

The Administrative Management – Administrative Engineering Relation

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Abstract The article has the aim of considering some constituent elements of the administrative management, bearing in mind the trend of improving the administrative system management, which calls for improvement of the quality through transfer of approaches, methods and tools, used for improvement of management in the business sector.

Key words: administrative system, reengineering of administrative processes, improvement, quality, administrative management.

Parallel to the processes of modernization of both the corporate and public sectors, the necessity of clear cut process regulations, as well as the need of qualified experts and managers continues to grow. The overall process organization and the need for change provoked the corporate and public sectors to adopt modern tools of apprehension regarding the subject of their activities, customer services, as well as a wide range of new skills and knowledge, commensurate and capable of creating added value to consumers.

The development of the administrative reform in Bulgaria within conditions of membership to the EU shows the necessity of improvement of quality of activities and functioning of administration, which has been predetermined by a growing demand on part of public towards the quality of public services provided, on the one hand, and, parallel to this, a necessity of improvement of the internal work organization of administration.

Analysis of possible alternatives on desired improvement of current state of administration practices demonstrates, that it should do away with conventional approaches and methods for partial improvement of certain administration activities only (often at individual administration levels). The experience of leading countries' administrations, members to the EU, shows convincingly that considerable changes to the approach and reorientation towards adopting innovative tools for quality improvement of the administrative system are necessary.

The idea springs from the philosophy of the concept for *new public management*, which calls for improvement of the quality of management in the public sector through exchange and transfer of approaches, methods and tools, used for the purposes of improvement of the business sector.

It is well known that the concept of *new public management* [1], aims essentially at re-designing the two underlying administrative relations, namely:

- administration – citizens* – mostly with respect to the quality of administrative servicing processes;
- administration – governmental bodies* – mostly with respect to the quality of administrative support of implementation of governmental bodies' powers and obligations.

In practice, it would mean to change the approach, i.e. to come up with new possibilities for providing new quality of

administrative activities in the process of administrative reform through reengineering basic (significant) administrative processes and, most of all, those related to supporting governmental bodies, administrative servicing and regulation of powers of governmental authorities.

It logically follows the idea of studying the possibilities to adapt the concepts and tools for reengineering, developed in the beginning of the 90s of 20th c. by M. Hammer and G. Champy [2], to the specifics of the public sector, more precisely towards administrative organizations.

The innovative idea suggested in the report, based on the possibilities of marrying the concepts of *new public management* [3] and reengineering is to perform an overall systematic reevaluation and redesign of the relations mentioned above.

A number of American and Russian publications in the recent years [4] have made reference to such experiments. American administration departments have based those on the Al Gore Program "Access America – reengineering through information technologies". Similarly, Russian administrative structures have carried experiments on reengineering the administrative processes based on use of the latest technologies.

Elements of the reengineering tools have been tested in our country too [5], in redesigning management processes and structures in the field of administration in Plovdiv, etc.

All that provides sufficient grounds to support the idea, that the change proposed to the approach shall be based on *adapting, complementing, developing and adding* to the tools of classical reengineering, in compliance with the specifics of the administrative system as a whole, the administrative services activities, administrative regulation and deregulation, introduction of contemporary information technologies to the administration, etc.

That is a reason why the assertion of K. Angelov deserves support with regards to the essence of contemporary reengineering [6], that it is *a fundamental reevaluation and radical redesign* of the processes within an economic organization, in order to achieve dramatic improvements of indexes critical to its survival and prosperity, such as quality of servicing of customers, prompt and adequate reaction to challenges of external environment, expenditures, etc.

In essence, it concerns objective expansion of the field of application of reengineering. What is more, though scarce, practical experience points out that reengineering of administrative processes is all the more effective, the more bureaucratic the processes are prior to their change, since the main power of reengineering is to be made use of – redesign of the processes in such a way as to be oriented to the needs of physical and juridical entities, customers to public services and not to the predilections of administrators and bureaucrats.

Most of all, it is necessary to determine the idiosyncratic features of the term *administrative process* from a point of view of administrative reengineering.

What more of the definitions share in common is that the *administrative process* is regarded as an interaction of activities or

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tasks, the result of which is a public service/product (for example a document required by a certain customer). At that, what is of priority for the quality of administrative services is the quality, the price, terms and convenience (place and time) of services provided to the public. Therefore, from a point of view of the administrative process, it should be viewed as “*organized totality of interrelated administrative activities, procedures and actions, performed in totality (consecutively or parallel) in order to provide a finished product, useful to the consumer*” [8].

The administrative process is an integral part of the implementation of the *process of management*. Its relative differentiation is significant for sharing responsibilities. He latter depend on the balance between its constituent elements of management decision making and the freedom of action in implementing it.

Should differentiation be sought between the two processes, i.e. managerial and administrative, it would doubtlessly consist in the attitude towards the objectives. The management process includes decision-making on the character, the type and content of the objectives, whereas the administrative process includes decision-making mainly regarding implementation of tasks and activities related to the objectives set. What both processes share in common is the implementation of management cycle functions, which, regarding the management process, are related to the management strategy, while with the administration process they are related to the implementation of the strategy.

The management process is related to the strategy of development while the administrative one regards implementation of the strategy in practice. In this sense, management of implementation would involve management cycle functions.

Analysis of administrative practices in Bulgaria has demonstrated, that concerning the state administration, a number of complex and often correlated *administrative processes* are carried out, which are not simply performed by various specialists, but also by various departments of an administration or even different administrations. This is a reason for the considerable time-taking of administrative services provided to public, which also creates potential for resorting to corruption pressure and practices. In the general opinion of a number of EU experts who have visited Bulgaria, the administrative processes in our country are slow, complex, without having the necessary effect and efficiency.

In this respect, the change proposed to the approach for qualitative improvement of the administration-related activities is directed towards adopting a process approach, i.e. a transition from conventional improvement of individual administrative operations and procedures (including their autonomous computerization) towards reengineering of the underlying administrative processes.

Hence the standpoint supported by the author, that from a point of view of the object of application of such reengineering, an autonomous, specific and applied scientific development could be launched, provisionally referred to as *administrative reengineering* [7].

Among other reasons backing up such a view point is the one that administrative reengineering could turn out to be absolutely necessary and useful in reforming the administrative system, bringing about a detailed view and focus on organization and management of administrative processes, stimulating achieving better results (not simply putting efforts into it) and continuous education and qualification of administration officers.

This calls for adapting and systematizing, in compliance with the specifics of administration activities, basic terms and characteristics of *classical* reengineering in a way that would match its practical implementation into the process of administrative reform across the board. In the view of the author, the main *strong* points of administration reengineering from a conceptual point of view could be summarized,

systematized and represented in the following way.

Retrospection of literature sources provide basis for summarizing and distinguish *three specific characteristics of administration reengineering*:

- Æ Abandoning the functional approach to the activity of the administration and transition to a process-based approach, i.e. systematic reassessment and radical redesign of processes, viewed as administrative chains of activities, thus ensuring improvement of the quality of administrative servicing not calculated in percents, but in times.
- Æ Necessity of a radical change to the approach of administrative officers to their tasks, i.e. innovative attitude towards their tasks, thinking, organizational culture, brining a high personal responsibility, transparency in their activities and professionalism.
- Æ Noticeable decrease of the number of hierarchical administrative structure levels, resulting from the reengineering, affecting the number of administrative personnel, as well as traditional functionally oriented structural departments transformed in the process-oriented teams, whose members turn from controlled into delegated performers.

The most important *characteristics, defining the administration engineering* as a contemporary, modern and effective concept to improve the quality of administrative activities include:

- F *Combining several operations into one.* The most important, general characteristic of a process transformed as a result from reengineering is the absence of a number of single and simple operations, requiring complex coordination during their implementation, whereas the number of connections among them complicated the mere process of administration.
- F *Use of multiplied teams for carrying out the pre-designed process.* Reengineering of simple single administrative processes involves organization that assigns the implementation of logically related chain of operations onto a single person, who is responsible for the performance of the entire process (often he/she is the only assistant to contact with the customer, i.e. the so called concept of a *single-desk services* [9]).
- F Should an administrative process be more time-consuming or complex and/or be performed at different locations, a multidisciplinary teams shall be set up, through which transfer of tasks from one department onto another could be avoided.
- F *Polyvalence of administrative processes.* Reengineering shall put an end to the conventional standardization. In order to meet the demands within contemporary conditions, a number of variants of the same administrative process are required, each of which complies with the requirements of particular customers, under different conditions and involving different resources.
- F *Positioning of the administrative process in relation to its performers and location of implementation.* Traditional administrative processes are usually referred to respective specialists and not to the location originally aimed at. Such a realization of the process is expensive, involving several departments. Expenditures and costs accompanying the document turnover from one department to the next and turning the sequence of processes into a single one are considerable and time-consuming to citizens and customers. Such weaknesses shall be overcome in the process of reengineering, while the administrative organization can end up simplified by transferring certain administrative services (together with the entire processes) to external performers, i.e. making use of the so called *outsourcing* [10];
- F *Reducing the number of coordinated checks and inspections, as well as the control among different departments introducing the principle of “work is done where sensible” and improvement of the coordination among them.*

Reengineering reduces performing activities which do not generate *added value*, such as coordination, limiting those which are redundant in the administrative process. Reengineered administrative processes make use of a balanced approach towards control, whereof continuous monitoring is replaced by more general inspections over longer periods of time.

F *Combining decentralized and centralized administrative processes.* Administrative organizations to have subjected their processes to reengineering combine the advantages of centralized and decentralized processes. New information technologies provide all the more possibilities to such organizations to set up fully autonomous departments or units in close proximity to customers, which notably speeds the services, rendering them more convenient. Besides, the current approach in structuring the organization of administration changes from vertical hierarchical to horizontal orientation of processes.

A main prerequisite for the success of administrative reengineering is establishing an adequate organization for carrying it out. Foreign countries' experience has shown convincingly that most appropriate for such a complex and innovative activity are the **project organization and management** of reengineering, whereas for each individual process a separate reengineering project shall be elaborated. As it is well known [11], a project is characterized by fixed beginning and end, determined resources, logical sequence of activities (stages of the project), aiming at achieving a particular objective. In this particular case, the administrative reengineering project would most appropriately be structured into seven stages:

- Defining the project objectives compliant with the form of services to be effected from its implementation (for main processes) or desired result (for support processes);
- Establishing teams for carrying out the project (the so called project team);
- Diagnostics analysis of the administrative process to be subjected to reengineering and identifying the bottle-necks that would require re-design;
- Developing a model of the renewed processes and defining the priority of areas to be affected by changes;
- Diagnostics of the needs for specialized training of personnel to implement the restructured process;
- Testing the new process and introducing necessary corrections if required, accompanied with additional hands-on training of personnel;
- Introducing the process in the administrative practice along with respective mechanisms for sustainable functioning and continuous improvement.

A next important step is to pay attention to the **main participants** in a process of reengineering. The specifics of administrative activities and the requirements of the project management show that the below typology of participants in carrying out the process of administrative reengineering is the most appropriate:

- *An administrative processes reengineering committee in the organization*, consisting of top-level managers. Such committee shall elaborate the general strategy of organization reengineering as well as the objectives of individual projects, monitor, control and analyze the implementation and assist in solving eventual problems;
- *Executive manager*, member to the reengineering committee, in charge of a particular process, subjected to such reengineering;
- *Reengineering project team* – a group of different specialists (internal or external, 5-7 people), directly

involved in the reengineering of a particular process, who shall diagnose the existing process and implement its redesigning;

- *Project coordinator* – an administrative officer in charge of keeping a catalogue of methods and means of reengineering and coordination of different organization reengineering projects.

It should be particularly pointed out, that **new information technologies constitute the facilities for reengineering**. This is the reason why members to reengineering project teams shall be well acquainted with the possibilities of the new information technologies and communications and make use of those not so much to automate routine activities as to provide more capabilities to administrative officers in providing better administrative services, promptly and of higher quality. Since new information technologies offer incredible possibilities for qualitatively new applications in the activities of the administration, they should be introduced the sooner possible and promoted, as in this particular case the following saying holds true: “supply creates demand”, otherwise customers of administrative services would not be able to assess the usefulness and convenience of something they are not familiar with.

Comparative analysis of results from experiments carried out, pointed out in the literature sources listed in the hereby paragraph, provide basis for **outlining** several **obstacles** and **prerequisites for success** essential to the experimental stage of the administrative reengineering.

Among the main **obstacles** for the successful introduction of reengineering of the administrative activities the following can be pointed out:

- High risk level from failure of administrative processes reengineering due to lack of experience in the field;
- High cost associated with the introduction of reengineering since it requires state-of-the-art computer and communication equipment and investments in specialized training of administrative officers;
- Potentially high social price due to the fact that successful reengineering would unavoidably lead to considerable reduction in the number of personnel and changes to the stereotype of work for the majority of the employed during a transition from functional to process-oriented organization of the working process.

Among the main **prerequisites** for success the following should be pointed out:

- Special attention to assuring relevant fund raising and qualified personnel of the reengineering process;
- Targeted special training, qualification and re-training of administrative officers, directly involved in the reengineering process;
- Combining to an optimal extent full-time and part-time officers in setting up the reengineering project teams;
- Targeted motivation and stimulation of managers and specialists involved in the process of administrative reengineering of the organization.

All of the above provides sufficient basis to draw a conclusion that the changes proposed in relation to the approach and qualitative improvement of administration processes on the basis of reengineering the said is possible and rational alternative in the process of catalyzing the Bulgarian administrative reform.

Analysis of publications referred to regarding the experimental implementation of administrative reengineering has brought to the foreground at least *two significant prerequisites for success in its practical implementation*:

- Appropriate and rational use of new information technologies and communications as facilities and basis for the reengineering process, along with modernized administrative and organization technologies;

- Availability of adequate administrative capacity of respective administrative, legislative, organizational, computer and communication competence.

With view to launching in practice the administrative reengineering activities the mechanisms for realization of these activities are of particular methodological and applied interest.

Most of all, the quality of the activities of the administration is in direct correlation with the activities of the governmental bodies. This means that the administration is called to provide competent, quality and prompt implementation of those powers. Therefore the activities, performed by the administration departments, shall guarantee full coverage of powers of the body, without duplication, amalgamation and/or overlapping activities, or that no powers would be unsupported administratively. Obviously, it is all about an exceedingly important and basic requirement within the process of the administrative reform, whose implementation creates the required prerequisites for all remaining administrative activities, servicing, introduction of information technologies, etc.

In this respect, improving the functionality of administration is subject to special attention on part of Operational Program “Administrative Capacity”, along with the unified methodology for carrying out functional analysis within the framework of sub-activity 3.1 “Elaboration of Unified Methodology for performing a functional analysis of the state administration”.

The study of the good practices in the EU member-states has shown that functional analyses constitute a large-scope method of complete or partial analysis of administrative structures, for optimization of their activities and introduction of effective methods of management. With view to the wide range of application of functional analysis, it is often the practice a particular analysis to focus on different problem fields.

It is important to emphasize that in consideration of differences to the administrative reforms in different countries, and the specific objectives of the functional analysis carried out thereof, approaches in different countries do not overlap completely.

Each individual approach in carrying out a functional analysis defines a particular objective with view to an existing structure of the public administration and related processes, identified problem areas, the changes sought and their impact.

The necessity of achieving a qualitatively new state of the administrative reform objectively calls for creative contribution to management tools related to the reform, based on adapting approaches, methods and mechanisms of contemporary management in compliance with the specifics of the public administration, which should lead to a noticeable improvement of the administrative capacity, introduction of information and communication technologies on a large scale in a realistic way, improvement of vertical and horizontal coordination at all administrative levels and communication between the administration and the structures of civil society and business.

At the new stage of the administrative reform one of the prospective trends for catalyzing it is the consistent implementation of the process-oriented approach for considerable improvement of the processes of providing administrative services to citizens, as well as those of the governmental bodies, as an important precondition for improving the quality of the overall activity of the administration, reducing the costs, assuring effective control on its activity as a condition for winning back the credulity of public towards the state management.

In all cases, regardless of the administrative reform concept selected as well as the tools for its management, it is worth not keeping in mind a realistic view point of Alexis de Tocqueville in his work “Democracy in America”, which seems to be of relevance to our Bulgarian administrative reality nowadays: “There is no country where everything can be provided by law or in which political institutions can be established as a substitute for common sense and public morality.”

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Аутсорсинг (от англ. Outsourcing – съкр. от Outside Resource Using) е концепция за вземане на вътрешни функции на дадена организация и предоставянето им за изпълнение от външна организация. Това се прави с цел спестяване на финансови средства, повишаване на качеството и/или за освобождаване на ресурси на организацията за други дейности. Вж. напр. сп. Публична администрация. ИПАЕИ, бр.1–2/2006 г.