



SEVERAL APPROACH TO DEFINE COMPETENCIES OF CRISIS MANAGERS IN TRANSPORT ORGANIZATION

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Abstract: *The solutions of crisis situations according to problems of traffic and transport are accompanied by many specific traits. Some of them are typical for all crisis situation, some of them denote the one singular form of crisis only. Therefore the demands on crisis managers are rising too proportionally with the intricacy of the situation. In this article several approaches to a content of manager's competencies and specified crisis manager's activities, their functions, tasks and roles are presented. In this paper we try to define the traits, qualities and skills, which are necessary to develop to effective solution of crisis situations in the transport company.*

Key words: *Crisis, crisis manager, competency, abilities, skills.*

FUNCTIONS AND ROLES OF CRISIS MANAGER

The solving of various crises in various areas of human activities expects the subject of management to gain a lot of specific knowledge, skills and other dispositions. These can vary according to character, range and sector in which the crisis is manifested.

Real life brings particular requirements on practical solution of the cases we considered to be crises or critical situations in various spheres of social life. Only the social praxis brings up the urgent task to be prepared for solving of such problems, which are indicated by endangering of human life, safety and property. The opinions on what the various types of crises have in common and what is specific for them develop gradually. It is not our goal to present the typology of crises here, but we think it is necessary to distinguish primarily the following crises:

- crises caused by unexpected accidents, technological and natural disasters with consequences on organizations, municipalities or whole regions,

- crises as consequence of acute endangering of security of the state, its citizens, its political and economical system, function of infrastructure, most often by political terrorism and military menace,
- crises in social systems caused by disrespecting or underestimating basic human needs, civic and political rights and arranged and generally accepted norms, or crises caused by failure of functions of particular system,
- crises caused by mismanaging risk of the enterprise in economical subjects (enterprises, firms), e.g. lost of liquidity, market, competition ability, failure of relation with supplier, crises in cooperating firms.

Some authors explain crises as not managed risk, as a certain stage in development of risk factors [1]. The existence of risk does not necessarily have to develop into a crisis. Vice versa, not every crisis has to announce itself by manifest risk factors. We can agree with Casserlay, "risk is the volatility of potential outcomes" [2]. So, to accept a risk also can mean an opportunity. However, not every crisis announces by

perceived risk factors. Here we do not solve these questions, because this article engages crises, which do not have their source in an enterprise.

Every crisis, regardless to its cause, specifically influences living, behavior and decision making of people. Most of crisis situation are accompanied with transport process. The crisis situation directly influences all managing processes. Apart from other so that:

- it endangers life of people and their property,
- it evokes feeling of insecurity and fear in the organization and its surrounding,
- it endangers function of particular systems in organization,
- it evokes need of urgent solution,
- it can start unexpected human behavior, panic, chaos,
- it demands restriction of certain needs of people who take part in solving the crisis or which are befallen by it, demands on co-operation of working teams rise,
- the demand for information inside the organization and also from public rises and other [3].

The crisis situation influences quality and effectiveness of decision-making processes of a manager. Long-lasting work in strenuous conditions restricts human awareness, increases the risk of wrong perception of the information and its misinterpretation. For the defining necessary skills and competencies for crisis manager, it is important to know what is expected from by the following elements of internal and external environment [4]:

- levels of management,
- authorities of state administration on particular level,
- executive subjects of the organization,
- co-operating organizations,
- directly befallen public,
- general public, media, society.

That means that the crisis manager according to transport assurance of solving a crisis situation has above all these roles:

- He decides about sources, tasks, particular measures, he solves arising problems quickly with the objective to eliminate the consequences of the crisis and to restart the function of the organization.
- He ensures the function of crisis information system, enables effective exchange of information inside the organization, between the co-operating elements and between management and public.

- He directs activity of all who take part in solving the crisis; decisively eliminates negative social phenomena, is responsible consistent and decisive leader and coordinator.

There are lots of opinions on what are the competencies of the manager. The term itself can have various meanings: competency as a set of qualities, abilities to do something, as a qualification or as a set of responsibility and authority. In connection with management we talk about manager competencies as about personal characteristics of executive managers. We must of course mention that these personal characteristics are meaningful only if managers' range of authority is strictly restricted. Then we can define competencies of a manager as *a set of knowledge, abilities, skills and experience together with physical and psychical readiness to use these qualities for effective executing of particular tasks according to given authority and general expectations*.

Because the activities of a crisis manager develop from general functions of management, we think it is suitable to specify basic abilities of crisis manager by general demands on work of headmasters. On the other hand, we accept that an important role will be played by the outputs of theoretical elaboration of the crisis management, codified social needs and demands of responsible authority of civic administration, expressed by laws, regulations, directives and other norms, including international agreements. An important source is also the experience of crisis managers and crisis crew. It is necessary to accept the needs and expectations of subjects befallen by the crisis and its consequences.

POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO IDENTIFICATION OF CRUCIAL ABILITIES OF CRISIS MANAGER

At the present there are more approaches and opinions about managers' competencies. Some authors come out of goals, content and tasks on particular levels of managing. Typical example is a model presented in most of management manuals distinguishing conceptual, social and technical abilities and skills. The content of these abilities depends on whether the author prefers functional or adjective approach. Lately we can see a diverting from traditional approach to the demands on managers' personality. The competencies to reach particular objectives on quality level of preset standard are preferred

more than personal qualities needed for the function and role of a manager.

As an example we can use the effort of The Institute of Management in Great Britain and Czech consulting firm Inventa Consulting to create the European standards of manager and professional competencies. The main goal was the creation of an effective instrument for evaluation of manager competencies. A competence is understood as *readiness of manager to attain performance with his subordinate structures according to defined standard* [5].

In case of crisis solving it is complicated to set precisely the expected result standard of the crisis management but understanding the competencies on two levels (functional and personal), as in the Table 1, is more apposite. *Functional competencies* are set of glib abilities focused on tasks of managed object. *Personal competencies* denote the ability of managing subject to keep himself on such professional readiness and in such physical and psychical condition (fitness) so that he can realize his goals and tasks effectively. Table 2 shows two levels of manager competencies.

Table 1

Functional Competencies
- Creating of strategy, goals assessment
- Managing of operations
- Managing of information
- Managing of human and other resources
Personal Competencies
- Self-knowledge, self-evaluation
- Professional development
- Physical condition
- Mental condition

Especially personal competencies, in connection with some kind of retreat from usage of psychological methods of manager evaluation, are underestimated. There exist lot of particular experiences and professional studies, which prove that often the reason of managers' failure is not professional incapability, but failure of his proven managing methods (especially in crisis). He is not psychically ready to manage this change. For the manager is not enough to manage competencies demanded by functions and roles on particular levels of management (e.g. conceptual, social, professional, technical etc.), but he also has to be able to manage himself, physically and psychically manage all demands of the stress situation [6].

In Eberspächer's opinions, *physical and mental condition* is part of personal competence [7]. Then we can define this condition for crisis manager as *ability of organism to cope with roles*

and tasks resulting from need of effective solution of crisis adequately to the situation. From this point of view, it is interesting to compare the already mentioned opinions, with the opinions and experiences of chosen subjects of crisis management in SR.

Most important activities of crisis manager:

A) In the stage of crisis planning:

- collecting of information about potential risks,
- analyzing of risk and crisis sources,
- investigating of probability of occurrence and rate of negative influence of particular factors,
- analyzing of previous crises and experiences according to their solution, formation of prognosis,
- workout of crisis plans, checkout of their realization on lower levels,
- control of preparation of preventive measures, processing of directives, techniques, examination of current crisis plans, their realization, preparation of alternative solutions,
- choosing of people to crisis crew, selection of cooperating elements,
- training of people, scenarios, exercises, screening of readiness,
- collecting of information about important and useful sources and means and others.

B) In the stage of solving of acute crisis:

- managing and coordination of work of particular subjects by realization of crisis plans,
- permanent monitoring and evaluation of the situation, control and assessment of possibilities,
- prediction of how the situation will develop,
- specifying of tasks and of their order, objective, brief and timely information of particular elements of crisis management and co-operating elements, true and sensible communication with public and media,
- reinforcement of psychological endurance of members of crisis crews and members of rescue forces,
- organization of not planned preventive and rescue activities as well as activities for ensuring life and property of befallen subjects (resources, evacuation, medical help) and others.

C) In the stage of removing of consequences of crisis:

- estimation and verifying of consequences and damages, evaluation of own possibilities,
- setting of order of activities and measures,
- managing of organization and co-ordination of rescue,
- localizing and liquidation operations, organization of co-operation with helping subjects and services,
- evaluation of importance of particular operations to distinguish important tasks from less important,
- monitoring of operations, evaluation of experiences, preparation of impulses for actualization of crisis plans,
- managing of restoration of security systems in organization and its surrounding, measures against plundering,
- ensuring of professional, material, medical and psychological service for consequences removing people,
- being in permanent contact with public, giving actual information about goals, tasks and general situation,
- taking measures against secondary consequences of crisis (epidemic, famine, other catastrophes, social conflicts) and others.

There were accented: co-ordination of all elements on rescue operations, monitoring the situation, prompt reaction on unexpected situation and permanent and objective communication with public in this part answers.

Most important knowledge, abilities and skills of crisis manager:

- ability to lead people in demanding situations, direct control and help them,
- ability to decide in non-standard situations, ability to recognize what is most suitable in particular situation,
- independence, decisiveness, responsibility,
- psychical endurance, psychical ability to solve unexpected problems promptly, ability to stand up longlasting physical and psychical stress,
- professional competence, professional and technical knowledge, knowledge of specific problems of crisis management and of transport problems,
- ability to observe and experience the environment and its changes, ability of quick orientation in demanding situation, predict its development and consequences,

- ability to organize and coordinate tasks and activities of members of crisis crew, executive and cooperating elements and helping services,
- knowledge of prepared information systems of crisis management, particular database systems and ability to use them correctly,
- knowledge of laws, decrees, regulations and other norms which restrict responsibility, tasks, activities and their relations in case of crisis ability to use them by co-ordination of particular subjects of crisis management and rescue forces,
- communicative skills, ability to listen, understand the information and signals, know how to negotiate etc.

Natural is professional knowledge, knowledge of methods, principles and techniques of solving of crisis situations. However, there are clear differences in order of some preferences for competencies. According to previous experiences, it is possible to propose kind of system of manager competencies, which accepts demands and specialties of a crisis manager.

We consider as reasonable to accept the division in functional and personal. The content of the functional competencies can be expressed in the following way:

Planning abilities:

- ability to analyze information about potential risks and about development of crisis factors,
- ability to set aim and main tasks with preference of saving lives,
- predict the development of the crisis, decide about sources,
- ability to coordinate work on preparation of crisis plans,
- knowledge of demanded techniques and methods,

Abilities to evaluate and realize:

- monitor fulfilling of tasks, evaluate potential risks and their consequences,
- examine the balance between tasks and needs and development, react according to changes,
- set tasks, stimulate their fulfillment,
- co-ordinate important information sources.

Social competencies, leadership

- get the people for fulfillment of tasks, order, stimulate, motivate, evaluate,
- take care about their professional, physical and psychical readiness,
- create team and coordinate their activities, monitor their enthusiasm, know to asses need of rest and exchange,

- manage more styles of leadership according to need and situation,
- solve potential conflicts.

Communicative skills

- monitor, observe what is going on and describe the situation correctly,
- monitor communication, listen actively, ask for actual information, know to distinguish important and less important,
- ability to communicate with people living in befallen area,
- persuade, formulate decisions clearly,
- be able to inform the public about the situation, goals and tasks of crisis management activity briefly, truly and seriously.

CONCLUSION

The balance between tasks and possibilities of managers is rising in the crisis situations. Manager cannot succumb to outer demands. He must control them effectively. The role of his mental condition (fitness) and skills is more important. Especially the mental condition should be given more attendance, what is confirmed also by the statements of managers. We must not underestimate those activities, which help the psychical regeneration of organism.

Experiences from long-lasting managing of process of anti-flood measures confirm that exchange of crisis crew members is necessary, eventually it is possible to exchange individuals, but the coordination of particular activities must be kept up. There are experiences about serious psychical breakdown, if the needs of psychical regeneration were not respected. During the

preparation and crisis planning it is necessary to accept these facts.

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НЯКОЛКО ПОДХОДА ЗА ОПРЕДЕЛЯНЕ НА КОМПЕТЕНЦИИТЕ НА КРИЗИСНИТЕ МЕНИДЖЪРИ В ТРАНСПОРТНАТА ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ

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СЛОВАКИЯ

Ключови думи: криза, кризисен мениджър, компетентност, способности, умения

Анотация: Справянето с кризисните ситуации съобразно проблемите на транспорта се характеризира с многообразни специфични характеристики. Изискванията към кризисните мениджъри нарастват пропорционално на сложността на ситуацията. Статията представя няколко подхода към определянето на мениджърските компетенции и дейности и е опит за определяне на характеристиките, качествата и уменията, необходими за ефективното справяне с кризисните ситуации в транспортната компания.