serve as organizational and administrative managers, managers of creative teams, or managers organizing creative performances. In artistic management, there are producers, impresarios, promoters, and entrepreneurial managers.

Management is implemented through various directions, methods, and techniques. A management style refers to the behavioral approach adopted by a manager toward subordinates in order to achieve organizational goals. Within a leadership style, the degree of delegation of authority, the types of power used, concern for human relations, and task fulfillment all play an important role. Leadership style represents the manager's behavior in influencing subordinates and motivating them to achieve the organization's objectives. Specialists in personnel management usually distinguish between autocratic and democratic leadership styles [6:102]. An autocratic leader has sufficient power to impose their will on subordinates. Autocrats are committed to the unity of command and centralization of authority; they prefer to enforce strict control and the threat of punishment to make people work. Such a manager centralizes authority, structures the subordinates' work, gives them little freedom in decision-making, and sometimes exerts psychological pressure on performers.

Under an autocratic management style, administration predominates, adherence to rules is emphasized, and the leader strictly monitors task performance. This style allows for quick decision-making and can be effective when staff qualifications are low. However, it should be noted that it deprives employees of initiative, leads to demoralization, and does not guarantee complete control over subordinates [7:104]. A democratic leader, as a rule, does not impose their will on subordinates; decisions are made collectively. Such a manager prefers mechanisms of influence not based on strict regulation; they favor encouragement and avoid imposing their will on subordinates. In this case, employees are relatively autonomous, possess a sufficient degree of independence, enjoy some freedom of action and self-expression, and can make creative decisions. Subordinates participate in discussing organizational goals, decisions, and performance evaluations. The democratic style is characterized by a high degree of decentralization of authority. Despite its clear advantages, this leadership style also has drawbacks—particularly, it is relatively slow in decision-making. Managers are often classified according to their orientation in the management process or whom they prioritize:

- A task-oriented manager focuses on solving production problems, planning work, and developing a remuneration system to increase labor productivity.
- A people-oriented manager pays greatest attention to increasing productivity through improving human relations. Such a manager fosters corporate culture, encourages mutual support, allows employees to participate in decision-making as much as possible, and promotes professional growth.

It should be emphasized that in practice, combinations of these management styles are often observed, though one may predominate. In general, there is no concept of the "best" management style, since each has its advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, leadership styles cannot always be rigidly categorized; it is more important to choose a style that best suits the situation. The best manager is the one who can adapt their behavior according to real circumstances. In this regard, the concept of adaptive management style has emerged. When choosing a particular management approach, it is important to determine the nature of the situation (stable, crisis, etc.), the specific features of the problems faced by the manager (defined, ambiguous, etc.), and the characteristics of the team.

There are also several main approaches to leadership styles:

- The personal approach. From this perspective, managers must possess certain qualities such as high intelligence and knowledge, initiative, self-confidence, an appropriate appearance, and relevant abilities.
- The behavioral approach. In this case, effectiveness is determined not by the leader's personal qualities but by their behavior toward subordinates. Such a leader can motivate people to achieve organizational goals through actions and encouragement.
- The situational approach. This approach is based on the idea that, for effective management, a manager's behavioral style and personal traits must correspond to a particular situation.

Traditional leadership styles have developed differently in various countries. In Europe, the autocratic style of leadership is considered more common than in the United States, while in Japan, the participation of employees in decision-making is widely and effectively applied [8:242].

A crucial part of cultural management is planning, which determines the main directions of a cultural institution's activities. Planning is the process of defining an organization's goals, directions, and content of activity, setting tasks, and assessing the resources necessary for their fulfillment. The planning process activates various management mechanisms — organizational, informational, financial, and economic — and human resource management. It also enables the identification of priority projects and programs, assessment of available resources, task allocation, and distribution of responsibilities among staff. Planning in management is closely related to design and programming, though these concepts should be distinguished. Planning involves defining the goals and content of an organization's work for a specific period (including program and project implementation); design relates to developing an idea, implementing it, and obtaining the final product (a monument, product, service, or concert); programming focuses on carrying out a specific type of activity through the joint efforts of participants [4].

Planning is a complex, multi-stage process that requires organizational skills. It begins with identifying the goals of a cultural institution — the desired future outcomes of its work. To achieve these goals, tasks are formulated, and the methods, means, and resources for solving them are defined. Deadlines and responsible executors are set, as well as the nature and methods of control. Thus, planning in the cultural field includes several key aspects:

- defining objectives;
- forecasting;
- evaluating resources;
- developing an action program;
- budgeting and financing;
- distributing authority;
- establishing control criteria.

Planning is one of the methods that ensures the unity of efforts by all employees toward common organizational goals. Generally, planning addresses three main tasks:

1. The manager must assess the strengths and weaknesses of the institution in various areas (resources, personnel, projects, finances, production of services, etc.).
2. The manager evaluates external opportunities and the environment: competitors, laws, socio-economic and political factors, technologies, and cultural changes to determine the organization's goals and the obstacles to achieving them.

3.   Managers and their teams must decide what actions are needed to achieve the organization's objectives.

4.   Planning in cultural organizations involves the targeted distribution of intellectual, financial, material, human, and other resources to ensure their most effective use.

Cultural institutions, departments, and organizations engaged in cultural and spiritual work perform various planning tasks. Types of plans:

1.   Personnel development plans, financial plans, thematic plans (for events, holidays, etc.), and comprehensive plans.

2.   Plans may be classified as local, regional, provincial, national, district, or city-level plans, as well as specific institutional plans.

3.   By their nature, plans can be divided into:

o   Forecast plans – expressing indicative projections for the planning period;

o   Recommendation plans – containing advisory elements;

o   Directive plans – mandatory for implementation.

Directive plans must include precise instructions for tasks, numerical indicators, and specific deadlines. Such planning is often used for budget allocation, construction, or the use of material resources of cultural institutions. Recommendation plans define the minimum requirements for execution, while forecast plans represent the theoretical conditions and trends of cultural organizations' future development. Plans are also distinguished by duration: current and prospective. These include annual, quarterly, monthly, and weekly plans. Long-term plans cover 1–5 years and reflect long-term and medium-term perspectives. Five-year plans in the cultural field, usually developed at local and regional levels, may contain information on developing cultural institutions, supporting cultural events, implementing programs, and more.

Operational plans detail tactical plans and include sequences of actions for solving tactical tasks (e.g., implementing part of a program, creating costumes). Based on such plans, the activities of individual artists, creative teams, departments, and others are coordinated. In current planning, the use of network schedules is very common, as they help adjust necessary actions by calendar dates, monitor stages of work, financing methods, and task progress, assess the realism of responsibility distribution, and make corrections when needed.

In cultural institutions, network schedules are usually structured by major departments — musical support, directing, scriptwriting, material assistance, finance, technical equipment, etc. Thus, effective planning forms a hierarchical system where operational planning is part of tactical planning, which, in turn, is based on strategic planning.

Strategic planning is a set of actions and decisions aimed at developing strategies and mechanisms for achieving organizational goals. Strategy is generally understood as a comprehensive action plan ensuring the attainment of long-term objectives. Strategic planning is a critical factor in the successful functioning of cultural institutions, helping them remain competitive and achieve long-term goals. The strategic plan must take into account changes in the cultural field. It is designed to solve the most important problems — adaptation to the external environment, internal coordination, and resource allocation. Strategic developments may be reflected in projects, programs, and operational plans, forming the foundation for more detailed planning. Typically, management is responsible for implementing strategic (long-term) and annual current plans, while cultural managers, specialists, team leaders, and mid-level creative workers are responsible for executing operational and tactical plans. In summary, planning cultural activities is a specific type of action program [10:31–36]. Finally, there are

one-time and permanent plans.

One-time plans are designed to develop and achieve objectives related to a specific and unique event, project, or activity (for example, a plan aimed at the ceremonial celebration of the anniversary of a great scholar, a state, or an ancient city).

Permanent plans regulate the conditions for decision-making and define the overall management policy of an institution based on its general objectives. Such plans, as a rule, include uniform actions, procedures, and events characteristic of this type of cultural activity, and may vary each year depending on changes in the external environment (for example, annual plans developed for the celebration of nationwide holidays such as "Navruz" and "Independence Day"). Developing a plan consists of several stages, each of which involves solving specific tasks:

1.   Stage One: At this stage, organizational conditions for the planned activities are created: the circle of executors (a performer, working group, or commission), the time frame for developing the plan, and the information base (reporting data, audit materials, surveys, etc.) are determined. Methodological assistance (instructions) is provided to clarify the main technologies and planning tasks.
2.   Stage Two: This stage consists of several parts:
o   defining the goals and objectives for the planned period (goal-oriented justification of the plan);
o   specifying the characteristics of goals and objectives using concrete indicators (quantitative and qualitative, positive and negative, absolute and relative, production and consumption indicators) — all of which cover the target data;
o   determining the quantitative values of the planned indicators (using normative or analytical methods);
o   substantiating the feasibility of plan implementation, i.e., justifying the action program included in the plan;
o   designing the plan draft (there is no single standard plan in the cultural sphere, but there are existing model examples).
3.   Stage Three: Two tasks are usually solved here. First, the plan often undergoes an approval procedure with various bodies involved in its implementation. Second, the plan is approved by the head of the organization, which is confirmed by the "Approved" stamp in the upper right corner of the document.
4.   Stage Four: At this stage, it is important to convey each section of the plan to the executors. Therefore, meetings, seminars, and discussions are often held to present and explain the plan. In addition, various monitoring methods must be used to ensure the timely implementation of the approved plan.

Successful planning requires the appropriate use of methods applied in plan development. In the cultural sphere, specialists distinguish between analytical and normative planning methods. To achieve higher results, the plan should include new forms and technologies of work, the involvement of qualified specialists, and other measures. The main outcomes of activity — the cultural services, their quality and quantity — serve as the principal indicators of the analytical planning method.

The normative method of planning in the cultural field is closely related to state standards and governmental tasks developed for cultural institutions. Although such a method is rarely used in the commercial sector, it remains relevant in the non-profit sphere, where regulatory approaches to planning continue to be applied. A standard represents a set of products created or consumed by a cultural institution per unit: time, volume, area, and finally, by audience or visitor — expressed in percentages, coefficients, or other units. In the field of culture, there are established

standards for the number of cultural centers, visitors, inventory, musical instruments, staff numbers, and others.

The normative method of planning focuses on the average characteristics of work, which may limit initiative, since it sets only boundaries that cannot be exceeded or reduced. In contrast, the target-oriented planning method develops plans based on goals and actions aimed at achieving results in the work of departments, divisions, teams, and each employee. However, in the process of goal-oriented planning, certain objectives may be replaced by others; attention may shift from strategic to operational goals, and relationships between managers and subordinates may deteriorate [11:96–101]. In this regard, it should be acknowledged that the most effective approach in the field of culture is a combination of different planning methods. At the same time, plans for cultural events should remain flexible and adaptable to changing conditions. Therefore, the planning process must always be continuous. For planning to be successful, it is important to consider the realism of the set goals. Planned actions, on the one hand, should be ambitious, but on the other hand, they must be realistically achievable. Finally, the key to implementing planned activities is a balanced motivation system in working with staff and, above all, the ability to reward completed tasks.

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