Public organization management: Trade Union Cafeteria Plan of Volgograd State University

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Abstract. The article analyses the effectiveness of the current project of systematic social package expansion according to the flexible management system in the Trade Union Organization of Workers of Volgograd State University. The application of such methodologies as customer / product development, Total Quality Management and empathic design has allowed focusing on the customization of social benefits on the Cafeteria Plan menu. The solution to the problem of combining production management and social benefits distribution in a public organization constitutes the novelty of this project. The authors conclude that the use of flexible and situational methods in the system management of an enterprise has enabled creating breakthrough product innovations in the services and benefits sector, extending their action to a wide range of users in the region, as well as applying this practical experience in the work of trade union organizations of other Russian universities.

1. Introduction
The combination of social benefits and corporate events is called the social package of workers (SPW) of an enterprise / organization. The Labor Code of the Russian Federation determines a mandatory part of SPW – state social guarantees. Therefore, SPW should include state social guarantees or expand them. The SPW extent depends on the management policy at an enterprise in relation to its staff, and on its workforce activity. Mutual relations between the management and the workforce are stipulated in the Collective Agreement, one of the main local acts of an enterprise. The representative of the workforce is usually a trade union organization [1]. The Collective Agreement contains the guaranteed part of expanded SPW; furthermore, both parties to the agreement may come to its further supplementing.

The authors of the article explore the effectiveness of the systematic SPW expansion project functioning in the Trade Union Organization of Workers of Volgograd State University (VolSU). The project is developed according to the flexible management system [2].

2. Methodology
The flexible management mechanism – the Cafeteria Plan [3] - adapts well to the activities of a public organization. The study uses the customer / product development methodology which allows orienting different types of social benefit packages on the Cafeteria Plan menu towards their further customization. The term “customization” is understood in this paper as the ideal of interaction between the service provider and the consumer. Such an approach to organizing the production of social services in scientific research is called a service factory [4]. For a successful long-term operation of such a factory, the interplay of the following methodological components is of especial
value: Total Quality Management, Teambuilding for social activists, a positive “economy of scale” and empathic design [5] of the production of services.

3. Results and Discussion
The practical experience of introducing the Cafeteria Plan in an enterprise as a working benefits differentiation tool already exists [6]. The Cafeteria Plan in the Trade Union Organization of Workers of VolSU was created in 2015. Its aims were 1) to enhance the protection of social, labor and professional rights of workers; 2) to develop business administration forms and methods in a public educational institution; 3) to modify the emotional and regulatory components of the team loyalty program.

The Cafeteria Plan Project typology [7] is as follows: it is a social program (by level), average regional (by scale), organizationally complex (by complexity); long-term (by terms of its implementation); modular (by quality requirements and methods of its provision); a multiproject (by resource requirements); Russian territorial (by location) and anti-crisis (by goals and objectives). The main reasons for the project include, firstly, the need for structural and functional transformations due to the increasing gap in the life expectancy of employees of the Russian state university and their actual socio-economic position in modern conditions [8]; secondly, the emergence of new opportunities for independent business administration and commercialization of trade union activities under the Federal Laws of Russia “On trade unions, their rights and guarantees of activity” and “On public associations” [9], [10].

It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by the Cafeteria Plan menu. It’s the area of implementing various projects where they can be tested, corrected, combined and where they can interact with each other.

The Trade Union Cafeteria creation algorithm includes seven steps, each of which is constantly repeated except for the second one.
1. Analyzing organizational motivation systems, loyalty and corporate culture programs.
2. Making a decision by the Workers’ Trade Union Committee on the transition to the Cafeteria Plan.
3. Formation of sections and menu dishes.
4. Approval of the list of effective and efficient benefits.
5. Informing the employees about changes in the social package.
6. Constant analysis of the new benefits system work, their systematic customization.
7. Periodic review of the menu.

The Trade Union Cafeteria menu consists of ten sections / packages of social benefits: 1) optional, 2) corporate, 3) business lunch, 4) “green”, 5) fitness, 6) catering, 7) baby/ children, 8) family, 9) seasonal, 10) exotic.

Numerous dishes / service products of these menu sections include a) a formed standard (non-flexible) SPW in the framework of the Collective Agreement; b) a set of elements of the university corporate culture mobilizing the workers to fulfill the university mission; c) a system of privileges for trade union activists; d) labor protection, industrial safety, ergonomics of workplaces; e) the workers’ health improvement, treatment at a health resort and recreation activity; f) holding and servicing off-site events; g) social benefits for children and grandchildren of the workers; h) benefits and guarantees extended to the workers’ families including several generations of relatives; i) seasonal, daily and holiday social programs; j) inaccessible and organizationally complex services, types of leisure activities and cultural tourism.

The Workers’ Trade Union Committee analyzes all completed projects, decides on their further use. The projects of such categories as “new”, “upgrade”, “popular”, “hit of the season” and “best” from each menu section will be on the priority list of the perspective work plan.

Further the paper reveals the peculiarities of applying eight principles of quality management when planning the activities of this public organization under the Cafeteria Plan.
1. Focusing on the customer is important because the workers monthly transfer voluntary membership fees (1% of their salaries) to the Trade Union Organization and expect to receive regular protection of their labor, professional and social rights. Those who are dissatisfied with the activities / inaction of this organization leave it.

2. Leadership. The designer of the introduction of flexible management in the public organization is N.A. Archebasova, the Chairperson of the Trade Union Organization of VolSU, a holder of a Master’s degree in Management, the leading auditor of the quality management systems of the “Bureau Veritas” company [11]. The project team includes the Trade Union Committee (20 people) and trade union activists from the university structural units (64 people). The Trade Union Committee headed by the Chairperson represents the interests of the entire workforce (more than 1,500 workers, more than 500 children and family members of the workers) as the second party in the negotiations on concluding the Collective Agreement.

3. The involvement of people in a public organization is based on the awareness of their personal benefit [12]. The vast majority of Volgograd State University workers (83%) are aware of the privileges of their Trade Union Organization membership. In this regard, it is worthwhile to pay tribute to the effective team building of this public organization. A public organization teambuilding is based on the distribution of tasks, taking into account the free time and personal wishes of employees, encouraging innovative activities, the opportunity to learn new forms and methods of social activity. The Cafeteria Plan allows creating a team of efficient trade union activists. They have a simultaneous opportunity to build a public career along with carrying out their professional activities and to realize their creative abilities as a lead user. The lead user method was proposed by E. von Hippel [13] to characterize consumers creating improved versions of products / services. Lead users are potential coordinators of social projects, successful members of a trade union activist team. An important motivator of their activities is the opportunity to realize their own innovative project and get a desired service [14], [15].

4. The strategic planning of production and distribution of social services is based on the SWOT-analysis method (see table 1):

| **Table 1. SWOT analysis of activity planning of the Trade Union Organization of Workers at VolSU** |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| • a socially oriented Collective Agreement with a wide list of optional compensation benefits and social guarantees, | • an average team size (up to 2000 employees) - it is difficult to apply the “economy of scale,” |
| • a positive effect of the main “hygienic factors”, | • predominantly the state formation of the salary fund of the university workers – a modest trade union budget for expanding benefits and compensation, |
| • democratic principles of management and grading | • “obsession” of the team at work - weak motivation for the development of recreational culture |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| • wide customization of benefits due to the average team size and trade union activists’ work, | • the state “optimization” of higher education, |
| • building a parallel public career or alternative to professional scientific and educational career for trade union activists, | • a long-term decline in the standard of living of Russians and a university worker’s social status, |
| • formation of a unique corporate culture, a synergistic effect | • the “sweating system” of an effective contract and of the academic activity of the teaching staff |

In the current planning, the process approach is applied. The Trade Union Organization of Workers of Volgograd State University has developed and introduced a technological map of the implementation process of each project (see table 2). This map is designed to monitor the manageable parameters of the service factory: the volumes and types of benefits provided; costs and expenses; timing, duration and relationships; resource provision. This constant monitoring provides, on the one
hand, the individualization of the choice of benefits. On the other hand, the public organization has a strict control over the costs of social benefits.

Table 2. Technological map of the implementation process of the VolSU Trade Union Project.

| Calendar | Project costs | Project audience (persons) / amount of financing (RUB) / % | Project PR: announcement / report / photo (A / R / P) |
|----------|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Month    |               | Total MV / TU / PF / OSF / CA / VR / SP                | Total TUM / Children / VolSU site / Intra-net / social networks |
| C        | M             | MV / TU / TU / PF / OSF / CA / VR / SP                | C / M / Total / MV / TU / TU / PF / OSF / CA / VR / SP |
| 2017/2018| 143/170       | MV / TU / TU / PF / OSF / CA / VR / SP                | A / A / A / A / A / A / A / A / A / A / A / all |

5. Making decisions is based on facts. The own production of social services allows successful implementing both personalized projects (1-3 people) and mass ones (up to 2000 people). All the workers receive information on each completed project / package of social benefits through various communication channels. The employees independently decide which projects to take part in as well as which benefits to use. The Trade Union Committee regularly monitors the effectiveness of projects with the help of technological maps, coordinators’ reports and consumer assessment of the services provided.

6. Mutually beneficial cooperation with service providers is also valuable. The situational approach and constant experimentation enable, on the one hand, creating breakthrough production technologies [16] of social benefits and, on the other hand, using the agile-method of product development in collaboration with all the participants of the process on the principles of three social interactions: social partnership, cooperation and co-financing.

7. The system management approach is provided by the Cafeteria Plan and a positive “economy of scale”. The cost of production decreases with increasing production volumes. Therefore, the larger the social project, the more benefits can be obtained from the social partners. The optimal scale for
effective social planning is regional (the Volgograd region as a subject of the Russian Federation). On the initiative of N.A. Archebasova, the Chairperson of the Trade Union Organization of VolSU, the chairmen of trade unions of ten state universities of the Volgograd region created an intersectoral coordination council and successfully implement projects at the regional level of interaction (up to 2000 people) using the co-creation method. Joint regional work gives a significant synergistic effect.

8. The perpetual improvement of the quality of social services and the growth in the volume of the provided services on the Trade Union Cafeteria Plan menu have been going on since 2015. The current achievements of the workers of VolSU, on the one hand, and Volgograd State University, on the other hand, in the social sphere are far ahead of those in the previous years. In our view, the progress has been made by introducing democratic innovations [17]. We should mention here, firstly, the improvement of the quality of life of university employees and their families; secondly, their satisfaction with the conditions of work and rest; thirdly, obtaining cultural and spiritual benefits, psychological comfort and other privileges due to implementing numerous projects on the Cafeteria Plan. Each project is a compositionally complete event, and being a “puzzle” it is creating a picture of the lifestyle of the university workers.

As explained in the previous paragraph, it is clear that the Trade Union Cafeteria Plan works to satisfy the workers’ existing (perceived) needs. Another undoubted advantage of the Cafeteria Plan is that it develops the consumer of social services. On the other hand, when innovations outpace the needs of the target audience, the production of a service factory is in a situation of uncertainty, waiting for consumers to understand and accept the services of a new product [18]. This entails periodic negative emotional attacks by consumers-traditionalists on a team launching a new product. Moreover, this increases the time for workers to accept a new benefit / service. The rate of introduction of new preferential products at the VolSU Trade Union service factory can be seen in table 3. It shows that over the four years of the Cafeteria Plan implementation, the volume of the provided services has increased eight times. Episodic services have become a permanently diverse menu of benefits.

| Year       | The number of social projects for the period |            |            |
|------------|---------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
|            | year                                        | month      | week       |
| 2014       | 21                                          | 1.6        | 0.4        |
| 2017       | 143                                         | 11.9       | 2.9        |
| 2018       | about 170                                   | 14.2       | 3.5        |
| (159 for 11 months) |                                  |            |            |
| 2014-2018  | The indicators have increased 8 times       |            |            |

Having discussed the progress made in the sphere of providing the workers with social services at VolSU, the final paragraphs in this section of the paper address the stages of implementation of the Cafeteria Plan.

Stage 1. The 2015-2016 period was that of preparation and implementation of a pilot Cafeteria Plan Project. The pre-project analysis was carried out taking into account the achievements of the VolSU Trade Union Organization of Workers in previous years, the trade-union analytics of the “expectations” of Russians [19] and the best world practices of motivational and personnel management. The concept of the project is based on the need for continuous improvement of socially oriented organizations.

Stage 2. 2017 was the year when the tested successful projects were included into the Collective Agreement for 2017-2020.

Stage 3. The 2018-2019 period is to face constant improving the menu of the expanded SPW as a tool aimed at:

a) improving the university performance as a whole;
b) high-performance labor stimulation;
c) improving the socio-psychological climate in the team;
d) developing corporate culture;
e) increasing the welfare of workers;
f) creating a favorable public opinion about VolSU.

Before proceeding to the conclusions, it will be necessary to briefly dwell on the results. Social projects are potentially characterized by a high degree of novelty. The novelty of this project lies in the compositional solution to the problem of production management and distribution of social benefits in a public organization. Some separate elements of the Cafeteria Plan Project are based on effective programs of the Central Council of the Trade Union of Education and Science Workers of the Russian Federation, primary trade union organizations of a number of Russian universities, but the very concept of the Cafeteria Plan Project is unique because it is adapted to the specific corporate culture of the VoISU Trade Union Organization of Workers. The social significance of this project is confirmed by diplomas of III and I degrees (2015, 2016) of the All-Russian “Trajectory of Success” competition of trade union organizations of workers of Russian universities.

4. Conclusion
The article presents an original way of applying flexible management aimed at creating a service factory which produces benefits in a public organization. The analysis was based on the practical work of the VoISU Trade Union Organization.

The results substantiate the reality of successful long-term operation of a service factory, subject to the skillful use of the interplay of the following methodological components: Total Quality Management, Teambuilding for social activists, a positive “economy of scale” and empathic design of the production of services.

The results obtained confirm the value of flexible and situational methods in the system management of an enterprise. As the analysis shows, applying these methods helps to create breakthrough product innovations in the sector of benefits and services.

The major results of the paper may serve as recommendations for expanding the scope of work of university trade union organizations in the Volgograd region and in the Russian Federation.

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