



*Sheffield Business School*

## **MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

**(LEADING TO THE AWARD OF MBA)**

In association with the

**CZECH TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE**

**CERTIFICATE IN MANAGEMENT - 1994/1995**

### **Managing oneself**

Successful completion means that a candidate has:

1. Assessed priorities with respect to his personal strengths and development needs and formulated an appropriate development plan
2. Evaluated the personal use of time and successfully undertaken appropriate actions to improve this
3. Identified sources of stress and responded with positive approaches to deal with these

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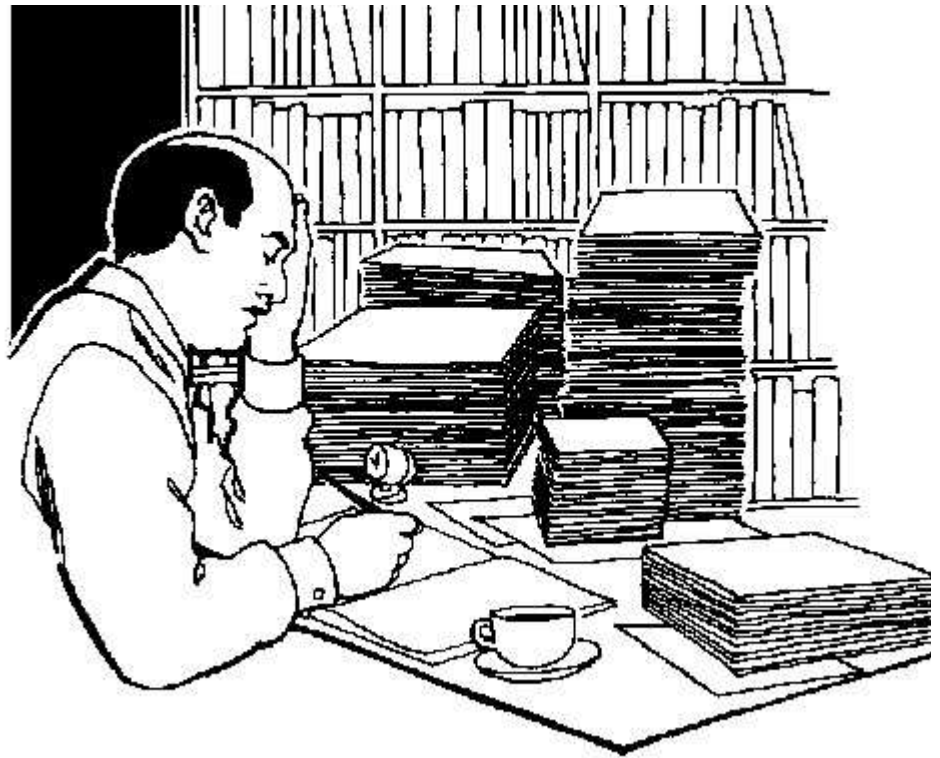
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## 1. Introduction

First of all let me introduce my company and myself. My company is ÈEZ, a. s. which is the biggest electric power generator in the Czech republic responsible for about 70 % of total country generation. Besides that we own the high voltage transmission grid and have many other activities. Simply said - we are the country's first or second biggest company.

My position within our company: I'm member of Board of Directors. My responsibilities are transmission business, real- time dispatch, telecommunications and informatics.





## 2. Personal SWOT analysis

To improve personal efficiency, one must be aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses. Without a thorough analysis it is not possible to improve anything - this applies not only for managing oneself. In the changing environment every manager who wants to be successful must work hard on improving own personal qualities otherwise he does not have a chance to survive in growing competition. Present market also puts high emphasis on stress resistance.

All the above mentioned is a good reason for me to think over my own activities and assess my strong and weak sides and perhaps take advantage of some opportunities.

### 2.1 Strengths

It is quite hard to describe one's own strengths, but here I can rely on "public opinion" within our company. I get views of people - both subordinates and others. These views I compare with my own ones and the outcome is following:

#### 2.1.1 Background

With some exceptions I must say that my background is quite satisfactory.

.....

### **- languages**

In my young age I attended schools with extended language education. The result is obvious - now I'm able to communicate in Russian, English and German. I admit that this is one of my greatest advantages. In this association I must express my gratitude to my parents who cared for this.

### **- technical education**

In 1984 I graduated from Czech Technical University in Praha - faculty of Electrical Engineering. I studied Electric power Generation and Transmission. After one year of military service I came back to the University and worked as an assistant teacher and at the same time prepared my dissertation thesis on Transmission and distribution systems reliability. This thesis I successfully defended in 1990.

Even if I studied technical science, my background is not strictly limited to this. After marrying my wife Marcela I helped her in her studies - economy and data processing. Sometimes it appeared to me that I was more interested in her problems than she. I liked econometry and computer science. Now I feel that I can take a great advantage of common knowledge in technical and economical sciences.

## **2.1.2 Creativeness**

People say (at least some) that I'm creative. This is very difficult for me to confirm, since there's no way to compare this with others. But creativeness is a substantial feature of every manager - the higher position, the more importance of this.

In my every-day practice very often I have to take immediate decisions or look for acceptable compromises. Once again I say that it's hard for me to assess this, but I think that I've been quite successful until now.

## **2.1.3 Decisiveness**

From time to time some decisions has to be taken on my level. This is a case, when other managers reporting to me are not able to find outcomes and solutions. Then it's my time to decide. Another example is when negotiating with partners.

## **2.1.4 Leadership**

**Leaders's personality** according to Bob Kaplan of CCL comprises following features:

- need for mastery
- active, assertive, persistent
- belief in self
- goal-oriented relationship
- a need for recognition
- ability to accept the need for self-development

I think that all the above mentioned features I comply with. One of examples can be this course I take part in, even if nobody pushed me into it.

### **2.1.5 Positive attitude to new approaches**

Generally said, I'm known to be interested in new things and new concepts. As an example - Some time ago we introduced in ÈEZ new way of communication - CC-Mail connecting computers with each other. Since then, I've been using this heavily and I force my colleagues to use this way as well. For some of them - namely older ones - it may be difficult to learn new concept, but I consider it perspective and I insist on it.

## **2.2 Weaknesses**

I think I have at least two major weaknesses:

**2.2.1.** Sometimes it is difficult for me to **understand people's motives** for their actions. I'm more oriented towards reaching the goals and I tend not to care for possible consequences for some individuals. One example may be the downsizing of dispatch center which took place in 1994. Some people complained that I eliminated their jobs and they had to care for their future. But personally I don't consider this as a big mistake. If I had to care for every single individual, I could make no major decision.

### **2.2.2 Bargaining skills and assertiveness.**

My background is strongly technically oriented, but I miss some skills in psychology. This gap seems to me more and more important. Therefore I had to get into classes organized for ÈEZ Board members, where all these topics are being discussed. Moreover - this course also covers etiquette, body language and other issues important for top managers. It is a pity that we have to learn this now, but there was no chance to get acquainted with this at schools in previous regime.

There are other weaknesses in my personality, but the two mentioned above I consider most important and I know I have to something with them now or in very near future.

## **2.3 Opportunities**

Under this point I understand two things:

- How can I improve myself ?
- How can I contribute to my company ?

### **2.3.1 How can I improve myself ?**

The improvements will be oriented towards my major weaknesses mentioned in 2.2. Therefore I attend this MBA course where I want to get more economical, financial and managerial knowledge, and psychological course for interpersonal skills. And last, but not least - I did not forget where I came from (University) and maybe one day I may habilitate myself in Power Transmission

ans Distribution and act as external professor. The University has already offered this to me, but now I have too many other things to do ....

### **2.3.2 How can I contribute to my company ?**

ÈEZ has several major projects underway. Briefly listed these are:

- desulphurisation program;
- Temelín nuclear power station completion and commissioning;
- getting synchronised to West-European grid UCPTE;
- solving problems arising from new legislation;
- etc.

Since my responsibility is a transmission grid, I'm deeply involved in the third project from the list above. This brings a great opportunity to me. This project has a pretty good chance to be realized as the first from all mentioned. It requires a lot of work, negotiating and meeting people. This is a hard, but extremely interesting work. I would not hesitate to use an expression "challenge". If "my project" succeeds, it will give me a great satisfaction. But then another project is waiting - involvement in telecommunications.

### **2.4 Threats**

Many threats await all of us every day. The higher position one has, the more careful he has to be. Major threads I'm aware of are:

#### **- personal disability to continue my job;**

I'm not old (35), but according to my doctor I'm coming to age, when it will be necessary to care for my health more and more. When time schedule allows me, I try to keep myself in good condition - swimming, jogging, riding bicycle. My doctor ordered to lose weight, but somehow I'm not quite succesful in it. But over and over - I think I do quite enough to keep in condition. And if anything happens, I have my life-insurance, which should take care of the family for some time.

#### **- not being re-elected into the Board;**

The Board members are elected every 3 years by the Supervisory Board. In case of not being re-elected the Company will find me a job, but now I cannot say if I accept it or not.

#### **- unpredictable impact of new energy legislation.**

If not handled properly, the new legislation can cause splitting the control center from my Transmission division. I don't like this idea at all and therefore I do all my best to avoid it.

### 3. Action plan for self-improvement

To summarize what I have said before - I want to improve my skills in following areas:

- interpersonal skills, psychology, assertiveness;
- rhetoric and body language;
- etiquette and protocol;
- financial and economical skills.
- if time allows, I'd also like to learn some more statistics. This has no special purpose, I simply like statistics.

To reach these goals I will:

- continue attending classes organized by ÈEZ lead by psychologist and other experts.  
This should give me competence in first, second and third points.
- continue attending MBA classes. This should enhance my knowledge in fourth point and maybe contribute to my interpersonal skills.

Meanwhile - not to lose my technical background in electrical engineering and the contact with the University - I will continue close cooperation with Faculty of Electrical engineering and give lectures to students of the last grade in actual topics of power Generation, Transmission and Distribution. I will also act as supervisor for students preparing their diploma thesis. All these things I've been doing since leaving the University in 1987.

### 4. Personal use of time

In higher managerial positions the time management becomes much more important. Usually there are thousands meetings to take part in, many people waiting to talk to you and, by the way, also some things to be done. In between one must prepare himself to public presentations and create his standpoint to some problems. All this I know quite well from my day-to-day practice.

How to deal with all this ?

The assumption of primary importance for managing one's time is - **to start thinking of time**. First of all every manager must make an overview of

**start thinking of time.** First of all every manager must make an overview of his own activities. The step immediately following is the choice what to do and when to do it.

All activities may be classified into one of three following groups:

- basic importance for me, I must be there personally
- important for the company, but I don't necessarily have to be present personally. Someone can replace me.
- not important at all.

This choice seems very simple on the paper, but in real every-day life this is not so simple. Some managers feel that they loose their importance when skipping some meetings. This approach usually ends with total physical collapse of such a person. Much better is to delegate some of one's powers to subordinates. On the other side, the competitors can say that you do nothing and there is no need to have you in such a high position. The approach is strictly personal and one must take all criteria into account.

#### **4.1 Time stealers**

In following text I assume to have deleted to unnecessary activities. Still many "time stealers" remain. The worst among them are:

##### **4.1.1 Meetings**

Meetings have been dealt with in above text. On the other side, not all meetings are valueless. Let's consider we have deleted unnecessary ones. Not only important meeting remain in our diary. But there's a danger that also these will turn into wasting time.

Every meeting which should bring some results must be managed in proper way. This means, that it:

- must be managed;
- the discussion must not be too long and broad;
- all participants must strictly stick to the agenda;
- all items on agenda must be concluded and decisions must be taken;
- the meeting must not be interrupted;
- the meeting should not last longer than 90 minutes, otherwise people loose concentration;
- at the end of the meeting every participant must have his Minutes of the meeting with clearly defined tasks, responsibilities and deadlines.

In my case I have two examples of regular meetings:

- Board meetings.

These meetings sometimes last a little bit too long while the discussion



seems to me sometimes unmanaged.

- My meetings with my subordinated directors

I have three subordinated directors whom I meet regularly every Tuesday. Our meetings start at 8 am and last until 9.20. The only rule from above mentioned I do not stick to is that my secretary prepares minutes after the meeting and sends it out at noon. But all gentlemen exactly know the conclusions from the meeting immediately.

#### **4.1.2 Visitors**

The worst thing any manager could do is the approach "my door is always open for everybody". On one side, manager must not "live on his own" and must have a contact with environment - see the assignment "Manager's task". But the "open door concept" is the worst time stealer of all. The outcome from this may be the "audience hours", or pre-scheduled visits. I myself prefer the second approach and everybody wishing to visit me from any reason must schedule the date with my secretary. She is a very experienced lady with ability to distinguish the importance of the topic and is able even to say NO and re-direct the applicant to anybody else - this last case not being very frequent.

Once the visitor has succeeded and came to talk to me, the discussion must be managed. Usually there is a problem in discovering the core of the problem, but as soon as we succeed, we immediately draw some conclusions and lead the visit to its end.

The extra problem in this case are the sales agents. I try to avoid as much as possible contacts with these persons and try to re-direct them to my directors. But not always do I succeed, some of them really ARE important. In this case I must use all my knowledge to keep it as short as possible. This may be done with using the psychological methods which I'm now being trained in.

#### **4.1.3 Telephone calls**

Telephone calls have much similar with visitors. It's easier with them that for the secretary it is easier to redirect them or say "He is not present" or "Now I cannot disturb him, he has an important meeting". I'm quite sure that this lie is used quite often in all companies. In case that the call is connected, the same rules as above apply.

#### **4.1.4 Others**

Other time stealers in boss' life may be:

- a wish to know and manage everything and not delegating the responsibility;
- too much paperwork;
- postponing unpleasant tasks;
- too much routine work;
- poor timing;

- doing too many things at once;
  
- forgetting things;
- inadequate preparation;
- etc.

## 4.2 Role of a secretary

A secretary has a very important role in her Boss' life. Sometimes she's even said to be "a half wife". Without her the boss cannot perform his role at all. I think, that it is of the at least same importance that a secretary has a knowledge of time management as her boss. In my case, since I'm quite young, I can learn from her a lot (and I do it).

## 4.3 Time management systems

Even if the progress runs fast, the basic thing to be done is to keep the calender in order - this being a role of a secretary. Some basic rules must be folowed, like:

- not more than two meetings a day;
- at least 30 minutes between meetings for preparation;
- at least 1 hour to check the mail;
- at least one hour to "think";
- any change within current week must be immediatelly consulted with me and can't be accepted without my approval.

This is being done every week we sit down and "prepare a schedule" for future. I prefer having the diary "on paper", not depending on batteries or even LAN. But then I make advantage of electronics - my personal organizer Casio keeps the schedule to remind me "it's time to go". But the basic schedule is in my paper diary.

As a part of informatics development in ÈEZ we plan to implement a new software product - Lotus Organizer. This will enable us to schedule meeting with other people automatically. This is definitely a good tool, but nothing can replace personal contact between people. And secondly, noone can always transport his PC everywhere with him.

## 5. Stress and its management

Today's life brings a lot of stress every day. The main sources of stress according to my personal experience are:

stress, according to my personal experience, are:

- human relations within company;
- time management.

However, my experience may hardly be generalized, since all stress tests show a high rate of resistivity against stress in my case. But still - time to time it happens that I'm under stress. My solution of this situation is very simple:

- do any other activity (preferably physical) to stop thinking of the problem.

My favourite in this case is jogging or swimming.

- sleep well and long.

After such a "treatment" I usually have a "clear head" enough to cope with the problems.

This recipe is my personal one and very likely other people would use different methods. I think that there can hardly be one universal approach useful for all. People are individuals and everybody must find his own best method to cope with stress.

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