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# **Motivation of Public Administration Employees in Bulgaria.**

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The motivation of work in the public administration is an issue often disregarded at the development of different governing steps and strategies. In this regard, the fact that all the employees are motivated by the same factors and that the motivation messages are apprehended the same way by all the employees, is taken as a constant. At second hand, as noted by M. Shiplet "it is accepted that the employee's motivation depends only on the external extrinsic rewards, incl. of threat of penalty, and control exercised by the immediate supervisors"<sup>1</sup>.

The research of the particular needs of the public administration officials is still rarely implemented and if so it is implemented mainly in the field of summary of the results from different manager's decisions<sup>2</sup>.

There is still a vacuum in the research concerning the identification of the motivating factors and their influence on the employee's performance. In this regard such studies are kind of pioneer ones and they trace out the future aspects of the research work in the field of administration.

Taking into consideration the stated needs for such an approach, we carried out an inquiry research on the opinion of municipal administration employees in 16 towns throughout the country. The total number of the inquired counted 446 officials, more than 42 % of the general aggregation of the employees in the administration of the researched towns was covered.

The results presented a new picture of the status of motivation of the municipal administration employees<sup>3</sup>. After the generalization of the inquiry results and the analysis of the theoretical bases of motivation on a global scale, a motivation model referring to and adapted for the needs of the municipal administration was structured and approbated. At its construction the summarized inquiry results were taken into account, employees' and

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<sup>1</sup> Shiplet, M., Modern Management of Human Resources, IPA EI, S., 2005, p.108

<sup>2</sup> Ref. Bosart, D., K. Demke, The State Offices in the Europe of the Fifteen, S., 2001.

<sup>3</sup> One can learn more of the research results from the generalized analysis of the inquiry, which is currently being printed and can be taken from the author of this paper.

supervisors' opinions on its applicability were studied and some proposals for its future improvement were considered.

The major problem identified by the inquiry, was the lack of appropriate structure and guidance of the activity, the bad return response and in this regard the poor accent to self-motivation of the administration employees.

The functional model of the motivation in public administration is presented in figure 1

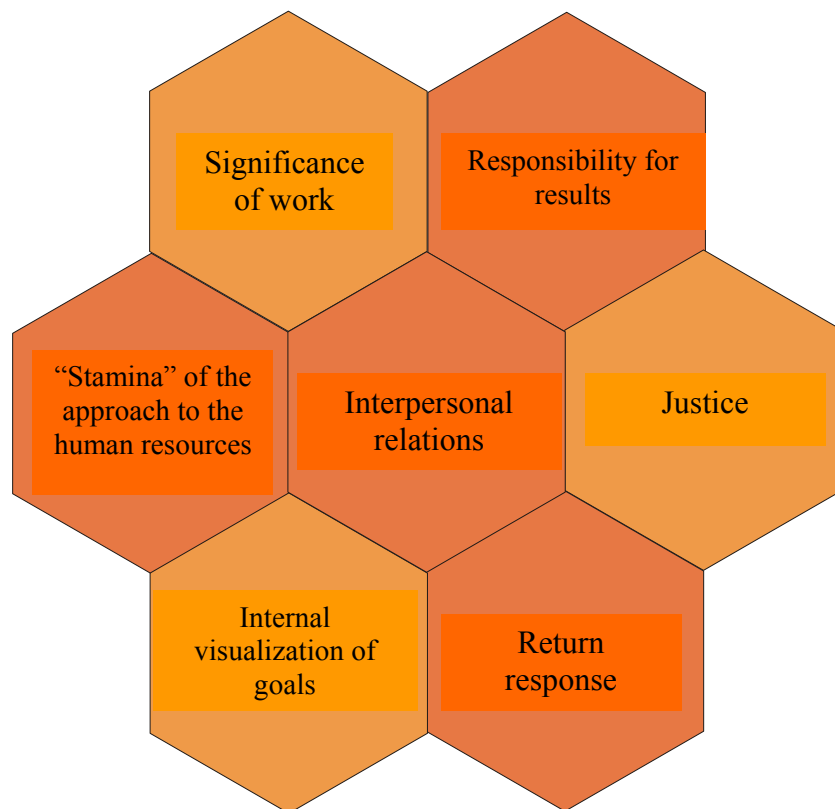


Figure 1 – Functional model of public administration employees' motivation.

A main element of the proposed model is the efficient handling of the so-called “internal motivation”. When the employees have a high internal motivation of work, their emotions are directly related to their good performance at work. The good performance is a kind of a self-reward, which is a good stimule of efficient work in future. In this situation the bad performace calls unpleasant feelings and the employee may try to reach equilibrium of the internal status with more efficient

actions until he/she achieves self-satisfaction with the well-done work. In the context of some of the studied motivation approaches, it has to be mentioned once more that the major reference point is the good and horizontally and vertically synchronized work of the human resources sectors or departments. For this approach, searching for the employees' self-motivation, the selection of appropriate motivation messages through objective and correctly defined and executed procedures, is of exclusive importance. In the opposite case, the model is distorted at its first stage and the internal motivation is deformed and very difficult to be achieved.

A model organized in this way takes effect in the possible achievement of a self-resuming cycle of positive motivation of work, enhanced by an internally generated (more often external) reward for a well-done job. When searching for approaches of external stimulation, the consideration of the limitations accompanying the work of the municipal administration has to be also taken into account.

A significant element of this new approach to employees' motivation is its complexity. At this stage of the analysis of the proposed model we have to pay also attention to the importance of the high precision of the leaders' messages. With their will new nuances of the organizational values as self-assessment and self-motivation can be introduced<sup>4</sup>.

A series of other results for the employees and for the work (for example improved efficiency of and enhanced satisfaction with work) often take place if conditions for internal motivation of work are created<sup>5</sup>. In the municipal administration this element is of major importance and is implied in the so-called functional motivation model for motivating the public administration personnel, proposed by us.

There are several reference points for the model efficient functioning and they have to be taken into consideration for its implementation in the public administration.

The first element is the creation of conditions for internal motivation. The indication of the conditions and factors that motivate the employees, certainly

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<sup>4</sup> See [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)

<sup>5</sup> Ref. to Allan J., *Motivating People*, The Open University Press, 2001, p. 121-123

activates the system as a whole, makes it more productive, „fills it with oxygen”. According to Buckingham: „the real tragedy lies not in the fact that it is not everybody who possesses enough qualities, but in the fact that one can not use the qualities he/she possesses ... the unused talents are like a sun dial without sun”<sup>6</sup>.

Based on the opinion of the inquiry respondents, at first place in the model the employee has to be an essential part of the interpersonal relations in the team. In this regard every defect of this component is very dangerous. With a view to the results showed in the inquiry, the interpersonal relations are an important element of motivation of the municipal administration and consequently it is particularly significant to the accent and attention on them.

Another essential element of the conditions for a high internal motivation is the apprehension of work as something significant<sup>7</sup>. The measures taken to make the work in the municipal administration (particularly in the middle-sized and small towns) an attractive job is of an essential significance for the employees' motivation. It is important to mention that the employee has to be convinced that his/her job is important for the whole organization.

Realizing the responsibility for the results of work is an element of growing importance. It is inseparably connected with the other elements in the model and like them it is “reared and cultivated” very difficultly. Its absence proves to be vital for the motivation of the municipal administration employees. Here the belief that the employee is personally responsible for the results has to be considered a result of internally intrinsic factors and not as depending on external factors.

The justice is an internally intrinsic category with a complex composition and characteristics<sup>8</sup>. The research results indicated the justice as a “hurt and sensitive” element of a varying character, having a strong influence on the employees and appearing as a mandatory element of the motivation messages of each leader.

The demand for an active and real return response is a provocative element with a particularly strong motivating intensity. Searching for it is a complex

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<sup>6</sup>Ref. to - Buckingham, M., D.Clifton, „Discover Your Advantages”, Classics & Style, S., 2003, p. 7

<sup>7</sup> Ref. to Blennerhassett, E., Work Motivation and Personnel Practices, “E & T”, 1982

<sup>8</sup> Ref. also to Perry, J.L., The senior Executive Review, Public Management Review, 2000, Zander, A., Making Groups Effective, “San Francisco”, Jossey-Bass, 1994,

element with intensive varying motivating load. Its realization and active approbation and implementation are a mandatory prerequisite.

The goals identification is an important element for the employees in the municipal administration but it has to be appropriately visualized and sufficiently flexible on practice. The goals are necessary and prove to be an efficient binding in the model we propose for management of the motivation in the municipal administration.

The element for attaching “stamina” to the approach to human resources is very well received. This element is a part of the new image of the work with the personnel in the municipal administration. The „stamina” of the strategies and approach to human resources is a novelty and is a mandatory sign for the individual’s, leader’s and organization’s maturity<sup>9</sup>. This necessity is generated and determined also by the entirely new (as an approach and method of management) manner of work with the employees in the public administration.

It has to be emphasized on the fact that these seven elements are obligatory in their aggregate and integrity. The lack of any of them quickly brings, as noted by Cropanzano „to a tint of demotivation and fall in the level of motivation”<sup>10</sup>.

As we have had the chance to convince ourselves from the performed research, the employees in the municipal administration are disposed to accept as important almost every task offering them the possibility to use and try their personal skills and competences, regardless of the task insignificance, triviality or intrinsic importance.

An important element for the realization of the model is the overcoming of the supervisor-subordinate distance and building of forms of control of a new substance. Here we mean situations and tasks the significance of which makes the supervisors control the employees through various rules and forms of control, providing the achievement of goals. There is an irony in the fact that in regard to many of these important tasks, just because of their significance, the municipal administrators plan and control the work to ensure a faultless performance and this way destroy the employees’ motivation of highly efficient work. This often met

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<sup>9</sup> Cropanzano,R., “Procedural Justice and Worker Motivation”, McGraw-Hill, 1996, p.233

<sup>10</sup> As previous - p. 250 and following

syndrome is a great disturbance of the proposed model for motivation management, and we may not disregard the fact that the municipal administration employees are motivated by an intricate complex of factors, which, as we have convinced ourselves, are varying and dynamic. But the fact that the employees experience a very insignificant personal responsibility for the results of their work and feel isolated from the knowledge of the results of their job, however, distorts the model and alters it in the direction of a decreased motivation.

The inquiry research showed a series of similar “vacuum” in the motivation of the inquired municipal administration employees. As far as the work requires the observance of strict instructions by the employees and as far as the managers impose this requirement, the employees see themselves as comparatively small screws in a well-structured machine. This thesis is particularly important for the interpretation in the field of public administration as the results from our research showed the specificity of the control over the employees. There is still a motivation “vacuum” from the fact that the mistakes or the incorrect interpretation of the job done, distort the employees’ apperception of justice. As summarized by Gagne “in such cases the sense of common responsibility, common mistake is stratified, and this on its behalf causes an additional drop in the level of employees’ motivation”<sup>11</sup>.

Summarized, from the example analyzed, the lack of even one of the elements stated in the proposed model can seriously demotivate the employees. The lack of any element galvanizes the motivation and takes it away from the integrity demanded by the managers.

These are only some of the challenges before the public administration in Bulgaria. Challenges that give a series of possibilities of creative search for the appropriate methods of employees’ motivation.

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<sup>11</sup> Gagne, M., and E.L. Deci, Self-Determination Theory as a New Framework For Understanding Organizational Behavior, 2002, p. 67