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# The Booming Business of Management Education in Russia

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Management education is a booming business in Russia these days. In the past couple of years in Moscow alone, more than 1,000 business schools and training centres have sprung up, like mushrooms after a rainfall[1]. Yet, like the Russians' voracious appetite for mushrooms, their appetite for management education cannot be readily satisfied. The new business schools have not begun to meet the huge demand, estimated at 50 times the supply, and 1.5 million managers and professionals need training in market-oriented management methods[2]. The training and retraining of such a massive number of people is a daunting task in any country under any circumstances. The task is infinitely more challenging in the Russia of the 1990s in light of the cataclysmic changes that the country is undergoing on virtually every dimension of the political, economic and social landscape.

The focus of this article is the way management education is evolving in Russia. We begin with an overview of the management education system that existed during the communist period. This is followed by a discussion of how political, social and economic changes have influenced management education since 1988. The latest developments in management education are presented next. Topics include the types of business schools that have been created, as well as the characteristics of their faculty, programmes and curricula, and teaching methodologies. The article concludes with a discussion of the future of management education, and presents a pessimistic and an optimistic scenario of the potential impact of management education on the economy, politics and society in the New Russia.

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### Management Education During the Communist Period

During the communist period, management education was directed by the Academy of Social Sciences for communist party officials, and the Academy of the National Economy for managers of industrial enterprises and other sectors of the economy[3]. The USSR State Committee for Public Education controlled and co-ordinated curricula and standards. A typical programme for senior enterprise managers during that period was the three-month management development programme that the author graduated from in 1980 at the Plekhanov Institute of the National Economy in Moscow. The curriculum of the three-month management development for industrial managers at the Plekhanov Institute of the National Economy, Moscow, 1980 is presented below[6]:

(1) *General management:*

- Methodological foundations of management
- Economic mechanism of the socialist economy
- Personnel management
- Sociopsychological aspects of management
- Foreign management experience.

(2) *Industrial issues:*

- Organization of industrial enterprises
- Economics of needs and consumption
- Economics of industry
- Economics and organization of labour
- Analysis of the administrative activity of industrial enterprises
- Problems of the rational use of the environment
- Automated management systems
- Statistics in the management of the economy
- Finance and credit in industrial enterprises
- Soviet law.

(3) *Politics and planning:*

- Economic policy of the Communist party of the Soviet Union in the current stage of development
- Planning of the national economy
- Foreign policy of the Communist party of the Soviet Union and the ideological struggle in the modern world
- Civil defence.

### Political Changes that Revolutionized Management Education

Three major pieces of legislation introduced in the late 1980s by President Mikhail Gorbachev as part of his policy of *perestroika*, or restructuring of the economy, had a significant impact on management education. These laws were the 1988

General Educational Reform, the 1987 Law on Soviet State Enterprises, and the 1988 Law on Co-operatives. The laws greatly increased the importance of training managers about the market economy, created a huge demand for such training, legalized the establishment of private business schools, and made state-run business schools become more financially accountable and independent. As a result, business schools were “almost as easy to set up ... as shish kebab stands at busy intersections” [7, p. 34]. These developments intensified after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, and became particularly strong in the newly independent Russian Federation.

### **Social Factors Affecting Management Education**

In contrast to the swift political changes that heralded the new business schools, social factors acted as a brake on their acceptance as legitimate institutions. The main obstacle was that most people understandably could not immediately reject the notion that capitalism was bad. Over the centuries, capitalism and entrepreneurship had never really taken root, and 70 years of communism reinforced the belief that private enterprise was antithetical to a just socialist society [8]. By championing private enterprise, business schools were viewed as promoting individualism and achievement, and they legitimated inequality arising from rewards associated with initiative and hard work. The image of business schools was further tarnished as a result of some people associating them with the sharp increase in crime and corruption in business dealings in the freewheeling economy.

### **Economic Factors Affecting Management Education**

The major economic factors which shaped business schools founded after 1988 are competition and scarce resources. Business schools and training centres competed with one another to train managers from state-owned and private enterprises who would pay large sums for training in market-based management. State schools lost many of their best faculty to private schools which offered markedly higher salaries. Schools scrambled for facilities, and entered into partnerships with foreign business schools and corporations in search of funding and technical expertise.

### **Management Education in the New Russia**

As a direct result of the extraordinary political changes implemented in the USSR under Gorbachev, beginning in 1988 the uniformity that had characterized management education for decades under the communist regime was quickly replaced by a dizzying array of business schools and management training programmes which varied on virtually every dimension imaginable including size, ownership structure, financing, faculty, programmes and curricula, and methodology.

#### *Types of Management Education Institutions*

There are three basic types of organizations engaged in management education: state business schools, private business schools, and private consulting firms.

The extent to which business schools are state owned or private is blurred in a number of cases where new business schools have been founded within existing state institutions. The scope and quality of management programmes vary greatly[1]. Some schools are striving to develop high quality, pedagogically sound programmes, while others, primarily a number of private consulting firms, offer lectures with more entertainment value than educational benefit at high prices. The characteristics of the top 15 business schools in Russia as rated by a panel of experts at the newspaper *Finansovye Izvestiia* in the autumn of 1992 are listed in Table I[9].

Rank	Name	Location	Number of programmes	Number of students trained annually	Number of faculty
1	International Business School, MGIMO	Moscow	10	1,200	24
2	Graduate School of International Business, Academy of the National Economy	Moscow	8	600	16
3	International Management Institute, IMISP	St Petersburg	3	500	16
4	Higher Commercial School, MVES	Moscow	6	450	12
5	Moscow International Financial-Banking School	Moscow	5	300	20
6	LETI-Lovanium International School of Management	St Petersburg	1	50	14
7	Center for Managers' Training, Plekhanov Institute of the National Economy	Moscow	4	250	6
8	Moscow International Business School, MIRBIS	Moscow	6	350	6
9	Russian Academy of Management	Moscow	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
10	Management Center, Ordzhonikidze University	Moscow	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
11	Kaliningrad School of International Business	Kaliningrad	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
12	Nizhegorodskii Institute of International Business	Nizhninovgorod	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
13	Voronezh School of Entrepreneurs	Voronezh	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
14	Moscow International School of Business for Industry and Science, MISBIS	Moscow	4	120	6
15	International Center of Business Administration, Russian Diplomatic Academy	Moscow	4	250	10

Note: n.a. = not available  
Sources: Compiled from[9,13]

**Table I.**  
The Top 15 Business  
Schools in 1992

State business schools are housed in universities and technical and economic institutes, as well as in training institutes affiliated with industrial sectors or in large enterprises. They are self-financing and operate as profit centres, but receive buildings and some funds from the government. Private business schools include former state schools that were privatized, as well as new schools that were created after private ownership was legalized. Private consulting firms typically target practising managers, and offer short seminars and training programmes rather than full-time undergraduate or graduate education. One such company is Neuman Business School and Trade. Founded by a Swedish academic and entrepreneur, the firm opened a business school in St Petersburg and also formed a joint venture with a Russian company in Iaroslavl to offer business training cruises, restore buildings, and trade a variety of goods[10].

### *Financing*

Sources of financing for business schools are varied[11]. For example, Moscow State University School of Business Administration, which considers itself a state enterprise with the status of a profit centre, receives half its funding from the Government and half from training programme revenues. In contrast, the Graduate Business School for Foreign Tourism also calls itself a state enterprise, yet receives no state financing. The Moscow International School of Business for Industry and Science, MISBIS, was founded in 1992 as a joint stock company. Sixty per cent of its funding comes from training programmes, with the remaining 40 per cent from the joint stock company, MOST. The Russian Academy of Entrepreneurs, a private organization, depends on training programme revenues for 90 per cent of its income, with sponsors providing the remaining 10 per cent. Tuition is high at many schools. At the International Business School, MGIMO, annual tuition in 1993 in the full-time undergraduate programme was \$2,000 (not rubles!), making the programme accessible only to a select few[12]. Applicants were expected to find themselves corporate sponsors to finance their education.

Business schools became entrepreneurial in finding ways to survive and grow by branching out to various business activities. For example, state schools leased classroom facilities to private management training firms at handsome rates. Some schools set up management consulting centres. Other schools, both state and private, created joint ventures with foreign partners that provide funding and technical expertise and share revenues from management training programmes. For example, The LETI-Lovanium International School of Management is a joint venture between St Petersburg Electro-Technical Institute and Lovanium University in Belgium. Similarly, the International Management Institute, IMISP, is a joint venture between St Petersburg State University and Bocconi University in Milan, Italy. The Graduate School of International Business, MIRBIS, was created as a joint venture between the Plekhanov Institute of the National Economy (now the Russian Economic Academy) and the Economic Research Institute NOMISMA of Bologna, Italy, and has partnerships with a half-dozen European banks. These three business schools rank among the best in the country (Table D).

*Faculty*

Faculty talent is the primary resource of any educational institution. The major faculty issues faced by business schools are training faculty members in market-based management subjects, and compensating them sufficiently that they will not leave for more lucrative teaching and consulting opportunities.

*Faculty Training*

Since state business schools are required to retain existing faculty, various methods are being used to retrain them, including in-house training programmes and study abroad. For instance, at Moscow State University's School of Management, in 1990 three instructors were sent to the United States for training, two to the IBM corporate training centre in Brussels, Belgium, and one to the Institute for Management Development (IMD) in Lausanne, Switzerland[7].

Some efforts to retrain faculty members have been undertaken with Western assistance. In 1991, the European Community spent more than 50 million ECUs in training faculty members in the republics of the former Soviet Union[2], and American government agencies such as the United States Information Agency funded travel for Russian and American faculty to collaborate on course development.

American participation in retraining of Russian faculty includes an ambitious programme sponsored by a consortium of five leading US business schools. In 1991, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northwestern, Stanford, and The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania collaborated to create The Central and Eastern European Teachers Program, a two-year programme designed to train 100 faculty members, including several Russians from the Academy of the National Economy[14]. The programme was designed to "give a little top spin"[15] to retraining initiatives in participants' home countries, the idea being that the majority of the effort and responsibility rested with the individuals themselves. The faculty were "raw intellectual horsepower and sponge-like in their desire to learn everything"[16]. However, many of them admitted that it would be a challenge to change their teaching styles from lecturing to the interactive case discussion method they were exposed to in the programme.

Training of faculty is a costly and time-consuming endeavour. The most successful programmes are, of course, very expensive. For example, the Central and Eastern European Teachers Program costs \$25,000 per participant for tuition, room and board, and other expenses. The consortium of five American universities funded the initial \$3.5 million cost, but hoped to raise additional funds from external sources to continue the programme[17]. Nevertheless, it is more cost effective to train faculty abroad than managers, since each faculty member can subsequently teach dozens of managers and students[18].

*Faculty Salaries*

There is a wide disparity between faculty salaries in state and private business

schools. In state business schools salaries are set by the state at such a low level that retention of the best faculty is a critical problem. Fortunately, affiliation with a prominent business school can provide access to lucrative consulting opportunities. For instance, in mid-1992 the prestigious state business school, the Academy of the National Economy, was restricted to paying its faculty members 3,000 rubles *a month*, not much more than the average national wage. Yet some of these faculty members earned 1,500 rubles *an hour* as consultants for a large enterprise[22]. In contrast, private business schools and private management training firms are free to hire anyone at any salary.

#### *Programmes and Curricula*

Most business schools, public and private, began their operations by offering management training to practising managers. Programmes ranged from seminars lasting a few hours, to courses covering a variety of subjects and lasting several weeks or months. These programmes commanded a high price and were profitable as long as a steady stream of managers could be attracted. Some schools offered programmes in general management, while others catered to more specialized groups. The International Management Institute, IMISP, in St Petersburg offered several business programmes in 1992: foreign trade in the market economy (four weeks, 20 students), management (two weeks, 20 students), and strategic management and marketing (two weeks, 20 students). Specialized business schools include the Graduate School of International Tourism in Moscow, which in 1992 taught the following subjects: management in international tourism (five weeks, 20 students), accounting (four weeks, 15 students), business law (four weeks, 20 students), international finance (two weeks, 20 students), and a guide and translators' programme (four weeks, 30 students). Another specialized school is the Graduate School of Marketing, VNIKS, in Moscow. In 1992 it offered a four-week programme, Marketing in Russia, to 20 participants.

An innovative programme to train entrepreneurs has been developed by Professor Iurii Ekaterinoslavskii of the Russian Academy of Entrepreneurship[23]. His three-step programme has the goals of developing the complete individual and promoting "civilized" entrepreneurship through attitude change, business courses and physical fitness.

Another innovative programme has been developed by the Russian Foreign Economic School. In addition to its regular programmes, the school initiated in 1992 a Distance Learning Program. Every two weeks, the school broadcasts throughout the former Soviet Union a series of business modules on the "Youth" radio station. Each module is accompanied by audio cassettes, workbooks, and readings. Certificates and diplomas are awarded on successful completion of one or several modules.

By 1990 a number of business schools began to establish degree programmes, including four-year undergraduate and one- and two-year graduate programmes. Most were modelled after similar programmes in the United States and Europe. The Moscow Commercial University, under the Committee of Higher Education

of Russia, offered four different four-year programmes, each having 20 to 30 students in 1992: management, trade, finance, and foreign economic relations. Similarly, Moscow State University School of Management and the International Business School, MGIMO, both initiated four-year undergraduate programmes in 1992. The ten modules comprising the undergraduate programme of MGIMO, the top-ranked business school in Russia, are listed as follows (the curriculum of the four-year undergraduate programme at the International Business School, MGIMO, Moscow)[12]:

- (1) Management. Includes subjects such as principles of management and human resources management.
- (2) Marketing. Includes marketing research, environmental analysis, and corporate international marketing policy.
- (3) Finance and accounting. Includes corporate investment strategy.
- (4) Macroeconomics and microeconomics. Includes general rules of market development and behaviour of individual players in the market.
- (5) Business law. Includes Russian and international law.
- (6) Management information systems, mathematics and statistics. Applied focus includes processing economic information, mathematical analysis and forecasting, and use of the personal computer.
- (7) Psychology.
- (8) Sociology.
- (9) Philosophy.
- (10) English.

Other degree programmes have been launched in collaboration with foreign business schools. For instance, the Moscow Institute of Electronic Technology in Zelinograd, Russia's première region of high technology industry and educational institutions, established an undergraduate management programme in collaboration with the University of Tulsa and welcomed an entering class of 47 in the autumn of 1992. An MBA programme was planned for 1993.

Typical courses include marketing, accounting, finance, organizational behaviour, economics, management and international business. Yet, faculty members have experienced difficulty in grasping some of these new concepts since they lacked familiarity with market-based management. At the Harvard Business School faculty training programme in 1992, the "conditioning of living in a planned economy"[24] was evident in the logic they used in a discussion of how prices would be affected as an industry reached full production capacity. In free markets, prices increase because of constraints on supply. Yet, some participants reasoned that prices would drop because fixed costs could be spread over a larger volume.

Cultural and economic differences also created bewilderment about the attention devoted in some American business subjects to seemingly irrelevant



or trivial issues. For example, a Russian enrolled in Northeastern University's MBA programme in Boston was amazed that his marketing class spent two hours discussing whether to sell deodorized socks in packages of two or four. He could not imagine such a discussion taking place in the shortage-plagued Russian economy[25].

Russian executives, too, have been surprised at the differences they have observed in the managerial role of their Western counterparts. One Siberian company president who studied in Germany in 1989 was impressed by the extent to which senior executives in the West delegated responsibility for many important short-term operational matters, and devoted a great deal of their time to strategic, long-term business issues[26].

### *Methodology*

Along with Western-style curricula, the new Russian business schools have adopted new teaching methodologies as alternatives to their traditional lecture method. A number of faculty have begun developing new materials and using the case discussion method, role plays and experiential exercises, as well as computerized business games. Building a set of market-oriented management materials adapted to the Russian context is a slow and difficult process. The European Foundation for Entrepreneurship Research (EFER) is one organization which has provided funding to Russian management faculty to develop and publish case materials. In addition, some Russian management faculty are writing books to fill the need. For example, Professors Oleg Vikhanskii and Alexander Naumov from the School of Management at Moscow State University have written a management textbook which adapts Western management theory and practice to the Russian context.

Although many case studies, experiential exercises and business simulations are now being patterned on Western practice, an indigenous form of such activities has been in existence since the late 1970s. Newly developed business games appear regularly in educational journals (e.g. *Kentavr* and *Professional*). The open game, for example, is a uniquely Russian technique used to solve complex, weakly structured problems that have no ready solutions, such as a polluting factory which is the primary employer in a town[27-29]. Open games are conducted by skilled facilitators in isolated settings and can last from several days to several weeks. Game participants represent groups with different views of the issue. The goal of the game is to bring about deep personal, organizational, and social transformation by having participants question their values and experience self-determination, responsibility, and openness in solving the problem.

Other games and simulations have been developed by Russian management consultants to bring about change in organizations[30,31]. Goals include increasing involvement in decision making by employees at all hierarchical levels, and encouraging cross-functional collaboration in problem solving. Other experiential exercises and role plays have been developed for use in management training programmes and management assessment centres. Innovative techniques include

“paratheater”, a sophisticated role play in which the manager plays the roles of scriptwriter, director and manager. “Duelling” is an exercise in which participants take turns being the boss and exercising power[32].

There are signs, however, that the game movement may be losing popularity in some circles. Some people contend that such games are no longer necessary since, under the new political and economic conditions, people are free to experiment directly in real-life situations and there are many serious economic and managerial problems which deserve immediate attention[33].

### **The Future of Management Education in Russia: Boom or Bust?**

#### *A Critical Time of Competition and Collaboration*

Management education in Russia is at a critical point. The proliferation of business schools of all shapes and sizes which occurred over the past several years has given business schools a high profile in society. Not surprisingly, management education has also become a highly controversial issue. As much as the new business schools have been hailed by market-oriented liberals as a solution for Russia’s economic ills, so have they been condemned by conservatives as a threat to the stability that had been provided by central planning and communism.

Management education has entered a new phase. The start-up phase has drawn to a close and a shake-out has begun. Purveyors of management education must both compete and collaborate to survive and become long-term players. Schools must compete among themselves to meet the needs of students. As consumers of business education become more discerning, they will support schools that have a reputation for quality programmes that provide practical tools to conduct business in a market economy. Schools which fail to develop a sound strategic plan and secure the resources necessary to provide quality education will not survive over the long term.

Business schools must also collaborate to define the field of management education, establish procedures, and set academic and institutional standards. The first major step towards collaboration took the form of a Moscow conference organized in October 1992 by the International Business School, MGIMO, in co-operation with the Russian International Association of Schools of Business, the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, the European Fund for Management Development, and the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business[2,34,35].

#### *The Potential Impact of Management Education in Russia*

Depending on the form that it takes, management education has the potential to make a significant positive or negative impact on the economic, political and social landscape in Russia. Let us construct a pessimistic and an optimistic scenario.

*A pessimistic scenario.* As business schools develop, they may come to be viewed in a negative light and be considered to have a negative impact. This could occur if they fail to develop ethical standards for their own conduct or

that of their graduates, or if they fail to train managers well enough and quickly enough to make a measurable difference in the economic performance of the country. If “wild capitalism” (*dikii kapitalizm*) overtakes the country, some individuals could accumulate wealth at the expense of the average citizen, upsetting the norms of social justice that value collectivism (and “equal poverty for all”) over individualism and wide disparities in wealth. Public resentment has already been directed towards the *nouveaux-riches*, and the crime and corruption associated with the accumulation of wealth have exacerbated negative public sentiment. Business schools could create additional social imbalances with exclusionary admissions policies, thereby creating an élite group of people skilled in the mechanisms of the market economy. As a result, business schools could become the scapegoat on which the government could lay the blame for a failed transition to a market economy, for growing social inequality, and for the infiltration of the country by unsavoury foreign influences. The government could appease people who want to return to central planning and socialism by shutting down business schools and punishing those who had the greatest visibility and involvement.

*An optimistic scenario.* Alternatively, as market-based business schools mature, they may come to be viewed in a positive light and be considered as having a beneficial effect on the economy, politics, and society at large. Business schools have the potential to create a new economic infrastructure by teaching people how to privatize state organizations, start their own businesses, and design reward and control systems which foster productive work behaviour and a healthy economy.

Business schools could also affect decision making in the political arena. Schools could form consortia to lobby the government to improve business education by providing financial aid to students and grants to support business schools, as well as by giving tax incentives to enterprises that support business education. Business school alumni could also form interest groups to influence government policy towards promoting and funding business education.

Finally, business schools could play a central role in transforming social attitudes towards the market economy and capitalism. A number of schools market their programmes as “civilized” entrepreneurship[23], and “civilized” management[12], to assure the public of their honourable intentions and their dissociation from the negative connotations of business. Another positive development was a conference on business ethics organized in June 1993 by half-a-dozen leading business schools and associations and spearheaded by The Academy of the National Economy. Other positive steps that schools could take include engaging in public service campaigns to educate the general population about the positive aspects of ambition, individualism and initiative. In addition, business schools could lead by example, such as by having respected faculty members and graduates perform volunteer work to help solve serious social problems such as drug abuse and homelessness.

### **Conclusion**

It is easy to be pessimistic about market-based management education in Russia.

Too many people need to be trained, including those who cannot easily let go of old ways of doing things and those who want to do new things immediately without taking the time to learn the right ways. Too few faculty are qualified to teach market-based management. Too few resources are available including books, buildings and computers. And there is too much social and political resistance to a market economy to make management education easy to deliver and to receive ready acceptance.

Yet, as this article has shown, there are reasons for optimism. A large number of initiatives have been undertaken in an amazingly short time. Business schools have found enough funding to get started, training of faculty members has begun, new curricula and teaching methodologies have been developed, and there is a large demand for management training. Successful development of market-based management education in Russia will depend on allocation of the requisite resources to faculty, administrators, and students who are both talented and dedicated to high quality market-based management education in Russia.

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