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The project approach in the development of small business in the Russian Federation

Abstract

The paper aims to discuss the prospects of using the project approach in the development of small businesses in 2020-2021. To meet that goal, the authors have applied a descriptive method, with regard to Articles of the Constitution of the Russian Federation. Small business is one of the economy drivers, providing the necessary jobs and opportunities for self-employment, enterprises related to small business are quite mobile and flexible. Project management allows for creating an adequate plan of company development under conditions of limited resources and time. Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the project approach is an effective tool used to solve strategic problems in the face of constantly changing circumstances by eliminating some of the imperfections inherent in the market and to introduce an agile workflow.

Keywords: Project Approach; Small Business; Economics: Management; Agile Workflow; Constitution

JEL Classifications: L21; K29

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Перспективи використання проектного підходу в розвитку малого бізнесу

Анотація

Метою статті є визначення перспектив використання проектного підходу для розвитку малого бізнесу на сучасному етапі (2020-2021 років). Для досягнення цієї мети було використано описовий метод з урахуванням статей Конституції Російської Федерації. Малий бізнес є одним із рушіїв державної економіки, створюючи робочі місця та сприяючи самозайнятості. Управління проектами дозволяє в умовах обмежених ресурсів та часу розробити адекватний план розвитку компанії, запровадити та реалізувати його. На основі результатів дослідження можна зробити висновок, що проектний підхід є ефективним інструментом вирішення стратегічних проблем в умовах, що постійно змінюються, та усунення деяких недоліків, властивих ринковій економіці.

Ключові слова: проектний підхід; малий бізнес; перспектива; економіка; управління.

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Перспективы использования проектного подхода в развитии малого бизнеса

Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются перспективы использования проектного подхода в развитии малого бизнеса на современном этапе (2020-2021 годов). Для достижения этой цели был использован описательный метод с учетом статей Конституции Российской Федерации. Малый бизнес является одним из драйверов экономики государства, обеспечивая необходимые рабочие места и создавая условия для самозанятости. Управление проектами позволяет в условиях ограниченных ресурсов и времени разработать адекватный план развития компании, внедрить и реализовать его. По результатам проведенного исследования можно сделать вывод, что проектный подход является эффективным инструментом для решения стратегических задач в условиях постоянных изменений, способствующий устранению некоторых недостатков, присущих рыночной экономике.

Ключевые слова: проектный подход; малый бизнес; перспектива; экономика; менеджмент.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, conducting the economic activity of small and medium-sized businesses based on the project approach helps to more clearly define goals and criteria for achieving them, optimize resources, identify and identify risks, more closely monitor the process of project implementation, which generally improves the efficiency of business processes and ensures competitive advantages in conditions of strategic change. The application of this area helps in developing the right managerial decision, thereby contributing to the development of small and medium-sized businesses (Bilgaev et al., 2021).

Small business is the guarantor of social stability, as it plays an undeniable role in strengthening market relations even in conditions of economic recession and crisis (Ziyadin et al., 2019; Yemelyanov et al., 2020; Morozova et al., 2019).

This is due to the fact that small and medium-sized businesses, admittedly, have great socio-economic benefits for the state and its population. The development of small and medium-sized businesses is a key strategic character in many countries. The main positive factors in the functioning of small businesses are: firstly, employment, job creation, increasing the level of financial independence of individual citizens; secondly, increasing the welfare of the middle class as a whole (Dudukalov et al., 2020; Kashirskaya et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2021).

Entrepreneurship is always fraught with great risk. In the case of small and medium-sized businesses, risks are surrounded by additional barriers to functioning, such as, for example, tight credit conditions, an unfavorable business environment as a whole on the one hand, and lack of certain skills or insufficient level of competence for effective management on the other. In view of this, it is necessary to study modern management technologies, evaluate their applicability in small businesses, and, if possible, adapt these technologies to the conditions of small and medium-sized businesses in order to facilitate its effective functioning.

2. Materials and Methods

The basis of entrepreneurship in the Russian Federation is Articles 8 and 34 of the Russian Federation's Constitution. According to these articles, on the territory of the Russian Federation, everyone has the right to use their abilities and property to carry out the entrepreneurial activity, and they are guaranteed freedom of economic activity, unity of the economic space, free movement of goods, services and financial resources (Constitution of the Russian Federation).

In order to attribute a business entity to a certain economic category in world practice, legislative acts establish criteria that are similar in many countries, mainly:

- number of staff working in the organization;
- the share of foreign capital in the overall structure of the organization;
- annual revenue.

In the Russian Federation, the main law by which business entities are divided into categories is Federal Law of July 24, 2007 No. 209-FZ «On the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises in the Russian Federation». A feature of this law is that small businesses are divided into 2 categories: small enterprises and microenterprises (Federal Law, 2007).

Under this law, any business entity can become a small business entity: a legal entity (except for state and municipal enterprises); individuals and persons acting without forming a legal entity, as well as peasant (farmer) enterprises that meet the conditions and criteria established by law. As the main criteria for classifying a business entity as small according to this law, the following criteria are important, similar to world criteria (Rahman, 2018; Panfilova et al., 2020; Poltarykhin et al., 2020; Bilgaev et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2021):

- The share of external participation in the authorized capital of the company should be less than 25%;
- The average number of employees for a calendar year for a micro-enterprise should not be more than 15 employees, for small enterprises - from 15 to 100 employees;
- The annual revenue of small businesses excluding value-added tax or the book value of assets (residual value of fixed assets and intangible assets) for the previous calendar year should not exceed: microenterprises - 120 million rubles; small enterprises - 800 million rubles.

Based on the above information, we can give the following definition of small businesses in the Russian Federation - this is a type of private activity, limited by the number of personnel and the amount of revenue that is carried out by persons registered in the Russian Federation at their own risk and risk and has the goal of making a profit.

3. Results and Discussion

Features of small businesses in the Russian Federation are the uneven regional development of small businesses and irrational sectoral distribution in the structure of the economy. As a result, the following problems occur:

- The largest percentage of small businesses opens where the most financially secure regions are located.
- Small businesses most often engage in activities in which it is most simple to open and run a business where the business costs are minimal, and the payback is high.

It turns out that basically, business is opened and conducted in the service sector. However, it would be more efficient for the state economy if a large proportion of small businesses were conducted and opened in the production sector. Thus, the development of the country's industrial potential and more goods could be sold in domestic markets and through export channels in foreign markets (Molchanov and Romasheva, 2019; Bilgaev et al., 2021).

In the process of their activities, small businesses in the Russian Federation are faced with a number of problems and tricks associated with the following:

- Backwardness in technology development. This problem is due to the fact that most technologies are mainly developed abroad, and it is not possible to import these technologies from there due to financial difficulties. This factor severely restrains the development of small businesses in manufacturing sectors, and as a result, opening up business in the sectors of commerce and trade is becoming increasingly more likely.
- Ability to work in the shadow sector of the economy. It is becoming easier for small businesses to develop Internet technologies to work in the shadow sector of the economy, using various workarounds in registering their business and promoting their services or goods via the Internet.
- Not a high level of information security about state support from the state. Most entrepreneurs are not aware of the availability of state support or are skeptical of this information, even the development of such an Internet information system as a business navigator allows you to find out about support, but it turns out that this system properly displays information only in large regions.
- Lack of financial support from the state. Financial support for small businesses covers only a small number of entrepreneurs.
- Difficulties in accessing credit support from banks. Access to credit resources for small businesses is difficult because banks do not have confidence that small businesses can repay funds, and most loan applications are not approved.
- Difficulty for small businesses to stay in the economy in a crisis. As a result of the influence of external factors of the economy and the low level of additional financing, smallest businesses are unable to survive in these conditions.

Surveys of entrepreneurs in the Russian Federation show that the main problems that hinder the development of their business are the following problems (Prodanova et al., 2019):

- High tax burden;
- Lack of financial resources;
- Difficulties in obtaining borrowed capital;
- Administrative barriers;
- Lack of information support.

This indicates that small businesses are experiencing financial difficulties, and at the same time do not rely on a system of financial support from the state, which can and should help them in creating and developing their business.

Small businesses have important properties for the state, among which are the following:

- Flexibility - unlike large and medium-sized businesses, small businesses are mobile and can move from one industry to another under changing market conditions. Small businesses can more quickly adapt to market conditions.
- Profitability - large and medium-sized businesses include high financial costs, in contrast to small businesses, whose costs are much lower. Small businesses can rent premises, equipment, and vehicles for activities using leasing services.

Due to these properties, with the right motivation of the business to start a business in industrial sectors, for such a large state as the Russian Federation, consisting of a large number of regions, small business will be one of the ways for the uniform development of regional markets and the entire economy due to its mass character and an easier way to open a business than opening large or medium enterprises.

One of the opportunities for the development of small businesses can serve as a project approach to business management.

According to A. M. Afonin, the most obvious way to make your project more manageable is to break the process of its implementation into successive stages (Afonin, 2015). It is on such a linear structure that traditional project management is based. In this sense, it resembles a computer game - you cannot go to the next level without completing the previous one. A diagram of such a process is shown in Figure 1.

This approach is focused on projects in which there are strict restrictions on the sequence of tasks. For example, building a house - you cannot build walls without a foundation.

Usually, 5 stages of classical project management are distinguished, but additional stages can be added if the project requires it.

5 stages of traditional management:

Stage 1. Initiation. The project manager and team determine project requirements. At this stage, meetings and brainstorming sessions are often held, at which it is determined what the project product should be.

Stage 2. Planning. At this stage, the team decides how it will achieve the goal set in the previous stage. At this stage, the team refines and details the goals and results of the project and the scope of work on it. Based on this information, the team draws up a schedule and budget, assesses risks, and identifies stakeholders.

Stage 3. Development. This stage is not implemented for all projects - as a rule; it is part of the planning phase. In the development phase, characteristics of technological projects, the configuration of the future project and/or product, and the technical methods for achieving it are determined. For example, in IT projects, at this stage, a programming language is selected.

Stage 4. Implementation and testing. At this phase, the main project work itself takes place - code writing, building construction, and the like. Following the developed plans, the content of the project, defined earlier, begins to be created, control is carried out according to the selected metrics. In the second part of this phase, the product is tested, it is checked for compliance with the Customer and interested parties' requirements. In terms of testing, product flaws are identified and corrected.

Stage 5. Monitoring and completion of the project. Depending on the project, this phase may consist of a simple transfer to the Customer of the project results or a long process of interaction with clients to improve the project and increase their satisfaction and support the project results. The latter relates to projects in the field of customer service and software.

What is described above is the basis on which various project management methods are built. Different projects need different phases of implementation - some are enough and three phases, others much more. Sometimes the so-called «iterative waterfall» is used, in which each stage is a kind of subproject, during which the tasks are realized according to fixed iterations. But the

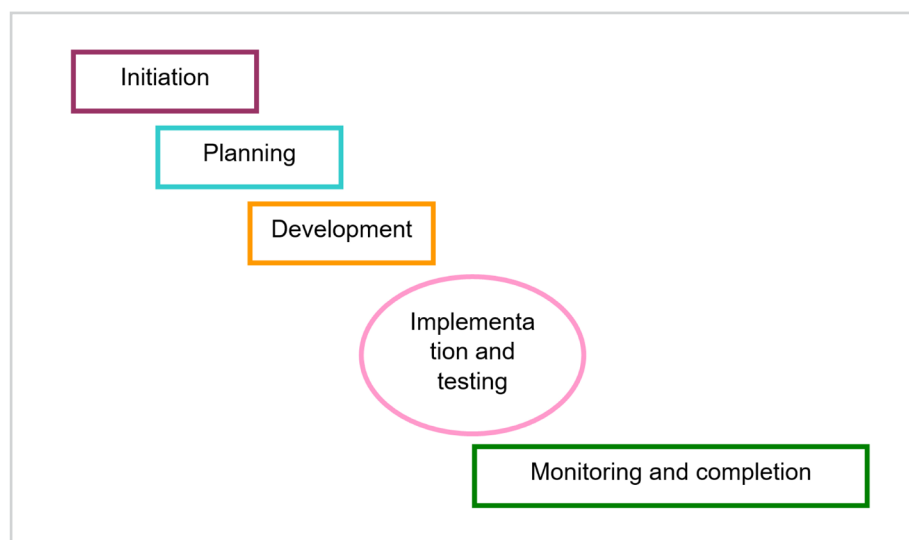


Figure 1:
Diagram of the classic design approach
Source: Afonin, 2015; Bilgaev et al., 2021

essence remains the same - the project is divided into stages, which are executed in a strictly defined sequence.

Due to the fact that the classical project management is strictly tied to the time of execution of tasks, as a rule, predetermined at the planning stage, calendar-network planning tools are excellent for implementing projects within this approach.

Potentially, the classic approach allows you to avoid stress due to the availability of spare time at each stage, laid down in case of any complications and risks. In addition, with the right planning step, the project manager always knows what resources he has. Even if this estimate is not always accurate.

The main weakness of classical project management, according to E. Yordon, is intolerance to change. Toyota executives, famous for creating systems such as Lean and Kanban, are often criticized for taking the classic approach to developing software for their company, and precisely for the lack of flexibility.

The mainstay of the classical approach now is construction and engineering projects, in which the content of the project remains virtually unchanged throughout the project.

As mentioned earlier, not all projects can be structured in such a way as to be implemented according to the classical project approach.

And here comes the game Agile - a family of flexible iteratively incremental methods for managing projects and products. According to this approach, the project is not divided into successive phases, but into small subprojects, which are then «assembled» into the finished product (Figure 2).

Agile itself is not a project management method. It is rather a set of ideas and principles on how to implement projects. Already on the basis of these principles and best practices, individual flexible methods have been developed or, as they are sometimes called, frameworks: Scrum, Kanban, Crystal, Lean and many others. These methods can differ quite a lot from each other, but they follow the same principles.

Agile principles are as follows:

1. The highest priority is customer satisfaction through the continuous and frequent supply of a product that has value to him.
2. Changes in requirements are always accepted, even in the later stages of the project.
3. Flexible processes welcome changes, which is a competitive advantage for the Customer.
4. Fully working software is delivered every few weeks, in extreme cases, every few months.
5. The development team and business representatives work together on the project.
7. The most effective method of interaction and exchange of information is a personal conversation.
8. The main measure of project progress is working software.
9. Thanks to flexible processes, continuous development takes place.
10. Continuous attention to quality architecture and technical excellence fosters flexibility.
11. Simplicity is necessary as the art of maximizing work that does not need to be done.
12. The best architecture, design, requirements are created in self-organizing teams.
13. The team is constantly searching for ways to become more efficient by adapting and customizing its processes.

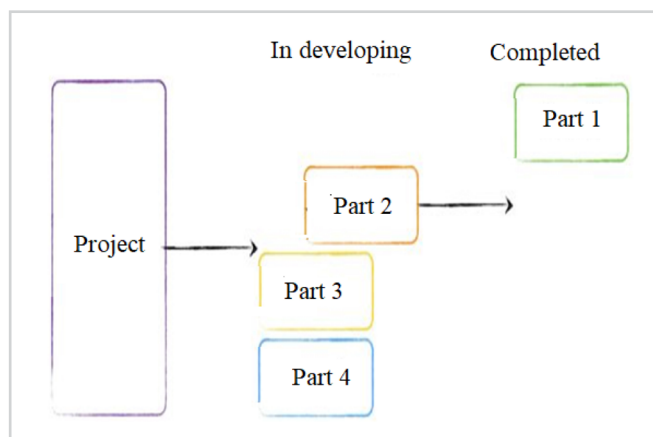


Figure 2:
Agile workflow

Source: Presented by the Authors

The most important strength of Agile is its flexibility and adaptability. It can adapt to almost any conditions and processes of the organization.

As often happens, weaknesses are a reflection of strengths. In the case of Agile, flexibility can lead to loss of focus. The lack of a clear process and procedures, the breakdown of the project into subprojects and frequent changes, in the absence of a clear direction on the part of the leadership, can lead to a loss of guidance and understanding of what is important and what is secondary.

In many situations, implementing Agile can dramatically increase productivity and improve the effectiveness of all team members. However, simply hiring a «flexible» project manager is not enough. For the successful implementation and use of flexible methodologies, it is necessary to change the entire organization, metrics and way of thinking.

4. Conclusions

Thus, with the project management approach, responsibility for the final result appears not only for the company as a whole but also for each project. At the same time, employees of different departments can take part in the project, but nevertheless, the project manager should coordinate all of them, and he should ultimately be responsible for the results to the general director.

When implementing the project, it is worth considering the persons interested in project management and their interests. Some of them directly or indirectly relate to project management and can be estimated using numerical (measurable) metrics, others are qualitative or are purely subjective. At the same time, this does not mean at all that only numerical and objective performance indicators allow an adequate understanding by stakeholders of the effectiveness of project activities and the Project Office.

On the contrary, it is often the subjective opinion of top management about the effectiveness of project activities that can be much more significant for project management and the Project Office and have a direct impact on the adoption of important management decisions, including the agile workflow.

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