
The Components of Managerial Alacrity of Government Executives

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Abstract:

The article analyzes the concepts of managerial potential and managerial alacrity of executives. A three-component model of managerial readiness, which has been tested and demonstrated the effectiveness on a sample of about three thousand heads of the state civil service in the Russian Federation, is approved in the paper.

Three components of the model are presented: leadership, expert-analytical and managerial. Their essential characteristic is given and the extent of expressiveness, expanding or narrowing the range of possible managerial roles that the leader can effectively perform is described. Indicators that reflect the development level of each of the highlighted components and serve as meta-competencies for civil service leaders used in the process of their personal and professional diagnosis are distinguished.

The connection between meta-competencies and the components of managerial alacrity and managerial potential of executives is discussed. The results of similar foreign and Russian studies are given. Based on the results of the above studies, it is concluded that considering the development of each of the meta-competencies is identified as an important indicator in assessing the actual readiness of executives to replace specific managerial positions and can be the basis for both assessing the potential for development and building individual career paths in respect of the resources available to the leader.

Keywords: *managerial alacrity, management readiness, managerial potential, personal and professional diagnostics, civil servant, leader, meta-competences, model of managerial alacrity.*

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1. Introduction

Within the framework of this article, we will dwell on the analysis of the concepts of "managerial potential" and "managerial alacrity" of managers and present a theoretically grounded three-component model of managerial readiness. We will justify the three components of this model – leadership, expert-analytical and managerial – and give a characteristic of all three elements. In addition, we will present indicators that reflect the level of development of each of the selected components, such as the meta-competences of public service executives used in the process of their personal and professional diagnosis.

The problem of assessing the managerial potential of a leader becomes topical today both in the business sphere and in the sphere of state and municipal management. Such an evaluation is necessary both to identify the potential capabilities of individuals when they are included in the reserve for the replacement of managerial positions, and for the effective selection and formation of management teams. It is equally important for the leaders themselves, as it allows them to determine the topical directions of personal and professional growth and development of their employees (Copeland, 2014; Sinyagin, 2016).

The very notion of managerial potential is quite complex and multidimensional. In this regard, its definitions are diverse enough; they often consider only individual components of this complex and multifaceted notion. While developing the model of managerial potential, its structure and ways to identify its individual components, we relied on the basic ideas of resource and personality-oriented approaches (Sinyagin, 2009; Sinyagin, 2016; Sinyagin and Pereverzina, 2015). We made sure that the managerial potential can be considered as a system of available and possible for their future acquisition, demanded by management activity in general (invariant aspect) and specific management activity (the partial aspect), individual, personal and professional resources of the subject of managerial activity, taking into account the possibilities of their mutual compensation through systematic self-organization (Copeland, 2014; Sinyagin, 2016).

At the same time, the key distinctive feature of the managerial potential is not only active work with own resources, but also the way and meaningful characteristics of working with another's resources. If the potential of a professional expert is determined primarily by the subject's own capabilities, then the potential of the executive depends on how well he can organize others, ensuring the maximum disclosure of the value and professional potential of the people around him. Hence, in the structure of the managerial potential, it is necessary to single out the components that determine this aspect of activity. The accumulated managerial potential appears to be the basis for the current managerial readiness (or alacrity), which is the possibility to carry out managerial activities in a certain position or a level of management in a qualitative and effective manner at this very moment.

At the same time, it is obvious that the managerial potential is a broader note. It includes not only what provides the actual managerial alacrity, but also the person's ability to improve this willingness based on working with available resources, as well as by acquiring new ones. From these positions in the structure of managerial potential, two components can be distinguished: the potential of managerial readiness and the potential for development. This is a very important observation, as often these components are substituted or mixed, and it significantly reduces its heuristic value.

Obviously, when analyzing an executive's readiness to replace certain positions or job levels, when it comes to the reserve of management human resources, and when assessing the potential, it is advisable to talk about their identical internal structure, since exactly the structure of readiness appears to be the basis for assessing the potential. In turn, the structure of alacrity is determined by the actual structure of the managerial activity of executives themselves, both at specific management positions and at certain managerial levels. At the same time, nowadays, in the situation of an actively changing world, it is impossible to evaluate and select promising future managers based on readiness potential only, since by the definition it reflects the structure of the actual management activity that exists today. Therefore, for an effective evaluation of management staff, in respect of the prospects for their further development, both these potentials must be considered simultaneously.

2. Methodology: A three-component model of managerial alacrity

We laid the above ideas in the technology of personal and professional diagnostics of executives, which later became the basis for a new technology of complex resource analysis. The diagnosis was based on the use of a series of methodological tools, combined into a single complex. Among them, there is a set of author's test methods, which includes questionnaires for assessing managerial potential and personal style, tested and ranked on a sample of more than 7000 leaders of public service and business, standardized interviews, observation, a set of case studies, video presentation and a biographical questionnaire (Sinyagin, 2009). This technology has been used for four years in real practice to assess the leaders of the top and main groups of civil service positions in the formation of managerial succession pools of various levels. It was tested and approved by a representative sample, which now includes three thousand heads of the state civil service of the Russian Federation. The nucleus of this group consisted of candidates for the reserve of management personnel under the patronage of the President of the Russian Federation, as well as participants of the higher managerial succession pool of the federal executive bodies of the Russian Federation.

In accordance with the model developed in the framework of the technology, managerial readiness of an executive includes three interconnected but independent components. The predominance of each of them sets its own individual picture of managerial alacrity of the leader and allows to determine the most effective

managerial positions where he can effectively operate at the moment, the ways of their development, and, accordingly, increase of the managerial potential of an executive, including available resources and the specifics of his life and career strategies (Sinyagin, 2017).

The conducted researches show that leadership qualities, ability and propensity to be independent, ability to see strategic prospects of activity and to form such a vision in others come first in the structure of managerial alacrity. On the other hand, the possession of modern technologies in activity organization, readiness to work in a team, the ability to accept the task as its own and the willingness and ability to implement organizational tasks assigned to the manager are no less important, too (Mudarisov and Sinyagin, 2016; Sinyagin, 2009). That means that in the structure of managerial potential, two components are immediately clearly monitored: the leadership and the managerial (or administrative) elements.

For the successful fulfillment of the leadership component, it is very important that the leader have what we call a strategic life idea or a "vital idea". By it, we understand not only the presence of a certain strategic vision, but also the existence of an active desire for its implementation. This desire, motivating the leader himself, allows ensuring the effect of psychological infection, which appears to be the basis for forming a team of like-minded people (Sinyagin, 2009). For the successful implementation of the managerial component, the presence of an orientation toward external, primarily organizational tasks, which ensures the manager's willingness to accept other people's ideas and to work fully for their fulfillment, is also important. Frequently, leadership and managerial components have various degree of expressiveness that can be a limitation on the way to realize the executive's capabilities and narrow down the range of possible managerial roles, which he can effectively carry out (Carter and Greer, 2013).

This conclusion is consistent with existing approaches to understanding the personality of the modern leader (Dile *et al.*, 2004; Zaleznik, 1977; Spenser and Spenser, 2005; Sinyagin and Podolskiy, 2016; Sudakov, 2012). Therefore, Abraham Zaleznik, a well-deserved professor at Harvard Business School in Boston, in 1977 concluded that leadership and management in the company are two separate systems of action that complement each other. Each has its own function and its characteristic activities. For the success of the company in the modern, increasingly complex and rapidly changing business world, it is necessary to master both (Zaleznik, 1977).

Ansoff (1979), another well-known expert in strategic management, expressed similar ideas: *"... to become a strategist, it is not enough to know the operation of all functions. Moreover, the deeper you get into specific problems of functions, the more likely it will lead to strategic myopia. It is not enough for a leader of a strategic level to have the skills of functional management, that is, to be able to solve highly structured problems in the spirit of convergence. A real strategic leader should be able to solve problems in a*

creative way, feel the company's environment, and have experience in analyzing strategies and designing strategic flexible structures. His abilities and leadership style are similar to those of an entrepreneur: he should see the prospect, be able to take risks, carry out a reorganization, have charisma and, to some extent, be a politician" (Ansoff, 1979).

The well-known Dutch psychoanalyst, specialist in the field of personnel management and leadership development Manfred Kets de Vries (2011) develops these ideas and emphasizes that: "effective leaders play two roles – charismatic and architectural. In a charismatic role, the leader draws a better future and inspires his subordinates. In an architectural role, he adverts to issues related to the structure of an organization and control and reward systems. Although the latter role is like management, it is not just another way to represent the difference between leadership and management. True leaders cannot exist without any of these roles. At the same time, none of them, in the absence of the other, will be enough for effective management (although one of the roles can be more significant, depending on the situation). The architectural role is much more than just management, as the leader implements the structure and rules that provide him with the functions of a visionary and mastermind, incidental to a charismatic leader (Kets de Vries, 2011).

Considering the options for developing these components in different leaders, Manfred Kets de Vries identifies several possible combinations of their matching. The strategic (leadership) component is high; the operational (managerial) one is low. He calls such people "Seers". The strategic (leadership) component is low; the operational (managerial) one is high. In his classification, this is called "Workers-bees". Both the strategic and the operational components are at a low level. Such managers Manfred Kets de Vries refers to the category "Wanderers". Finally, when the strategic (leadership) and the operational (managerial) components are equally well developed, that they can be called "Stars" (Kets de Vries, 2011).

The effectiveness of leadership and managerial roles implementation presupposes first that the executive is internally and externally ready for fulfilment both leadership and managerial functions. This readiness includes three main components: the availability of certain knowledge and skills, or a system of competencies that ensure the effectiveness of managerial and leadership functions (competence readiness); expressed desire to implement them in the real practice of managerial activity (motivational readiness); and the presence of certain professionally important qualities, internal inclinations and abilities for managerial activity (psychological readiness). Thus, alacrity for managerial activity largely depends on both the professional and managerial qualifications, the level of professionalism of the executive, his experience and individual predisposition of the managerial activity subject to the implementation of its various components.

The latter, in turn, as has been shown in numerous studies, is largely determined by both the personality traits of the manager formed at an early age, and by the specificity of his professional and managerial career path. As a part of our study on managerial potential of executives, it has been shown that one of the important components of a person's psychological readiness for management, both within the framework of leadership and

managerial functions, is an individual psychological characteristic called "strength of personality". This notion was justified as an acmeological category and studied in detail in the works of Konjuhov and his students (Konjuhov and Shakkum, 1996).

In one of the latest studies devoted to this problem that was carried out by Sudakov, it is shown that "strength of personality" is one of the components of the leader's volitional resource. The strength of personality, in the context of this research, is understood as the ability of a person to overcome the resistance of the external environment and to influence others (Bazarova and Eremina, 2002). Without a high level of development of this component, achieving high performance indicators of management activity, even with the presence and vivid development of all others, is very difficult to imagine.

Professionalism, reinforced by the strength of personality of the leader, appears to be also the basis of his charisma. In this exact case, it is possible to achieve the stellar level of development of managerial potential with the harmony of its leadership and managerial components (Carter and Greer, 2013). Moreover, even with a pronounced lack of predisposition to implement one of the two managerial roles, the effective leader positioning in the management structure is still possible. In that case, he can act both as a recognized ideologist of the organization, it is think tank, and as a talented administrator, whose authority is indisputable. With a low "strength of personality", he will remain at the level of the "Seer" or "Worker-bee" in respect to the typology of Manfred Kets de Vries.

However, it becomes possible only in the case of a high level of professionalism. At the same time, it is obvious that the presence of only the "strength of personality" in the absence of a sufficient level of professional and managerial competence is fraught with "militant unprofessionalism". It threatens with the ideological disintegration in case of a pronounced leadership motivational component, and the organizational disintegration in condition of managerial one. If in business such a variant is fraught with problems with the development and functioning of only this very organization (which, of course, also does not please), then in the system of state and municipal management the consequences can be more global and destructive (Sinyagin, 2009; Shmaliy *et al.*, 2017; Anureev, 2017; Shmaliy and Duskakova, 2017; Vasin *et al.*, 2017).

That is why, when assessing the managerial potential of executives, the identification of only the leadership and managerial components and the strength of personality is insufficient. The key element is the evaluation of the professional competence of the leader, which at the high management levels acts as his expert and analytical competence, characterizing the depth and professionalism of solving problems in the sphere of professional activity within which the management process is carried out. Thus, an expert or (expert-analytical) component appears to be an additional element of the manager's alacrity (Carter and Greer, 2013).

The data factorization results of personal and professional diagnosis of executives of different post groups of the state civil service at the preliminary stage of the study made possible to identify nine key indicators that are significantly related to the real experience in managerial and professional activity, and indicators of its effectiveness. The wide range of research methods were used, including a questionnaire for assessing managerial capacity, questionnaires for assessing the personal style of management process, a structured interview, a video presentation, and a set of methods of the assessment center. The identified nine key indicators are:

Strategic leadership (the ability to develop and maintain the energy and psychological potential of employees, "infect" them with your own ideas, formulate the strategic goals of the organization, see the strategic outlook for the activities and development of organizational and managerial structures).

Managerial competence (managerial experience; alacrity for the implementation of managerial functions, readiness for administrative activities; ability to plan, organize, control, and coordinate the activities of large organizational structures; readiness for the adoption of independent management decisions).

Dimension of thinking (the ability to see and analyze problems not only from the position of the post held, but also in a broader organizational and social context).

Readiness for self-development (development potential) (readiness for personal and professional growth, training and self-development; orientation to professional and personal improvement; ability to act effectively under changing conditions).

Readiness for teamwork (orientation to team interaction, readiness for internal acceptance of organizational goals and tasks).

Perseverance, purposefulness and strength of personality (ability to overcome the resistance of the external environment while performing professional and managerial activities; ability to "keep the goal").

Competence of interpersonal and social interaction (readiness for constructive interpersonal and social interaction; possession of skills of effective social communications; activity in social contacts; "insight" of value and behavioral models into a broad social context).

Competence of self-management (stress-resistance, self-control, poise, readiness for compromise).

Expert competence (ability to a profound versatile and system analysis of professional and managerial problems based on available professional experience and knowledge).

3. New scientific facts and results

These indicators are of scientific value, since they are novel in relation to public service. The Presidential Commission for Public Service and Management Personnel Reserve approved this system of indicators as the basis for personal and professional diagnosis of candidates for a management personnel reserve under the patronage of the President of the Russian Federation in 2013. It showed its effectiveness during candidates' evaluation and, since 2015, by the Government's decree it was fixed in the Program for Training and Retraining of the Management Personnel Reserve for 2010-2018 as indicators that form the basis for the compilation of individual plans for professional development of representatives of the federal management personnel reserve.

The data accumulated during personal and professional diagnosis of the state civil service heads made it possible to say that these very indicators that are common in their content for the leaders of different government levels can be nuclear in assessing the managerial potential and managerial alacrity of executives.

At the same time, using the method of contrast groups, the factor analysis of the data array on personal and professional diagnosis of 2,935 leaders of different levels of the state and municipal government, the budgetary sphere, and business was carried out. The results of the analysis showed that the indicators of executives with high success and performance metrics are included with different weights in three main factors, which are the three components of managerial alacrity: *leadership, managerial and expert*. The leadership component comes first among these factors. The strategic leadership, perseverance, purposefulness and strength of personality, as well as the competence of social and interpersonal interaction are the reflection of this component. This very factor appears to be the most significant; it has the greatest weight in the group of leaders who rated highest in the ranking based on diagnosis results. These data fully correlate with the results of the theoretical and methodological analysis. The second factor is the expert component of alacrity. This number two factor also includes three components: the dimension of thinking, readiness for learning, development and changes, as well as expert and analytical competence.

Finally, the third factor is the managerial component. As noted during theoretical analysis, it includes the existing managerial experience, the possession of modern technologies of managerial activity organization, the ability and possession of effective self-management methods, as well as the ability to control yourself and your emotions. This may also include both readiness and ability to team work, even though in the reference group this indicator does not have the highest factor load. On the one hand, it is the ability to effectively form and organize a team of performers, the possession of project teams' selection and formation methods. On the other hand, it is the ability to be a member of the management team of a superior leader, to understand and accept tasks assigned by others as one's own.

Finally, there is one more aspect related to teamwork in management activity: the formation of one's own management team of like-minded people. Today a separate word is used to call this phenomenon: "Teaming", unlike "Team building". This very multi-aspect appears to be the basis for the relatively independent existence of this factor. At the same time, at the level of the background massif, unlike the reference group, this indicator is included in one factor with managerial competence and self-management skills with significantly greater weight.

In this regard, the indicators, which reflect the development level of this component of managerial alacrity and managerial potential, also include three indicators from the meta competence model – managerial competence, readiness for teamwork and self-management competence. Thus, the general model of the structure of managerial alacrity sufficiently consistently included all the integral indicators of personal and professional diagnosis, grouped in three main blocks of readiness components (Figure 1).

As already mentioned, each of the components of managerial alacrity exist not in isolation, all of them are in some way interconnected. At the same time, the predominance of some components over others creates a unique individual profile. This fact was confirmed during interviews with more than five hundred top management executives. Significant unevenness in their development leads to significant problems. Thus, the absolute predominance of the managerial component with a noticeable lag in the expert and leadership elements is characteristic for the management topnotches that is able to organize and build processes irrespective of the activity specific content and a clear understanding of its strategic goals and objectives. In case of a developed expert component, these executives appear to be irreplaceable «second», people who have understood and accept the idea of a strategic leader as their own and are able to ensure its implementation at the highest management level.

The expressed leadership component without a developed managerial or expert element can in some cases lead to "militant unprofessionalism", when strength of personality and charisma are capable of capturing others with a meaningless and unjustified idea. The expressed leadership component with a highly developed expert element is most characteristic for effective chief executives at high management levels if they include both expert professionals and individuals with highly developed managerial alacrity in their immediate environment. Finally, the apparent predominance of the expert component provides the activity with content and a large-scale vision but does not guarantee the successful implementation of the proper and reasonable ideas. The balanced development of all three components of managerial alacrity ensures the highest possible efficiency. This, according to Kets De Vries (2011), is "star-leaders." Understanding the individual structure of managerial readiness allows to outline the motion of each executive in this direction and to build an individual strategy for advancing the components of alacrity.

Figure 1. Components of managerial alacrity based on personal and professional diagnosis of 2935 executives using 9 integral indicators



At the same time, the expert component of readiness is much more connected with the development of such competencies that today are called «Hard skills», and managerial one is linked with «Soft skills» group. To some extent, this group also includes the leadership component of readiness, but it is largely determined by what is called today "family programming." Changes in this area are a separate direction, requiring the use of special technologies that are currently developed and tested at the Faculty of Management Personnel Evaluation and Development of Higher School of Public Administration (The Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration).

These exact components appear to be the key ones in assessing the potential for readiness to perform specific managerial roles. If we speak from the same positions about the management potential of development, it is possible to single out indicators that are nuclear in terms of further development of the managerial readiness. They are much less amenable to changes than all the others. The presence of other elements ensures the speed with which such changes become possible. This is, first, strategic leadership, strength of personality and dimension of thinking, the intensity of which appears to be the basis for further resources improvement. Finally, it is alacrity to learn, development and changes, which provides a

motivational basis for building managerial readiness. These four components become the foundation for assessing the managerial potential of development within the framework of the personal and professional diagnosis of executives.

It should be mentioned that, as noted earlier, different management levels require different profiles of preparedness for described components, since in the real activity of the leader either expert, managerial, or leadership components come to the fore on each level. In accordance with the results of the conducted studies, it is possible to determine the weight of each component of alacrity at each management level. Three levels can be optimally identified: linear (basic), medium and higher.

4. Results and discussion

The results of a standardized interview conducted with 156 state civil service officials show that at the basic level of management the weight of the expert-analytical component is 68%, of the managerial element is 20%, and of the leadership one is 10%. At the medium level of management, this ratio varies; and with a high value of the expert-analytical component, the importance of the managerial component of readiness substantially increases. At the higher level, where the activity of the leader is directly linked to the formulation of strategic goals and objectives and is of a "semi-political" nature, the leadership component of alacrity comes first with a large margin (Table 1).

It should be noted, however, that for different specific managerial positions, a more differentiated assessment system is possible, not only by the constituents of readiness themselves, but also by the nine meta-competencies included in them. At the same time, it is very interesting that many executives perceive the model of an effective leader as invariant for all levels and spheres of governance and single out the leader component first. On the one hand, it sometimes leads to the construction of ineffective individual management model, and, on the other hand, can be the cause of a distorted self-perception. In addition, the invariant model of the personality of an effective leader can also occasion mistakes in the selection of candidates to fill vacant managerial positions.

Table 1. *The ratio of alacrity components at different levels of management (in percent) based on interviews with civil service executives.*

	Leadership	Managerial	Expert
Higher	43%	23%	34%
Medium	18%	35%	47%
Basic	12%	20%	68%

Thus, a survey of 446 executives at various management levels, using a questionnaire for assessing managerial potential that was the foundation during

personal and professional diagnosis, was carried out (Sinyagin, 2009). The participants were asked about their preparedness to perform one of the three managerial roles. The answers are presented below (Table 2).

Table 2. Subjective assessment of readiness for execution of three managerial roles by leaders of various management levels (446 people).

	Leadership	Managerial	Expert	Total
Higher	71,7%	16,7%	11,7%	60
Medium	59,2%	30,3%	10,5%	76
Basic	41,0%	44,8%	14,2%	310

The obtained data are very interesting and indicative in comparison with the interview data with the leaders of the higher position group, which are given in the table (Table 1).

First, a high degree of mastering assessment of the leadership role at a significantly lower readiness assessment of the expert component attracts attention. This is particularly significant at the level of basic managerial positions, where the expert component carries the main load. The data of the answer to this question are not critical, since they assumed not a ranked, but the only choice of three possible options. At the same time, the very fact of assessing the maximum willingness to fulfill precisely the leadership functions by 48% of executives – representatives of different levels of management – is quite interesting. In this connection, the answer of these leaders to the question about subjective evaluation of themselves as leaders and specialists in different fields is interesting, too. They were asked a question: "What do you feel yourself to be – a leader or specialist in a specific field of activity? (Please rate the correlation of these roles in your activity)". The data reflect the ratio of leadership and managerial components of managerial readiness on the one hand, and expert-professional, on the other (Table 3).

Table 3. Subjective assessment of the correlation of managerial and professional roles in one's own activity by the heads of the state civil service at different levels of government.

	Higher	Medium	Basic
100% leader	10,0%	15,8%	14,5%
80-90% leader and 10-20% specialist	33,3%	28,9%	30,6%
60-70% leader and 30-40% specialist	35,0%	35,5%	27,1%
approximately equally as a leader and specialist	20,0%	17,1%	23,5%
30-40% leader and 60-70% specialist	0,0%	2,6%	3,9%
10-20% leader and 80-90% specialist	0,0%	0,0%	0,3%
100% specialist	1,7%	0,0%	0,0%
Total number of participants	60	76	310

These data also show an underestimation of expert-analytical component in their activities, especially by the leaders of the basic level of management. The main element for many of them is the managerial or leadership component of management. According to the results of interviews with executives, in their opinion, it depends on them both the effectiveness of their management activities, and career success and prospects. At the same time, some leaders, overestimating the development of their leadership readiness, focus on acquiring new management competencies and mastering modern and effective management technologies. Some of them, on the contrary, are focused on developing the leadership component, believing that it can be raised quite easily by mastering new technological methods.

Actually, the expert-analytical component is often left out of the picture. At the same time, as it was already noted, it appears to be the basis for both forming the real authority of the leader, and for ensuring readiness to formulate deep and meaningful strategic plans, without which the true leadership is impossible.

In addition, there is another important point, which is clear when discussing personal and professional development with executives. The invariant subjective model of an effective manager in many cases leads to an attempt to build a process of his development based on a normative or deficit model. Many leaders, trying to correspond with their own subjective model, are guided by the development of those components of readiness that they, in their opinion, are lack for successful career advancement, instead of developing their strengths and key resources.

Each moment of time is characterized by a certain individual configuration of development of the managerial readiness components, while each of them is also characterized by a certain development potential. The choice of development directions is determined both by topical and long-term plans of the person, as the career path chosen by him requires a certain combination of them.

5. Conclusion

The above outputs appear to be the basis for assessing the topical alacrity of executives to replace specific managerial positions, and for building individual programs for personal and professional development and individual career paths, considering the resources available to the leader.

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