

# Dealing with Managerial Conflicts and Resolving Them

By the Case of Magnitogorsk Music Houses and Music Community

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**Abstract**—The paper attempts to analyse a problem of managerial conflicts and dealing with them, as well as with conflict people and their appointment to management positions in an organization. It also provides an overview of the history of Magnitogorsk Music Houses and Music Community and their value in terms of educational activities and people's communication with music; studies the case of erroneous appointments by their example. In addition, the author weighs their losses and gains and provides some useful rules for managers to follow.

**Keywords**—*managerial conflicts; managerial mistakes; erroneous appointment; financial difficulties; losses, gains; communication with music; library of sound recordings; musical instruments; art; academic musicgenres*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Crisis periods in management and the change in attitude towards a manager in the society are the main costs in a manager's work. Professional skills of a manager determine their ability to minimize losses during crisis times. However, to solve this problem, they have to learn to understand the reality of crisis onset, to distinguish possible to overcome and insurmountable difficulties; to decide what a manager can sacrifice; to turn losses to positive results; find errors in their actions and predict the associated independent losses. What is more, the situations when pen pushers destroy prosperous businesses are not rare at present times, unfortunately. This was exactly what happened to Magnitogorsk pride —the Music Houses and the Music Community. Therefore, in a situation of the kind it is a manager's responsibility to find the solution.

## II. THE HISTORY OF THE MUSIC HOUSES

It is important to mention that the first Music House in Russia was established in Magnitogorsk on 16, March 1968 initiated by the local choral community chair S.G. Eidinov. Its establishment became a remarkable event both for the town and for the whole country, as the activity of the Music House was an evidence for the emergence of a new form of relations between people and music. There started a library of sound recordings, an integrated musical library, and a collection of the most popular musical instruments. Any

local could listen to records of classical music, take musical notes, play music on any instrument they liked and communicate with professional musicians in the music room. In the concert hall, there were concerts performed by local high music school teachers and students, state chapel choir and music schools students. There children's creative groups were organized and lectures and events were conducted to familiarize people with classical music.

The Local Choral Community, later renamed into Music Community, organized and coordinated the work of the Music House. Its methodologists and lecturers conducted up to 600 events per year, regularly arranging Magnitogorsk academic musicians and music admirers meetings. In 1972, the Choral Community opened the second Music House, both of them being financially supported by the Choral community. The activities of the second one were mostly focused on work with children; while both Music Houses activities were distinguished for a high level of educational work.

In 1988, the author as the chair of the Music Community got teachers' request for assistance in opening a studio of wind instruments play. In 1991, the presidium of the Music Community made a decision on the third Music House establishment. For this, the town administration gave one more rather small building, signing it off to the balance of the high music school, where the studio of wind instruments was further on located. A talented organizer and musician A.L. Dudin became the art director of this Music House.

The premises, concert hall and classrooms redecoration was accomplished by efforts of children's parents supported by the high music school. Soon, the Music House started its work. This became one more victory of the Magnitogorsk musical population: there were opportunities provided for youth's professional training, quality, educational leisure, especially for boys, and, which was also important, it helped to overcome children's addiction to street and protect them from antisocial behaviour.

Before long, the work of the wind instrument studio received a significant boost for its development. The children were taught not only to play wind instruments play but in addition, in line with the music school curriculum, they

attended extra piano, musical literature and music theory lessons. First fruits were not long to come: gifted and well-trained youth entered the musical college for their further education.

The college administration made great efforts to create educational conditions for the children providing musical instruments, furniture and equipment. For the purpose of children's health improvement, in the basement of one of the Music Houses, there was a swimming pool with a sauna and a fitness hall constructed and equipped. Swimming and muscle activities are an important condition for professional education of windinstrument players as playing these instruments more often than not, children breath in more air than can spend on a musical phrase performance. It can result in lungs problems, which can provoke pulmonaryedema. Going to the swimming pool or a sauna is said to be a good preventative measure.

### III. A PROBLEM OF DEALING WITH AUTHORITY AND SEARCHING FOR ITS SOLUTION

Afterwards, with arrival of a new town top-management team, the presence of the swimming pool and sauna in the third Music House was interpreted incorrectly. It was rumoured that, allegedly, the sauna had been built for the Music Community administration entertainment. It should be mentioned that as a rule, rumours tend to be spread by pen pushers unable to perform any constructive activities. A supposition generated by their overacted imagination is expressed as a statement used further on as the main argument.

Soon, the reason for such rumours became clear. In 1992, there property division between the regional centre (town, a constituent territory of the federation) and the local administration took place. At that time, top managers did not try to understand the specificity of institutions activities, the same was with the Music Houses; being afraid that they could be a part of regional property, feverishly, the local administration sought possible ways of its transfer to local subordination.

It is interesting to note that local clerks at such moments always pretend to be benevolent, acting in town interests and demonstrating a high degree of patriotism, unlike the teachers working directly with children and the youth, in their opinion.

The property redistribution was complicated by financial difficulties within the Music community. For many years, the activity of two Magnitogorsk Music Houses was subsidized by All-Russian Music Community in Moscow. As a result of the democratic transformations, the All-Russian Community lost its numerous industrial enterprises; so that was the reason for withholding financial provision of regional institutions. This escalated the tension between the high music school and the town.

Teachers' teams of the Music Houses of the Music Community appeared to be in a difficult situation, their salary being financed by parents' financial contribution only. Evidently, the money was not enough. The heads of the

Music Houses had to develop paid services, such as premises leasing and, of course, paid performances to provide their salaries. According to authorities' calculations, about 70% of so-called active time, the premises were empty. However, the top managers of the Music Houses were unable to meet the new economic conditions but instead kept insisting on financing from the local budget. Any budget assignments are a useful thing; however, such a founder change could ruin completely any well-organized activity.

Under the prevailing circumstances, it was possible to solve the problem of the Music Houses in two ways. The first one presupposed making them structural departments of the college, which was in regional subordination. This way ensured obtaining necessary funds together with increasing commercial concert and educational activities based on connections of the Music Houses with the personnel of the high music school, which needed concertvenues. In this case, students' concert practice could be implemented in the well-established mode. Besides, the Music Community having there its legal address and registered office could preserve its former status and positions, and most importantly, it could provide real assistance in commercial forms of concert work development.

The other way to be achieved through negotiations between the local administration and the Music Houses top management, implied the Music Houses transfer to local jurisdiction. In this case, Magnitogorsk administration got the right to require additional budget from the regional centre due to increased culture institutions list. For the Music Houses top managers this way was extremely convenient, as thus, they did not have to aim at commercial activities growth and learn how to earn money. Town mayor promised to provide teachers with salaries on full pay. Along with it, concerts and commercial activities were considerably reduced, as they required great engagement and hard work from the Music Houses top managers. However, mainly, this way deprived musicians of their creativity demanding their complete subordination to the authorities.

### IV. PERSONNEL AND ERRONEOUS APPOINTMENTS

In a case of transfer to the local jurisdiction, projections on personnel were optimistic and secure, because then the maintenance of the Music Houses was borne on taxpayers. In their turn, the authorities of high music school tried to convince their colleagues that in case of transfer into the college structure and success of commercial activities, the financial position of the personnel would be better. However, the managers of the Music Houses were afraid of any changes and took the side of the local administration.

This event, which subsequently resulted in serious harm to Magnitogorsk musical life, triggered the deep analysis of the situation and the causes. The point is that several years before the described events, being the chair of Magnitogorsk Music Community, the author made an unreasonable managerial decision for the position of the Music Houses director having appointed a person most prone to conflicts. This mistake served a precondition of what happened later

on. In other words, human factor is supposed to be the source of most conflicts, and this case was no exception.

Prior to being appointed to this position, this person had worked as deputy-director of a musical school. Unfortunately, there was a conflict with the director and the local administration requested the author's assistance in this situation resolution. They studied the causes for the conflict, talked to teachers and parents. The director of the school appeared to be a decent person possessing good musical skills but lacking relevant management skills, being unable to arrange and maintain educational discipline and ignoring the colleagues' mistakes, including the deputy-director's ones. She was an experienced head teacher, nevertheless, not infrequently found in the centre of a conflict due to ambitions and verbal arguments. The local administration made a decision to dismiss both of them and appoint other specialists instead.

Soon, when the former school director was looking for a job, the author offered her a position of library director in the special school at the conservatory, which she accepted, subsequently devoted all her efforts to this work and managed to win her colleagues' respect. In half a year, her deputy came asking for a job, too. During the conservation, she was flattering, which irritated the author and even manipulated him with tears. In the staffing table of the Music Community, there was a vacant position of the Music Houses director. She swore that the conflicts taught her a lesson, assured that her actions would never be a reason for any confrontations and tension. In this connection, she took an obligation to leave the position in any case of disagreement with colleagues or the Music Community authorities. So, she was accepted.

To a manager's attention: there was a serious managerial mistake made by the author. Any candidate's claims of personal devotion should be considered as a possible programming of subsequent betrayal. Unfortunately, understanding of such delicate aspects comes with practice only.

This managerial mistake exactly played its role during the property division between the town and the region. What is more, the author overestimated his influence on colleagues from the Music Houses. At an important meeting of the Music Community administration with the Music Houses workers, the personnel were very reproachful to their chair in terms of remuneration. They got the facts wrong; the director responsible for the personnel's financial state seemed to protect her own interests. It was clear that the Music Community existence in large depended on the results of that meeting. In case of the Music Houses transfer to the local subordination, it would be deprived of anything: a legal address, an office, concert venues, and, most importantly, the well-organised and efficient forms of local people involvement into academic genres of music would be destroyed.

Once again, to a manager's attention: according to the proposed by the author program, prospective salaries of the Music Houses' workers could be much higher than those proposed by the local administration and there were no

grounds to question calculations. Besides, the community proposed concrete assistance; hence, it was not only money, what mattered. The conclusion appeared itself: consciously, the director misinformed her subordinates.

Despite all the arguments, it was a defeat of the Community, followed by refusal in renting the Music Houses. Undoubtedly, they were frustrated as the Music Community served the town for more than 30 years, conducting a number of educational concerts and lectures (500 to 600 events per year only in the Music Houses). With its high educational value and quality leisure activities, they were not paid attention to in the process of property division.

## V. CREATION AS A TOOL FOR SOLVING A PROBLEM

In spite of the intense conflict with the personnel of the Music Houses, the Music Community administration directed its efforts into a constructive channel. They asked themselves what could be possibly done to turn their defeat into useful result for musicians and the town culture. At a meeting in the Community presidium, there was a tactics developed to guarantee that the local authorities would take obligations on financial position improvement of those remained workers of the Music Houses. Notwithstanding the non-corporative behaviour of the Music Houses personnel, they set a task of contributing to their colleagues' well-being improvement in every possible way. For the purpose of the situation escalation and bringing the local authorities to real assistance to the Music Houses in their re-equipment, there were several articles published about the indecent intentions of the administration to close the Music Community<sup>1</sup>.

In Large hall of the college, the town musical public meeting of about 500 people was called in order to discuss the current situation. The speakers addressed the local administration and the Music Houses authorities accusing them of intrigues and a short-term vision. Among others, there was the town mayor, for whom the unanimous opinion of mass of experts and music lovers was much unexpected. Unfortunately, there was nobody to give a speech on behalf of the Music Houses personnel and this circumstance confused the mayor greatly. The musicians were extremely concerned about the future of the library of sound recordings as the main information base of concert and educational activities and required its transfer to the library of the special school at the college and a free access to the informational funds for local people. The mayor had nothing to do but assure the public that the administration had no intention to transform the three Music Houses into amateur institutions but instead was going to establish a single unitary local Music House for children<sup>2</sup>.

In their turn, the members of the presidium and the Community did not reduce the criticism and expressed their doubts. They also required passing-over Community musical instruments and property to orphanages and disabled people

<sup>1</sup> 1 Articles by Yu.G. Pisarenko "How authorities press us" and M. Kotlekhuzhin "Confrontation", and others.

<sup>2</sup> Prescriptions of Administration Head of Magnitogorsk dated on 24st of August 1992 No.1536-R and No.180-11.

homes (this was just a tactical move: the musical instruments and the furniture of the Music Houses were far from new, so they were of no value). The presidium and the active group of the Music Community set the goal to renew the musical instruments inventory in the Music Houses. The mayor promised buy new instruments and furniture for the Music Houses and conduct buildings reparation.

This way, the Music Community implemented the intended tactics of parting from the Music Houses: in a week, the entire property was distributed among children's institutions. Having no grounds to accuse the Music Community of mercenary interests, the local administration had nothing to do but fulfil the taken obligations. Soon, the Music Houses obtained new instruments and new furniture and started working in their new status — as ordinary children's pre-school institutions.

For a while, the personnel of the Music Houses proceeded carrying out some educational work. Nevertheless, in several years, these activities came to an end. The marvellous boys' choir called "Skylark" has stopped its activity, now, being an ordinary mixed children choir with predominant participation of girls. The music room has lost its public significance; the studio of wind instruments play does not work anymore.

Now the Music Houses get little finance from the budget, while these institutions efficiency index in the musical life of the town reduced considerably as compared to the period, when the Music Community conducted its management. Its previous value and scope of concert and educational activities in the town stayed only in memory of Magnitogorsk residents.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Analysing the provided example a management conflict and an erroneous appointment, it is possible to summarize the losses and gains they led to.

The losses are the following:

- The Music Community has stopped its activity and has not revived until now;
- The Music Houses as unique educational centres of the town lost their social significance being transformed into traditional institutions of extra education;
- The connections between local musicians and the personnel of the Music Houses has weakened considerably ;
- The Studio of wind instruments stopped its existence.
- The gains are the following:
- The material base of the Music Houses was improved;
- The financial state of teachers of the Music Houses has become more stable.

- The given case also provides a manager with some useful rules to follow dealing with people and conflicts:
- People known for their inclination to conflicts should not be appointed managerial positions;
- A manager should not believe a person, who when applying for employment promises their personal loyalty;
- Going through a defeat from colleagues in creative activity in case of organization division, leave the battlefield with as much assistance as possible, as it will strengthen your positions and count afterwards.
- Some more considerations on the given topic:
- The most intricate and absurd rumours are generated in authorities offices by ordinary pen pushers. In attempts to explain their treachery, they compose incredible stories about managers and spread them broadly using their administrative resource.
- The sharper and more intense is a manager's conflict of with authorities, the more generous are the latter to colleagues, on the opposing to the manager side.

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