

V Congress of Russian Psychological Society

Survey on Consumers' Satisfaction of Psychological Support Services in Russia and Ukraine

Bazarov T^{a*}, Konyaeva A^{b**}

^a*Professor, Lomonosov MSU, Mokhovaja Street, 11/9, Moscow, 125009, Russia,*

^b*Managing Partner, Executive Search Company "Ancor SW", 21 D Yaroslaviv Val Street, off. 1, Kyiv, 01054, Ukraine,*

Abstract

The problem of the research: the need to identify current and future challenges for organizations and business [1],[2] the comparison of the views of the consultants and clients on the borders of the problems, determination of ways of harmonizing interests [3]. A 2 questioning was organized in November-December 2011. Practicing organizational psychologists - 108 specialists (54 from Russia and 54 from Ukraine) were polled as well as top-managers and owners of companies (totally 343 respondents: 93 from Russia and 250 from Ukraine). The results of questioning allowed to define the problem field, zone of actual and future necessities of organizations and to designate the themes of long-range organizationally-psychological researches and projects, corresponding to the queries of clients.

© 2013 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of Russian Psychological Society

Keywords: organizational psychology, partnership between consultants and businessmen, empirical research, necessities of organizations.

1. Introduction

1.1. The problem of the research.

The need to identify current and future challenges for organizations and business, the comparison of the views of the consultants and clients on the borders of the problems, determination of ways of harmonizing interests.

1.2. Subject area

Divergence between practical requirements and response of science

1.3. Applied research objectives

Identify ways to overcome one-sided attribution and erroneous stereotypes of providers' position in the sphere of organizational psychology.

*Corresponding author: tbazarov@mail.ru

Identifying recipients' and provider's of support points of interests coincidence.

1.4. Hypotheses of the study

Most likely, weaknesses are masked by mechanisms, which cause perceptual errors, and by defence mechanisms. For example: by displacement, rationalization.

Customers' request for psychological services, based on the idea of organization's superiority intransitivity over the individual members' interests, generates a permanent conflict between the expectations. Constructive ideas for innovation in service models of organizational psychology can be born in this field.

2. Method

There were 2 on-line surveys in November - December 2011. 2 questions were asked with multiple choices on effectiveness of tools and 2 questions about issues, in resolving of which the respondent had to participate (provider position) or to receive service support (client position).

1.5. Sample

1. 108 providers of psychological services – business-coaches, organizational consultants, coaches (54 from Russia and 54 from Ukraine).

2. 343 Top-managers and owners of companies. (250 respondents represented companies doing business in Ukraine and 93 respondents whose companies do business in Russia.)

3. Results

Table 1. List of successful psychological help and support tools

Successful tools according to providers of psychological services (high to low frequency of mention)	Responds, %	Successful tools in the opinion of customers of psychological services (in descending order of frequency mentioned)	Responds, %
Training	51%	Brainstorming	51%
Structured Interview	51%	Training	48%
Coaching / Mentoring	48%	Coaching / Mentoring	41%
Testing	46%	Team building promotion	32%
Competency Interview	39%	Strategic Session	29%
Brainstorming	37%	Interview Competency	29%
Moderation of group processes	32%	Structured Interview	28%
In-depth interviews	31%	Business Game	24%
Business Game	30%		
Simulations	30%		
Assessment centre	27%		
Conversation correctional	26%		
Strategic Session	25%		

Table 2. List of tools that are realized as needing improvement by providers of psychological services and customers

Tools that need to be improved according to providers of psychological services (high to low frequency of mention)	Responds, %	Tools that need to be improved according to customers of psychological services (high to low frequency of mention)	Responds, %
Testing	33%	Testing	25%
Coaching / Mentoring	33%	Coaching / Mentoring	22%
Facilitation of psychological group processes	27%	Team building incentive	20%
Moderation of group processes	23%	Business game	17%
Experiment	21%	Competency interview	17%

Situations modelling	19%	Strategic session	16%
Facilitation of individual processes	19%	Training	16%
Competency interview	19%		
Assessment centre	18%		
Strategic session	17%		
Training	17%		
Team building incentive	15%		

The first feature that deserves attention is the number of providers' choices of successfully resolved issues was higher (7/6 of choices per respondent) than the number of customers' choices (3/2 of choices per respondent). Apparently we are faced with big educational work of promoting broad opportunities of psychological services not obvious to potential customers. Proprietor is the key customer of organizational psychological services. The proprietors of businesses showed great interest – they accounted to 20% of the total number of participants. Suspected motives for that interest are: a) high level of concern about business safety caused by an unpredictable impact of human factor; b) experience of the successful application of psychological support services for management tasks. The second most important target group are managers of organizations. Salaried employees were distributed in the proportion of top-managers – 94% of the sample, line managers – 6%. The assumptions about most business-oriented higher education are often expressed in business publications. Our study brings some clarity to the statistics of answers to this question. A) Economic education have received 34% of the respondents. B) Technical education (24% of the respondents). C) Humanities (19% of the respondents). Business people usually do not stop at achieving higher education. The survey showed that 24% of respondents have a degree in business administration. Other 20% have doctoral degrees. On one hand, this is the evidence of the high level of education of entrepreneurs and executives. On the other hand, it can also give rise to the illusion of knowledge excess for successful entrepreneurship and rejection of external support in solving management problems. Low demand for psychological services also appeared in our study. 49% of the respondents chose the answer “never” to the question “How often does your organization use psychological services?” 23% of respondents use them occasionally. Only 9% reported that they use psychological services regularly. Can we conclude on the basis of obtained data that business needs psychological support? 11% of respondents strongly rejected psychological services in the future, 69% think that they will be needed. 20% do not have a definite answer.

4. Discussion

The leader of satisfaction is the same for customers and providers – about half of both samples are generally satisfied by the training. Coaching/mentoring was also considered a successful service by both samples. But if the training is not seen as an object for change, coaching clearly needs it.

Customers' satisfaction by psychological services is relevant to the most frequently used instruments in the companies. This is a consequence of the focus on business results. Individualized services, moderations, facilitations, deep immersions in person's values are remained not comprehended as successful help. It is interesting that customers have chosen brainstorming as the most successful tool. This is the most often used tool for group interaction in the organizations. Probably because it's the easiest way for the moderators of strategic sessions and coaches to achieve intellectual engagement. Customers gave less requests for improvements in the tools in their answers than providers. Providers believe that tools supporting high level of client's self-expression freedom are in greater need for optimization than the tools that give psychologist more power and easier results control. Coaching and testing are seen as successful by great number of respondents, but at the same time they are realized to be far from perfect. Facilitation of individual and group processes is moderately successful now and is perceived as in need for improvement. The principle “No success, but we don't need to do anything about

it" is realized in appraisal of interim management, problems simulation, negotiations mediation and psychotherapeutic counseling. Obviously, services unfamiliar to users, as much as the most familiar, result in the convergence of opinions of providers and clients. Rather familiar service allows diverse judgments. If our hypothesis: "the repeated experience of using the tool in working with customer increases customer's need in improving it" is true, then it is possible, starting with a new instrument, to immediately begin developing modifications and, moreover, to position this activity of the scientific community as a distinct competitive advantage in the communications with customers.

Table 3. Self-assessment and impression about the customers' assessment of problem solving success (data from 108 respondents - providers of psychological services)

Impression about the customers' assessment of psychological services offered by providers	Responds, %	Tools that need to be improved according to customers of psychological services (high to low frequency of mention)	Responds, %
Improving procedures for selecting employees	62%	Improving procedures for selecting employees	28%
Improving adaptation of hired employees	50%	Improving the psychological climate	22%
Improving the psychological climate	49%	Work motivation Improvement	20%
Resolution of conflicts in the organization	47%	Optimization of communications inside the organization	19%
Optimization of communications inside the organization	45%	Resolution of conflicts in the organization	16%
Raising the professional compliance with the corporate standards	45%	Improving adaptation of hired employees	14%
Formation of general corporate values and standards	40%	Professional development	14%
	34%		
Optimization of management styles	32%		
Optimization of external communications	31%		
Harmonization of collective values	31%		
Performance evaluation			

Psychologists see the convergence of self-assessment judgments with customer assessments of their success when the results are objectified with a high level visibility. It is possible in such services: selection, adaptation, improving the psychological climate, resolution of conflicts, optimization of communications, etc. When assessment criteria are clearly uncertain, providers overestimate customer satisfaction compared to the self-assessment judgments. Interpretative hypotheses may be different. Here are just a few of the possibilities:

1. Results capture the manifestation of "guild modesty".
2. Psychologists understand that over time achieved effects of "instrumental stimulation" fade away, as the client learns post factum, therefore they make "anticipatory" adjustment to the "delayed disappointment".
3. In the area of implicit relationship, where everything is intangible, psychologists do not believe that they make a significant contribution – for example, optimization of management styles or formation of general corporate values and standards.

5. Conclusions

1. The results of the survey allow to identify areas of current and future needs of organizations and provide an opportunity to plan the topics for future research in such a way as to exactly match the sequence of actualization of client requests. Priority research objects may be localized in the field of poorly solved customers' problems. For example, the need to improve the safety of business - the attention of psychologists to this area will be in demand, despite the fact that so far success is rare. If safety will become the focus of scientific research, it is likely to create or adapt theoretical explanatory models, followed by algorithms and instruments, that will be able to form the basis of cooperation and attract investments in innovative psychological projects.
2. Discrepancy of evaluative judgments about the instrument can be fixed on the instruments of average popularity. These points of disagreement can be considered the most promising for breakthrough change. According to research, it is safe to say that customers are aware of the need for professional psychologists and have their own judgment about the success of psychological services and the effectiveness of the tools used. Question: Are we ready to hear it? And what is worth paying primary attention? There are several points.
3. Firstly, practitioners in the field of organizational psychology expecting to receive funding must begin to consider the ROI (return on investment). And this is not so much economic as a practical category. The contribution of organizational psychologist, in other words his intellectual investments can be evaluated based on the results obtained by the client in his activities. And the results can certainly be financially assessed. Second, the organizational psychologist should be prepared for the fact that entire problem areas will be actualized. Moreover, not all of manifested problems can be solved solely by means of organizational psychology. It opens "problem space", which requires a multidisciplinary approach. This implies an important commitment to the consolidation of professionals and creation of interdisciplinary teams. Main perspective of future research and development is seen in the purposeful preparation of system response of the professionals providing services to organizations to the system business request.

6. References

- [1] Bazarov T.Yu Social Psychology of instability within organizational reality // *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art*, v. 5, Lomonosov Moscow State University; Russian Psychological Society Moscow, 2012. - p. 271-288.
- [2] Leonova A.B., Kuznetsova A.S., Barabanshchikova V.V. Self-Regulation Training and Prevention of Negative Human Functional States at Work: Traditions and Recent Issues in Russian Applied Research // *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art* v. 3, Lomonosov Moscow State University; Russian Psychological Society Moscow, 2010. / p. 482- 507
- [3] Bazarov T.Yu , Konyaeva AP. Organizational psychology: the transition from service managers to partnership with entrepreneurs. The experience of empirical research and analysis of their own practices// *Organizational psychology*, volume 2, number 1, 2012. p 42-57. (in Russian)