

Searching and Retaining Innovative Staff: Assessment of the Factors Promoting Employee Innovative Thinking within an Organisational Development Context

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Abstract

The development of a knowledge-based economy and the knowledge-based industries forced some employers to change employment requirements. One of the new requirements for employees is innovative thinking which is usually defined as the ability to create, implement and promote new ideas and products. Despite the numerous references to innovative thinking in job advertisements, corporate codes and competency models, its nature and role in staff performance is not fully revealed, each employer invests its own sense and meaning to the concept of innovativeness.

The justification of introducing innovative thinking among the requirements for employees in modern organizations, and the clarification of its features and content, and the identification of vacancies which demand applicants to think innovatively are the main tasks of conducting survey among HR-specialists in Moscow, Russia. The research program was launched by the author in October 2015. The first results of the survey have been already received. The respondents' answers enable to refine the concept of innovative thinking, to find the differences between creative and innovative thinking, and to confirm the relevance of the requirements for innovative thinking of, at least, several categories of staff which are senior managers, project managers, IT and R&D specialists.

The conducted research has also contributed to clarifying the factors that affected development of innovative thinking of personnel within organizations. The most significant one is a culture of personal growth which can be defined as a particular organizational atmosphere that encourages employees to share ideas, to learn from each other, to engage in self-learning and self-development.

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Keywords: creativity, innovative thinking, innovativeness, development of innovative thinking, personnel requirements, a survey of HR-specialists, a culture of personal growth.

Introduction

The development of a knowledge-based economy and the knowledge-based industries, the rapid growth of innovative enterprises, and the increasing number of members of the creative class on the Russian labor market determined the changes in requirements of employers to the staff and job applicants. The new requirements include both knowledge of specific software products and technologies and possession of special skills and abilities – one of

them is innovative thinking. The last requirement is gradually replacing the requirement for employees' creativity, actively promoted by the companies a few years ago. The aim of our study is to specify the role of innovative thinking in the requirements for employees of modern organizations operating in Russia, as well as to define the grounds for distinguishing creativity and innovative thinking as the competencies of staff, and to find the ways of developing innovative thinking within organizations.

Creativity versus innovative thinking

The Russian employers' interest to creative thinking of employees increased at the beginning of 2000s, and could be traced back to at least several reasons. The *first global reason* was concerned with the escalation of the reform processes and innovative transformation in Russia and abroad. The organizational environment was characterized as unpredictable, changeable, risky and competitive at that period. Many experts confirmed that the only way to meet the challenges of the organizational environment successfully was to exploit the creative potential of organizations, the creative solutions of personnel, and the original, frequently based on intuition strategies and models of organizational behavior. The famous sayings of P. Vaill and I. Ansoff which are 'if we want to succeed in the world of constantly boiling water', 'we need a new level of understanding of managerial work' (Vaill, 1989) and that 'unpredictable external environment must be coped with by a creative response' (Berezhnov, 2005) were widely spread in Russia that time and regularly cited both by theoreticians and practitioners. That fact meant the acknowledgement of creativity as a significant competency of personnel.

The second and no less important *reason* for the interest of employers to creativity of staff was the desire to increase the efficiency of organizations by maximizing the potential of employees. The studies on personal traits and abilities that influenced the staff performance enjoyed great popularity in Russia in the early 2000s. The works on management, human resources, organizational behavior and sociology, published in Russia that time, widely reflected the views at the factors of personnel performance belonged to the classics of management H. Fayol, A. Gastev, P. Drucker, R. Marr and G. Schmidt, and also to the scientists working at the turn of XX-XXI centuries – K. Mainzer (Meinzer, 2006), S. Frolov (Frolov, 2001), D. Klementiev (Klementiev, 2006), A. Prigozhin (Prigozhin, 1995). The latter ones appealed to the results of the conducted studies and demonstrated that *creativity as the ability to create something new* significantly affected the efficiency of workers in modern organizations; first of all it influenced managers' performance. These results, backed up by the numerous practical examples from the books by P. Cook (Cook, 2007), R. Florida (Florida, 2005) and others, translated and published in Russia, found a certain response among the employers. The articles on creativity as a competency of staff started to appear in the proceedings of industry conferences and specialized magazines on management and human resources. Moreover, the

requirement to creativity was firmly entrenched in job offers; the training programs aimed at creativity development were highly demanded by the employers.

The third reason for the interest of employers to creativity of employees was an increase in the number of companies specialized in development of new technologies and operating in Russia. All of them treated the ability of staff to generate new ideas and to find new creative solutions as the main resources.

Finally, *the fourth reason* was acknowledgement of creativity as a factor of successful professional development by the working professionals. Creative thinking turned into a symbol of professional success, promising future, and an interesting professional life. Moreover this idea penetrated into the student environment. This fact is partly evidenced by the results of anonymous survey on the subject 'The role of creativity in the work of modern managers' that we conducted in February – March 2005 and 2006.

The study was based on the following assumption: 'The creativity is an important determinant of managerial activity'. The main objectives of the study were measuring the importance of creativity for managerial work and identifying opportunities for the development of managers' creativity by the means of training.

The participants of the conducted survey were 235 students, including 46 students studied at the Faculty of Management in Moscow State University of Railway Engineering (MIIT), specialized in human resources management and management consulting, 119 students studied at School of Public Administration (SPA MSU) and 70 students studied at the Faculty of Computational Mathematics and Cybernetics in Lomonosov Moscow State University (CMC MSU). The students from CMC MSU were considered as a control group. Their participation in the survey was expected to reveal the differences in understanding the role of creativity in managerial work by the students of the core and non-core departments. The survey was conducted in class time in the auditoriums of the universities.

The study found that the respondents highly scored creativity as a factor of managerial success. Even the control group of students, not properly aware of the specifics of managerial work, highly appreciated the role of creativity in the performance of modern managers and expressed a desire to participate in training activities aimed at creative thinking development.

The recognition of creativity as a factor of professional success by the students and working professionals determined the emergence of new conceptions. These are the conceptions of creative education – for example, the one by S. Alieva (Alieva, 2004), the conceptions of creative organization – for instance, the conception of creative enterprise by G. Berezhnov (Berezhnov, 2005), the conceptions of creative management. Most of the mentioned conceptions tend to be humanistic and direct employers to enhance staff creativity that is expected to affect the future success of organizations.

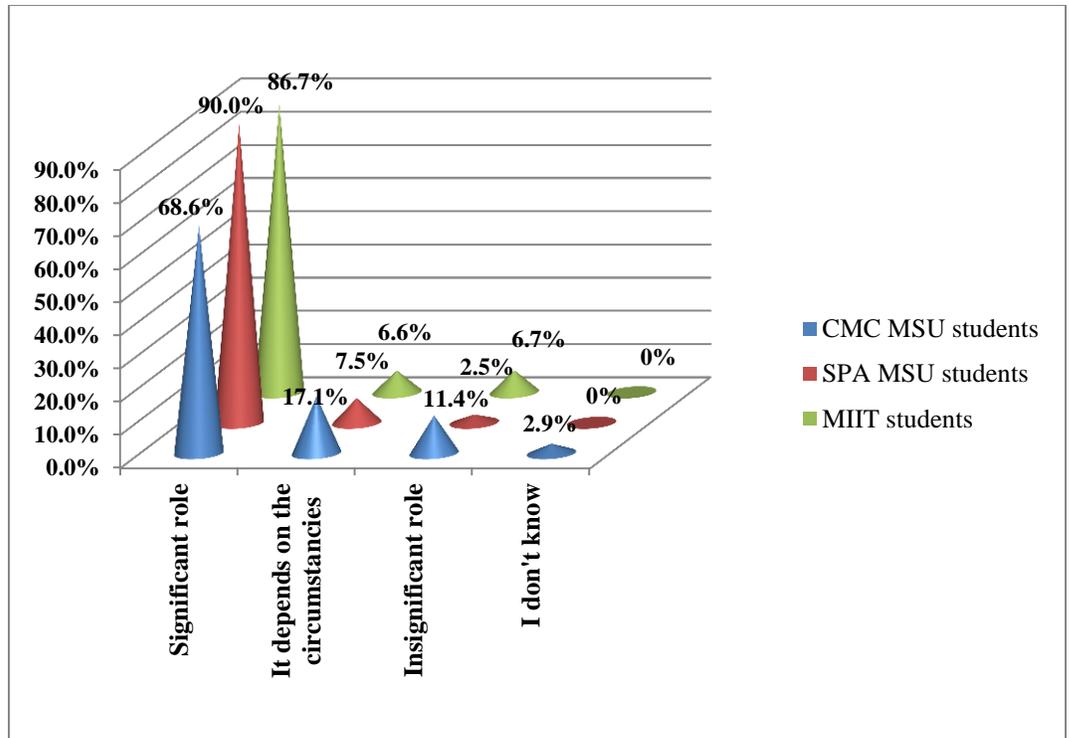


Diagram 1. A comparative analysis of respondents' views on the role of creativity in the managerial work.

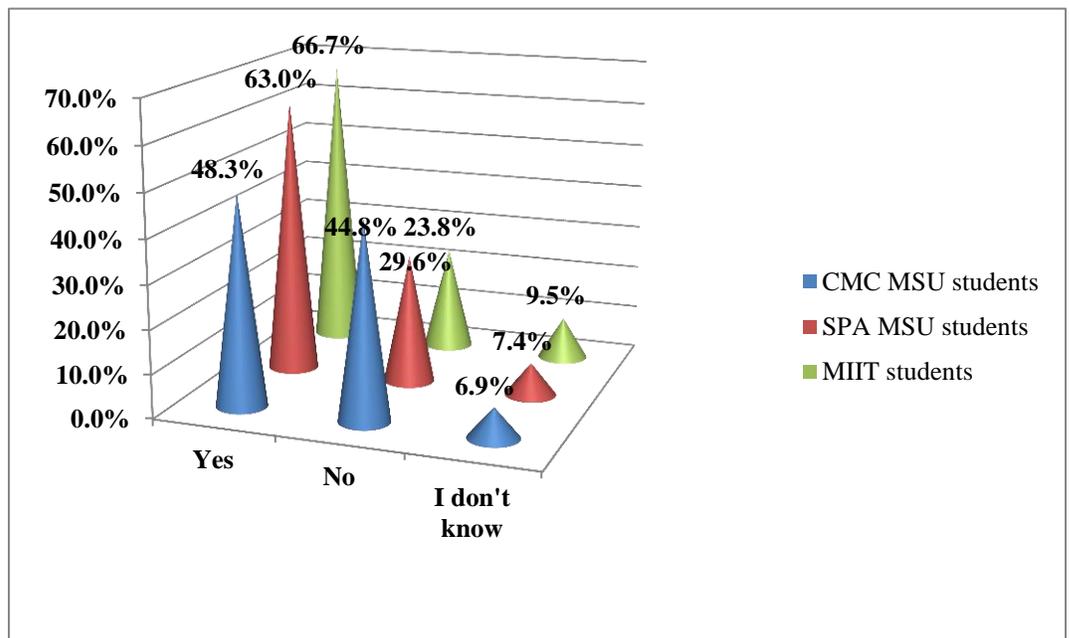


Diagram 2. A comparative analysis of the respondents' willingness to take part in training activities aimed at creativity development (Would you like to take part in creativity training program?)

The perception of creativity as a requirement for workers by the companies operating in Russia was changed a few years ago. Since 2011 and 2012 the interest of the employers to staff creativity has been replaced by the interest to innovative thinking of personnel. From the employers' point of view, in contrast with creativity innovative thinking has more to do with the practice as it allows solving specific practical problems. This trend is reflected in scientific publications. For example, N. Fersman writes that 'in a period of the fundamental structural reforms only 'the leaders of change' survive, as they are able to think innovatively, the ability of innovative thinking helps them to respond to changes instantly and to use the new opportunities for their benefit' (Fersman, 2010). D. Rodin and O. Pankina argue that 'development of innovative potential of staff is one of the main tasks of modern organizations based on the necessity to accelerate the innovative changes in the economy' (Rodin, Pankina, 2013).

In the context of the requirements for employees innovative thinking is interpreted broadly. So, it is defined as 'an activity resulted in successful solutions of a new problem that previously has never been solved, in creation, implementation and promotion of the new original product' (Kubrushko, Nazarova, 2012); and as 'a type of thinking aimed at innovation activities carried out on the instrumental and cognitive levels' (Usoltsev, Shamalo, 2014); and as 'a creative thinking objectified in a real innovative product' (Salikhov, Antipova, 2014).

The proposed definitions of innovative thinking seem to be similar to the interpretations of creativity at the first sight. However, the similarity is very deceptive. A comparative theoretical analysis of the concepts of innovative thinking and creativity (creative thinking) based on the study of Russian-language and English-language scientific literature on the considering subject revealed the following foundations for distinguishing these types of thinking: nature, specific traits, product, result, conditions for cultivating, dependence on personal background, motivation, etc.

The analysis (see Table 1) suggests that innovative thinking is significantly different from creativity (creative thinking) on almost all mentioned grounds. The decisive difference of innovative thinking from the creative one is its applied nature. Innovative thinking is result-oriented, highly connected with the personal professional activity and training. Thus, it can be defined as a special type of thinking that promotes creation and implementation of new tangible and intangible products in a particular sphere of human activity; it is inextricably linked with the highflying ambitions and intentions of a person involved in innovation activity to develop as a professional.

Table 1. Differences of creative and innovative thinking.

Criteria	Creativity (creative thinking)	Innovative thinking
<i>Nature</i>	Generating a new idea	Generating a new idea and its successful implementation
<i>Product</i>	Idea	Idea + technology, methods of its implementation
<i>Characteristics</i>	Intuitive, irrational; Spontaneity, inclusiveness, no boundaries for originality	The combination of intuition and logic, more rational; Pragmatic, result-orientation, a close connection with the main field of personal professional activities
<i>Result</i>	Unexpected, unpredictable	Expected, projected
<i>The conditions for cultivating</i>	Imagination, fantasy	Imagination, fantasy + logic, knowledge, experience
<i>The influence of personal background (first of all training) on cultivating these types of thinking</i>	Requires no special training	Requires special training
<i>Dependence on personal professional life and experience</i>	No connection	It is inextricably connected with a specific professional activity.
<i>Motivation</i>	The main impetus is a creative process itself. Man enjoys creative activities, often without giving any special significance to the results.	The main stimulus is the pursuit of achievement. Man is pleased by the result, not by innovative process itself.

Source: Batovrina, 2014.

The theoretical analysis allows acknowledging the requirements of employers for the innovative thinking of employees: it has an applied nature, it is connected with professional activities; it also contributes both to generation of new ideas and also to their implementation. However, it is clear that in practice the differences between creativity and innovative thinking are usually not so obvious; the requirements for the latter one are traced back not only to the specifics of professional activities and the real functions of employees, but

also to the employers' desire to be in the trend. In order to specify the role of innovative thinking in the structure of requirements for personnel on the Russian labor market we have conducted a sociological survey among HR-specialists.

Before the study

Before preparing a program of sociological research and a questionnaire for HR-specialists we tried to collect general information on the requirements for innovative thinking of job applicants and employees declared by the companies operating in Russia. Our purposes were to assess the severity of employers' interest to innovative thinking of staff and to identify the wide-spread trends in this field. It was assumed that the results will facilitate the preparation of the questionnaire for HR-specialists, and will enable us to formulate specific, 'point' questions. The sources of information we used were the following ones:

- Leading Russian recruitment websites (www.rabota.ru, www.zarplata.ru, www.hh.ru, www.superjob.ru) (we analyze information placed on the websites at the period from August 25, 2015 to September 25, 2015 in Moscow region);
- Websites of the training companies operating on the Russian educational market, and also Internet portals on personnel learning and development issues (www.trainings.ru, www.vsetreningi.ru) (information on October 2015);
- Corporate codes available in Internet.

The analysis of the mentioned sources allowed identifying the following trends:

1. The requirements for innovative abilities of job applicants were found in job advertisements at all considered websites. The number of vacancies with the relevant requirements was small (53 positions in Moscow during the month on the website www.rabota.ru), but steadily. Thus, the number of positions with the requirements for innovative thinking ranged from 50 to 60 per month at all four considered websites.
2. Formulating the requirements for the innovative abilities of job applicants, the employers appeal directly to innovative thinking and also to its varieties. Here are some examples of the requirements found on the mentioned websites: 'an innovative approach to ongoing projects', 'an ability to turn on quickly and to adjust to innovative space', 'an ability to generate innovative ideas', 'an ability to find new and innovative approaches', 'an ability to innovate', and others.
3. The positions that require innovative thinking are very different and connected with the various professional spheres. These are education (a teacher of Geography, a teacher of French, a seller of educational services, a training manager), marketing and advertising (a marketing manager, a marketing director, an advertising manager), business development (a business development manager), engineering and

construction (a senior project manager, an architect), information technologies (a system engineer, a senior network engineer), research and development (a head of innovative team, a head of R&D department). As a general rule, the requirements for innovative thinking of employees are declared by the large well-known companies that have a good market share and are interested in the further development.

4. The training programs aimed at the innovative thinking and innovative capacity development are widely offered on the Russian market. That is one of the arguments for the employers' demand for these educational products. The examples of the proposed training programs and workshops are 'Enhancing the innovative activity of the managerial team', 'The innovative and problem-oriented thinking tools for the bank managers', 'How to develop innovativeness', 'Original innovative thinking', 'Development of innovative strategic thinking' and many others. However, some individual trainers and training companies tend to develop the innovative thinking and creativity of staff by means of similar training program. This trend indicates a lack of clear understanding the differences of innovative thinking and creativity, and the opportunities of implementing them in practice both by developers and potential customers.
5. Many large companies operating in Russia included innovative thinking of employees (as a synonym for which some employers use the term 'innovativeness') in the texts of corporate codes. The innovative thinking and innovativeness are primarily viewed as corporate values that are expected to be cultivated, maintained and developed by the employers themselves. For example, the corporate code of 'Bank of Moscow' promises 'to create a system in which the generation, development and implementation of innovative ideas and approaches by all stakeholders will be fully supported and encouraged'. The telecommunication company 'Rostelecom' declares innovativeness as one of five key corporate values (in addition to innovativeness they include professionalism, responsibility, openness and continuity), and notes that all of them were taken as a foundation for a code of ethics. According to the website of 'Lukoil-Perm' company all employees regardless their position or profession are obliged to have six competencies including professionalism, *innovativeness*, loyalty, teamwork, responsibility and adaptability.

Thus, the conducted analysis revealed a fairly high interest of the employers operating in Russia to the innovative thinking of staff. The seriousness of interest to the innovative thinking of employees is also confirmed by the willingness of some companies to invest in its development (for example, to buy trainings programs and workshops). One of the evidences is also a penetration of the relevant concepts (innovative thinking, innovativeness) in corporate codes and other organizational documentation. However, a number of facts (which are

sometimes unjustified requirements for the innovative thinking of employees, purchase of training programs aimed at simultaneous development of creativity and innovativeness, etc.) reveal the difficulties with understanding the role and specifics of innovative thinking as the staff competency.

Research methodology

The research program was prepared in October 2015. The research participants were determined by the main purpose of the conducted research – to find the place of innovative thinking in the structure of personnel requirements of modern organizations in the Russian labor market. We proceeded from the assumption that the HR-specialists participating in the daily procedures of recruitment, assessment, training and development of personnel, are well informed on our issue. The objectives of the study were:

- To identify the differences between creativity and innovative thinking as the competencies of employees;
- To find the positions that require innovative thinking;
- To explore existing management practices that stimulate innovative thinking of employees;
- To find the ways of developing innovative thinking of employees within organizations.

We selected a survey as a method of sociological research. The choice of a method led to its advantages which are concerned with the possibility of comparing the obtained data, the saving of time resources required for processing and interpreting the research results, and others. The tool of sociological research thus became a questionnaire. The questionnaire for HR-specialists consists of 10 questions, including the ones about:

- the inclusion of innovative thinking in the range of requirements for applicants and its importance for personnel;
- the feasibility of identifying the concepts of staff creativity (creative thinking) and innovative thinking;
- the positions that require applicants to think innovatively;
- the measures taken by the employers to manage the innovative thinking of employees;
- the methods used for measuring and developing the innovative thinking of employees, and also the methods that stimulate personnel to appeal to innovative approaches and innovative thinking during decision-making.

Given the necessity of surveying HR-specialists from different organizations, it was decided to use the electronic form of questionnaire posted on the *SurveyMonkey* website. The respondents were informed on the possibilities of access to the questionnaire by e-mail. In mid-January 2016 the questionnaire was filled out by 25 HR-specialists occupied in the commercial organizations in Moscow. HR-managers, HR-directors, HR-generalists, Recruitment consultants, Training and development managers are among the respondents of conducted

survey. Despite the small number of respondents (the research is still going on), the obtained results allow to highlight interesting trends.

The main results of the conducted research

The validity of the requirements for innovative thinking of personnel: HR-specialists' points of view.

In the understanding of the most of respondents (66.67%) the requirements for innovative thinking of personnel are justified. It helps employees 'to keep up with the times, to solve their tasks', 'to be effective in a crisis period'. The innovative thinking of staff makes organizations to improve business processes successfully, 'to obtain competitive advantage'. Some research participants have interesting associations with innovativeness. Thus, according to one of them, people with innovative thinking are talented; therefore, the requirements for innovativeness can be assimilated to the demand for a talented workforce.

However, not all research participants agreed with the importance of innovative thinking as a staff competency. According to 33.33% respondents, the presence of innovative thinking in the list of requirements to employees is inappropriate. They appealed to the fact that 'the concept of innovative thinking has not been defined clearly'; 'it can be interpreted differently by the employees and employers, so to put it as a requirement is not fair'. The second reason lies in the specifics of work of the employees occupied in the various fields: 'Innovativeness is not always necessary'.

The essence of innovative thinking, its difference from creativity

According to 66.67% respondents the innovative thinking as the competency of personnel is significantly different from creativity. Creativity is 'closer to the fantasy', innovative thinking is 'closer to intellect'; creativity is associated with the creative work, innovative thinking is usually connected with scientific achievements and new technologies; creativity is aimed at creating something new, the goal of innovative thinking is not only to generate a new idea or to create a new product, but also to solve specific tasks. In general, trying to determine the content of innovative thinking, the respondents identified the following characteristics of it:

- the focus on solving specific problems ('the ability to create, apply, use new tools and equipment to solve specific problems');
- the effect on the willingness of employees to make decisions (the ability 'to make the right decision in any situation', 'to find original solution');
- the applied nature (the ability 'to develop and implement something new');
- the influence on high motivation of staff and the desire of employees to improve their knowledge (the innovative thinking is associated with 'the severe interest to work, the understanding of importance of work, the willingness to learn').

However, some respondents (16.7%) complain that the employers do not realize what lies behind the concept of 'innovative thinking': 'it is a tribute to fashion,

most of the people don't understand it properly', 'and every employer invests his own sense and meaning to the concept of innovativeness'.

Positions requiring applicants to think innovatively

The analysis of the questionnaire responses allowed making a list of positions which require applicants to have innovative thinking. The first places in it were occupied by the following references:

- Senior managers (mentioned by 58.3% respondents);
- R&D specialists (mentioned by 50.0% respondents);
- Project managers and product managers (mentioned by 41.67% respondents);
- Marketing managers, Advertising managers and PR managers (mentioned by 40.0% respondents);
- Engineers, IT specialists (mentioned by 33.3% respondents).

Some participants also referred to the sales directors and sales managers, HR-specialists, designers, account managers and consultants worked in consulting companies in their responses. In justifying the relevance of innovative thinking for the people holding these positions, the respondents appealed to the specificity of their professional activities, the necessity to make difficult decisions, to act in an unpredictable, rapidly changing environment. In addition, some respondents cited the need to 'develop strategy for the entire organization', to 'competently manage the staff' and to 'optimize business processes' as the arguments.

Managing the innovative thinking of personnel

The research participants admit that the innovative thinking of staff is not regularly managed in their organizations: 'there is no system'. However, it does not mean that the employers do not work in this direction. Thus, one of the most popular measures taken in organizations is to encourage employees to use innovative thinking in solving professional tasks (mentioned by 66.67% respondents). Slightly less popular measures are improving organizational culture that promotes innovative thinking of employees, and testing innovative thinking during the staff assessment procedures (mentioned by 41.67% participants). The most 'failure' measures, according to respondents, are testing innovative thinking of job applicants and developing of innovative thinking of employees. They are implemented by employers of only 16.7% research participants.

The respondents confirm that the employers interested in innovative thinking of employees should do their best to assess the job applicants' innovativeness ('before they are hired'), to develop innovative thinking of staff, and to motivate the employees to implement innovative approaches in professional activities.

As the main diagnostic tool that facilitates measuring the innovative thinking of job seekers the research participants (77.78%) offer the case study. They also recommend using the tests (22.22%). The development of innovative thinking

can be successfully fulfilled by the means of workshops, brainstorming sessions, and also by cultivating free, open atmosphere in organizations that promotes exchange of views and experiences among the peers, and delegation of authority.

As for the employees' motivation to use innovative thinking the most effective measures are the following ones:

- Creating a favorable climate in the working teams, facilitating close communication and exchange of experience among their members (mentioned by 83.33% respondents);
- Encouraging trusting relationships between senior managers and employees (mentioned by 75.0% respondents);
- Conducting training activities within organization (workshops, seminars, conferences, etc.) (mentioned by 66.67% respondents);
- Practicing the tools of career management ('to create career opportunities for personnel') (mentioned by 58.33% respondents);
- Holding competitions of the best ideas and know-hows among the employees (mentioned by 50.0% respondents);
- Granting autonomy and independence in decision-making (mentioned by 50.0% respondents).

To sum up, it should be noticed that according to the conducted research the main organizational factors leading to development of innovative thinking of employees are:

- A special climate, atmosphere within organization;
- Training activities for personnel;
- High requirements to employees' ideas and performance;
- A special style of leadership and a unique 'free' pattern of relationships among managers and employees.

These factors are usually viewed as the attributes of the culture of personal growth.

A culture of personal growth and its role in developing the innovative thinking of employees

The culture of personal growth can be defined as a particular organizational atmosphere that encourages employees to share ideas, to learn from each other, to engage in self-learning and self-development, and force them to rethink their places in organizations. Complementing the ideas by G. Ekvall (Ekvall, 1996), one of the first researchers of this type of organizational culture, it is possible to reveal its following characteristics:

Table 2. Characteristics of Culture of Personal Growth.

Characteristics of Culture of Personal Growth	Comments
<i>Work as a challenge</i>	The employees experience the pleasure of working. They are aware of its importance not only for the organization but also for themselves, so they are willing to spend a lot of strength and energy for its implementation.
<i>Freedom</i>	The employees feel free from the managerial control. That affects their organizational behavior – the employees suggest and discuss new ideas, make their own decisions.
<i>Idea support</i>	The employees' ideas and suggestions are encouraged by colleagues and management, the implementation of the most promising ideas is supported.
<i>Idea discussion</i>	The employees' ideas are actively discussed by colleagues and leaders, the authors of ideas get feedback.
<i>Trust</i>	The rule of emotional security is adopted in organization. It means the prohibition of harsh criticism and condemnation of the employees' mistakes. The creation of emotionally comfortable environment contributes to the growth of trust between colleagues and management.
<i>Dynamism</i>	The organizational life of employees is rich of events. Something new happens in organization all the time.
<i>Risk-taking</i>	Many decisions are made quickly, based on intuition, they are risky.
<i>Idea time</i>	The employees have enough time for self-learning and self-development, as well as to generation and discussion of new ideas.
<i>Knowledge exchange</i>	The employees trust each other. They are not afraid to share knowledge and know-how.
<i>Humour</i>	Free and often informal communication between staff is encouraged. People exchange jokes, laugh.

Based on the characteristics of the culture of personal growth, the stages of its building can be defined. The consistent implementation of each stage leads to creation of favorable conditions for developing innovative thinking of employees.

1. *Changing the employees' goals and tasks*, their reformulating in terms of achievements, results. Encouraging personnel to professional growth and self-realization in a professional field. Revealing dependence of performing personal tasks of employees on achieving the organizational objectives.

2. *Changing the office design* aimed at stimulating a creative, free atmosphere in the team, removing barriers in communications.
3. *Building a new system of personnel training* based on the assumption that the employees should participate in it as the authors and moderators of training programs, coaches, mentors, consultants for less experienced and knowledgeable colleagues.
4. *Changing the system of control in organization*, delegating employees more autonomy in decision-making process, using a democratic leadership style.
5. *Changing employees relationships*, encouraging informal communication style and discussion of ideas and proposals. Encouraging joint leisure.
6. *Re-designing jobs* to provide employees with enough free time for self-learning and self-development.
7. *Encouraging new ideas of personnel*.

The examples of implementing the mentioned stages of building a culture of personal growth can be found both in private and in public sectors. Some of them are presented in the table.

Table 3. Some Examples of Building a Culture of Personal Growth in Private and in Public Sectors.

Organizations	Examples
<i>Austal</i>	Promoting active attitude of personnel to work and life-long learning by means of slogan 'If you are enthusiastic and willing, we will train you'.
<i>Google</i>	Designing a creative space for creative process and generating ideas – meeting rooms, halls, etc. Encouraging employees to design their workplaces creatively with sketches, objects, photos or prototypes.
<i>IBM</i>	Encouraging employees to exchange ideas by launching different training programs – for instance, 'leaders to leaders' program.
<i>Merlion</i>	Distance learning programs, prepared and by the employees themselves.
<i>VIPAC</i>	Encouraging employees to spend at least 10 % of working time in library.
<i>Biota Holdings</i>	Encouraging employees to participate in science community, to collaborate with colleagues from scientific organizations, to prepare and publish scientific papers.
<i>Sberbank, MTS</i>	Providing employees with corporate libraries.
<i>Russian Federal Customs Service, Moscow City Government</i>	Holding on competitions for creative professionals - for example, the literary competition 'On Customs with love', the competition for Moscow civil servants 'Moscow innovators'.

The given examples confirm the interest of various organizations to building a

culture of personal growth to develop innovative thinking of employees. Many of them practice original ways of performing this task, but most of the organizations appeal to them once or occasionally, so this practice does not contribute a lot to developing innovativeness. The best way to develop innovative thinking of personnel is a consistent, comprehensive implementation of each stage of building a culture of personal growth, accompanied by the complying the range of conditions. Spreading ideas by T. Amabile (Amabile, 2016) about the factors creating a culture of personal growth, the following important conditions can be distinguished:

- Sufficient time for the work that have been done to avoid stress situations among employees;
- Similar workload of each employee in the organization;
- Sincere interest of employees in professional tasks, communication with each other;
- No fear and no avoidance of risk and responsibility;
- Sincere interest of employees to new ideas and suggestions;
- Openness of employees and organizational leaders to innovative, unconventional ways of tasks performance.

Conclusions

To sum up, it should be noticed that innovative thinking as the competency of staff is firmly entrenched in the life of modern organizations. In some cases – it is a tribute to fashion, in most cases – it is the need. Innovative thinking affects performance of employees whose professional fields are connected with new developments and technologies, management of personnel and organizations. Thanks to innovative thinking, the workers do not only make the right decisions and generate unique ideas, but also implement them. Thus, considering innovative thinking as a requirement for applicants of a variety of jobs is fully justified; managing innovative thinking at the organizational level, including building a culture of personal growth, is demanded.

However, the further research of creative and innovative thinking is required; it is expected to clarify the concept of ‘innovative thinking’. From our point of view, its precise definition and delimitation with the notion of ‘creativity’ will significantly reduce the number of cases of unjustified references to innovativeness in the requirements for employees.

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