

## **DETERMINING THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES IN THE LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*During the present paper the authors have as aim to present a managerial approach for the solving of citizens' problems by the local public administration.*

*Furthermore, ways of identifying citizens' problems are presented, ways that represent in fact the strategic objectives of the local public administration, their ranking and the ways of solving them according to their nature and complexity.*

*The solutions presented in the paper are based on the experience of the local public administration in the municipality of Câmpulung, Argeș County, Romania.*

**Keywords:** Strategic objectives, mayor manager, minimum standard, citizens' problems as strategic objectives.

### **1. THE NECESSITY OF A STRATEGIC APPROACH OF THE ACTIVITIES IN THE LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

After 1990, in Romania there took place important transformations in all spheres of activity of the society. Romania's integration process in the European structures, the economic transformations towards a market economy accelerated the reform process in the local public administration as well.

During the public administration reform, an important part was played by the decentralization phenomenon of some activities towards local administration, in such a way that the decision-making process belonged to the latter. Through this process the number of problems grew and the expectations of the citizens, along with the application of the new European norms, changed in quantity and quality.

In order to face this challenge, the local authorities must adopt another way of working, based on managerial methods and techniques. The mayor has to transform himself into a real manager, to identify the problems of the citizens, to rank and to solve them [2].

The problems of the citizens represent the strategic objectives of the local administration, and the way to solve them has to be the object of a strategy corrected by annual techniques.

Only by coming up with a strategy one may identify the problems of the citizens, rank them, quantify the resources and find the sources, set up deadlines and people responsible, in such a way that their solving rises up to the expectations.

The last stage of the strategic process, the evaluation of results, is different regarding to that of other organizations. It is evaluated by citizens exercising their right to vote.

### **2. DETERMINING THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

The strategic objectives of a strategy at the level of local administration is identified with the problems of the citizens it has to solve. In this regard, the mayor, turned into a true manager, will organize a working pattern which will include [2]:

- a. The identification of problems;
- b. Establishing the clasification criteria for the citizens' problems;
- c. Clasifying the citizens' problems
- d. Defining ways to solve the problems of the citizens.

The assignment of contracts with the citizens on ways of knowledge in the case of the administration from Cămpulung during 2000 – 2004 is that represented in the figure 1. [1].

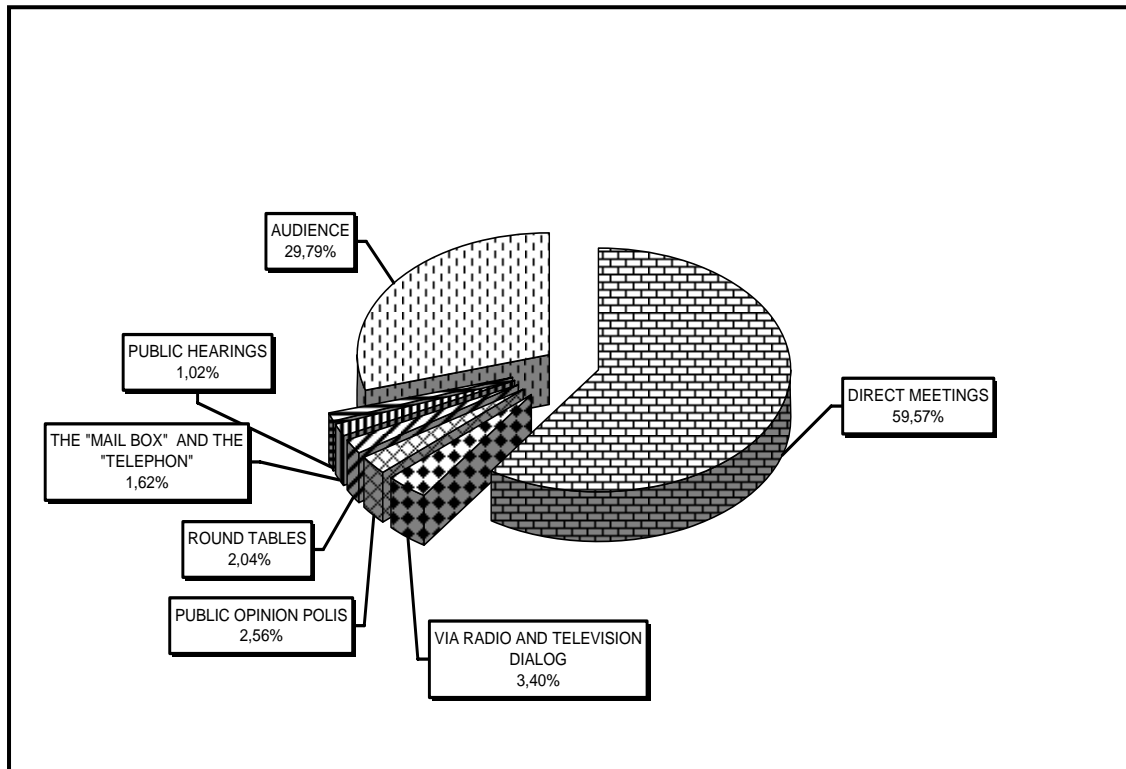


Figure 1. Assigning contracts based on knowledge

Out of the means used, the most effective proved to be the direct dialogue with the citizens, representing 59,57% out of a total of 23.500 contracts [1].

Through the means presented above the Cămpulung local administration identified a series of problems, which it clasified in the following way:

- Problems of public interest;
- Problems of regional or district interest;
- Problems, which are connected with the local administration in these fields: economy, army, religion, and sports;
- Strictly personal problems;
- Problems which fall out of the competency of the local administration.

### 3. ESTABLISHING THE WAYS TO ACCOMPLISH THE OBJECTIVES

From the analysis of the identified problems, it results that the way to solve them will be different according to their nature and the way they are financed.

If the personal problems (taxes, social services, the need of juridical services, of town planing, or of agricultural services) can be solved swiftly without a significant financial effort, it is not the same case with public interest, regional or district problems. The latter regard generally infrastructure works (water networks, sewerling system and gass), roads, public illumination, investments in education, works that necessitate a longer period of time for execution, as well as important funding for their completion.

For all of the identified problems, stating clear, coherent and efficient ways of solving them is a must. In the case of strictly personal problems the executive authority (the mayor) has come up with the following program:

- Has set up a circuit of documents (petitions, requests, correspondence), deadlines and people responsible for them;
- Has set up an Information Centre for the citizens, where they can receive all the necessary bits of information regarding the services offered by the local administration, from the representatives of the specialised services themselves;
- Has organized a European Integration Centre aimed at providing the interested citizens with information regarding Romania's Programme of European Integration.

Solving general and regional problems involves a larger process, the setting up of an action plan. This strategy will contain the strategic objectives (the problems of the citizens), deadlines, resources and sources.

By identifying the citizens' problems, their multitude and complexity has been noticed, the necessity of establishing the objectives of the strategy that needs to be elaborated appearing, thus, as a must. Regarding this matter, a ranking of the problems with a minimum standard, from which all the citizens of the community could benefit from has been filed. This standard, completed with other objectives according to the stage of community development, has made up the content of the action strategy for the period of the four year mandate of the executive (see table 1.) [2]

*Table 1 Action strategy*

THE OBJECTIVE	2001				2002				2003				2004			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Water supplyng																
Water purification facility																
Road improvement																
Household waste management																
Public illumination																
Gas supplyng																
Town planning works																
Termic power plants																
Investments inthe field of education																

*Table 2 The resources with the identified sources*

Resources	Financial resources with sources:	Own
		Municipal bonds
		The Budget of the County Council
		State budget
		Specialized ministries' budgets
		External programs
	Material resources with sources:	Owned by acquisitions
		Donations and sponsorships
		Own apparatus
	Human resources with sources:	Social programs
		Contracts with third parties
		Volunteering
	Informational resources with sources:	Own
		Statistical
		Others' experience

Also as a part of the action strategy, the resources with the available sources at the time, have been identified (see table 2.).

Being a managerial approach, imposed by the new tasks of the local public administration, the elaboration of the strategy has to contain the evaluation of the objectives' fulfilment. In this case the filing of some performance indicators is difficult. In our opinion, the annual public opinion polls can

render information about the degree in which the actions and services of the local administration have corresponded to the citizen's expectations.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The quality of the services offered to the citizens by the local administration has to rise up to the European standards.

Solving problems, a strategic objective of the local administration, necessarily imposes a managerial approach of the actions took in this regard by the administration.

The objectives identified and ranked with a minimum standard, together with other objectives imposed by this kind of situations, will form the content of the action strategy of the local administration.

Evaluating the attainment of the objectives is going to be subjective, done by the citizens by exerting their right to vote.

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