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Article



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FEATURES OF THE SUBJECTIVE FACTOR AS HUMAN IN PHILOSOPHICAL HUMANISM DIVIDED BY THE MARKET

Abstract: In this article, the authors came to the conclusion that an integrated approach to managing the quality of materials and products remains a mystery. The reason is simple: most authors merely planned such research but never implemented it due to its complexity. Currently, this problem is solvable because it is now manageable and a step toward philosophical closure is possible. It may not all work out, but we decided to take the risk.

Key words: integrated approach, quality management, philosophical shore, materials, finished products, hedgehog in the fog, comprehensive research, worldview, methodology.

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Introduction

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The most obvious illustration of this is the fairly frequent reports of reputable companies like Ford, Toyota, and others recalling their products due to the discovery of a technical defect in just one component. It would seem simpler and cheaper to have service

centers replace the defective components. In reality, these companies are acting wisely, given the competitive market and their brand's position within it.

In a complex system, a design or manufacturing defect in one component inevitably impacts the entire system, so replacing just one component or unit is not enough. The entire product must be thoroughly tested

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to ensure the manufacturer's warranties meet the stated standards.

ISO 9000 and its modifications, ISO 9000-2000, do not guarantee product quality. They are designed to ensure production conditions that allow for the "most probable" quality reserve of productive activities. Another weakness of these systems is that they explain "what should be done," but they offer virtually no explanation of "how to do it."

ISO 9000 proponents assert that "What should be done?" is a standard question and subject to standardization. The question of "How should it be done?", however, is determined by the specific production conditions of each individual case. Therefore, the "how" must be determined by manufacturers on-site. With the introduction of ISO 9000-2000, the concept of "QS" (quality system) became obsolete, giving way to QMS, as defined by the International Organization for Standardization, namely:

- continuous monitoring of consumer interests;
- systemic leadership of the manager, ensuring unity of goals and directions of the company's activities, as well as a stable internal environment based on cooperation and comprehensive motivation;
- maximum involvement of employees' abilities, knowledge and skills in the production process;
- use of a process approach in managing activities and resources;
- the need for a systematic approach to management;
- striving for continuous improvement of the company's activities;
- making decisions only after taking into account a comprehensive analysis of the entire possible volume of "information for reflection";
- development of mutually beneficial relationships with suppliers.

From now on, international quality standards require that the "quality seal" be awarded not to products, but to the method of their production. "Quality" is the conformity of the organization and management of an enterprise's activities with the quality management system (QMS). The modern history of the economic aspect of quality management reveals a highly instructive interrelationship between specific scientific, technical, and philosophical approaches to solving socially relevant problems of production.

Philosophical theories on quality have undoubtedly always influenced economic understanding. K. Marx began with G. Gogol, completed a course in economic analysis, and founded the historical-materialist view of social development. He then returned to economic analysis

and left an impressive mark on social philosophy and economic theory. Something similar can be said about the creative paths of A. Proudhon and J. S. Mill.

Main part

History is repeating itself at a new stage. Thinking economists are moving from practice to philosophy, using philosophical knowledge and method to develop a deeper understanding of the subject of their research. All modern concepts of quality management owe no less to philosophy than to economic theory. Philosophical analysis of the social process has led to the conclusion about the increasing role of the "subjective factor." In philosophical humanism, the "human factor" has always been considered the decisive factor in history. This was the view of leading thinkers of Antiquity, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment. But the "human factor" and the "subjective factor," contrary to the widespread practice of conflating them to the point of equating them, are far from the same thing.

The "human factor" is a concept that characterizes the entire complex of human capabilities. It expresses the duality of our nature—the combination of the biological and the social; organization and personality; physics, physiology, psychology, intellect, behavior, and activity. As advertising likes to portray it: "all in one" or "in a package." The "human factor" is essentially the person themselves, in the context of their ability to realize their full potential. The intelligent, educated Oblomov, reclining on the couch, as well as the active Stolz, are examples of contrasts in the context of the term "human factor."

The concept of "human factor" does not express a preference for either the biological or the social. I think that's correct. To define "humanity in action"—no matter what kind: Oblomov, rolling over with a newspaper in his hand, or the active, enterprising Stolz—a synthetic concept is necessary.

It has been proposed to call the abstract individual in a state of abstract activity the "human factor," thus incorporating the abstract individual into the abstract historical process. In theory, the key is to find a conceptual equivalent to describe the object of study. In our case, the object of study is social progress. The task is to understand the factors that set history in motion and give it progressiveness. The logic of the argument is straightforward. Human history is either an objectification outside of human substance (an objective idea, the Universal Mind, the Universal Will, God, etc.), or a product of the activity of people themselves: their minds, feelings, will, and practical activities.

The problem can be simplified because both options involve human activity, the only difference being that in the first case, history is made by humans according to a program developed outside of human

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life, while in the second, humans chart a historical path guided by their own ideas and motives. In history, no matter how you look at it, human participation is inescapable. History is "tied" to humans just as humans are "tied" to history.

This is when it becomes relevant to "disassemble" the "human factor" into its component qualities, to separate what exists within the human being only in unity. To divide it conditionally, depending on the contribution to historical progress of the two "halves" of the human being: biological and social.

The concept of the "subjective factor" emerges. Its components—the "individual" form of the subjective factor and the "collective form of the subjective factor." Politicians who emphasize the historical nature of human activity note the collective nature of this activity. In relation to production and production quality, the "subjective factor" is concretized to the level of the "performer," "manager," and "team." To those who object, believing that we have narrowed our understanding of man within the structure of the economic form of his activity to the dimensions of a "subjective factor," ignoring his biological status, which is also present in production and influences its quality, we answer: no, modern production—that is, knowledge-intensive, high-tech production, based on the power of knowledge, not muscle; on responsibility and organization—depends precisely on the "subjective factor" of man.

The logic of the development of economic quality management convincingly demonstrates that total quality management, toward which everything has been moving, is possible with the complete mobilization of human subjective forces: knowledge, convictions, desires, will, interests, upbringing, and education, concentrated in a professional form of culture. The classics of economic quality management theory, from Taylor to Crosby and Freigenbaum, were seriously concerned with mobilizing the motivation of production participants, correctly believing that it was the lifeblood of quality work. But they were realists, and realistic experience told them: don't overemphasize the moral factor, no matter how significant it may be. Quality is created by free will, but it is controlled administratively and legally. The legal aspect of achieving TQC objectives is highly significant and requires constant attention. Is it possible to imagine a situation where quality is achieved solely through the self-organization of the manufacturer, thanks to team spirit, the social dedication of each and every one, and a high level of professional qualifications? The answer is up to the reader, but the hint is obvious: it is not impossible. So what's the deal? Is legal regulation optional, or superfluous? No. Experimental fantasy ignores the purpose of production, which, by the way, is very clearly defined in TQC. The purpose of production is

not product quality (that's a misleading goal, a self-deception). The purpose of production is not production quality (that's also misleading). The purpose of production is customer satisfaction with quality!

Even in a subsistence economy, where the producer and consumer are one and the same, production does not exist in isolation and for its own sake. As for the commodity form of production, the consumer is the primary figure.

Therefore, understanding quality is not the sole responsibility of the manufacturer. It is formed through the mutual interest of the manufacturer and consumer in the properties of the product (and its price) intended for sale.

Manufacturers have one small advantage in their relationships with consumers. It's difficult to exploit, but the opportunity is quite real. Manufacturers of technically complex products that require knowledge and skill to operate can try to shape consumer preferences through education and advertising. While this is certainly a costly mechanism, it's unlikely to win the fierce competition in the market any other way.

The interests of producers and consumers don't always coincide, not immediately and not for long, for they are the interests of productive entities separated by the market barricade. The market is their ring. The producer is interested in profit. The consumer is interested in preserving their finances. One strives to fill the cash register, the other to keep his wallet open. At the same time, both view quality as a reward for victory in battle. Legal regulation helps to civilize the duel and prevent fraud. The state cannot remain aloof from events unfolding in the market, for economics gives birth to politics; market movements determine the movements of large social groups. And if class struggle has lost its relevance today, tomorrow the place of the proletariat and peasants will be taken by dissatisfied consumers—some with quality, some with price—whose numbers will be no less numerous, and their desire to win even greater. The state is unable to manage the fate of each individual citizen, and it's hardly advisable. But the fate of social groups should be a special focus for any state, and always—unless, of course, the state itself wants to avoid being the focus of that core segment of society that, in times of peace, is called the electorate, and in times of trouble, the people, when quality is, first and foremost, a matter of policy, and, secondly, a product of the intricacies of market relations. Advocates of absolute market liberalization are "scholars" who provoke tension in social relations and "subverters" of national security. All modern social experience confirms that participation in quality management is a function of the state and even interstate cooperation. The Bologna Agreement serves as an example. It was drafted by a social movement, but, to give it real power as a regulator of

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educational quality, it was legitimized by collective political will. "The state's attention should be focused on:

- intensification of the import substitution process by improving the quality of domestic products;

- increasing the production potential of enterprises, creating progressive technologies and new types of high-quality products, so that as the domestic market develops and integrates into the global economy, the share of Russian products in the domestic and foreign markets will expand."

Updating the state's legal resources across the entire vertical of political power in the area of quality management will undoubtedly contribute to achieving the following key results, namely:

- Ensuring a high standard of living for the population, without which we will definitely not escape the demographic collapse. To be a leader in terms of more than just absolute indicators—a reserve fund, early repayment of a loan, partial write-offs even for those unable to repay in the foreseeable future—we must improve the quality of social services and products;

- strengthening security, territorial integrity, and preventing military aggression;

- strengthening Russia's position in international relations and greater compliance in economic partnerships;

- creating an image of Russia as a truly great, and not just a huge country;

- development of environmentally sound policies and economic practices.

Integrating the analysis of the actual and consequential effects of the state's intensified behavior in the quality marketplace, we note the most important point. This is the only effective way to ensure national security—that is, what ranks above all else in the state's priorities, since achieving all other objectives is only possible within the framework of national sovereignty. A systems approach to addressing quality issues in the USSR began to emerge in the 1950s. The Saratov system of defect-free manufacturing, the NORM, KANARSPI, and KS UKP systems, were quite successful examples of the socialist implementation of the need for production quality management. In the mid-1960s, the Lviv initiative, recognized as the "defect-free labor system" (DLS), gained widespread acceptance in domestic industry. The highest achievement of the "struggle for quality" was, arguably, the creation of the Integrated Product Quality Management System (KS UPK), based on a combination of a serious experiment (VNIIS) and a comprehensive review of practical work to improve quality at leading Lviv enterprises. This system was the first to use enterprise standards as the organizational and technical basis for product quality

management. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of applying best practices was low. By the early 1990s, only 10% of civilian technical products met the best foreign standards.

The state has extensive and multifaceted influence over production quality and product quality. The legal mechanism within the state's control can directly and indirectly influence improvements in the quality of the production process. Tax policy can stimulate high-quality production and discourage low-quality production. By protecting consumers from low-quality products, the state actively prevents unscrupulous manufacturers from entering the market. The foundation of legal support for production quality in our country is the Constitution of the Russian Federation. The 1993 Constitution was drafted during the height of the redistribution of property, and therefore its drafters ensured that the provisions (articles) of the supreme law were as abstract and declarative as possible. However, even in its abstract form, the Constitution of the Russian Federation did not ignore the rights of Russian citizens to quality goods. The relevant articles were formulated to reflect the time of its birth; nevertheless, in this form, some clarity is present. Article 41 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation states: "Everyone has the right to health protection." Of course, it would have been better to add "and a healthy lifestyle." Or even better: "the right to health protection and a healthy lifestyle of Russian citizens is guaranteed by the state." However, this option would have harmed the "legitimate" interests of future oligarchs, so we settled on what we have. This article doesn't seem to have a direct connection to legal quality management. It has an indirect connection, mediated by the protection of the country's population's right to health. Products for immediate and long-term consumption must meet the required quality standards to avoid harm to health. Otherwise, severe legal and financial sanctions are imposed on the manufacturer and seller. To ensure the protection of the right to health protection, all possible tolerances (MPCs), sanitary and hygienic requirements, state standards for products and services, and industry standards within the company were developed, which also included the company's own "standards" (TU). Management structures were created, or modernized, those inherited from the socialist era.

A modern quality management structure has been built on the foundation of citizens' rights to quality goods, as proclaimed by the Constitution. The state does not interfere with production quality management technology. Its activities are aimed at controlling production methods to prevent harm to the health of citizens (and non-citizens) and damage to the natural environment where people live, as well as preventing the appearance of dangerous, low-quality goods on the market, consumer fraud, and

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legally regulating relations between sellers (producers) and buyers in situations that require such measures. The market is designed for environmental action within the framework of normalized relations. Prices, priorities, supply, demand, and advertising are all market mechanisms as long as they remain within

the bounds of economic relations that are ethical for these same markets. A diagram of the legal framework for quality management is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Scheme of legal support for quality management

Many violations of economic relations inevitably lead to the intervention of law enforcement agencies, designed to protect the affected party within the framework of current legislation. Any act of "purchase and sale" is a subordinate act, and the legislator or the executor is obligated to participate in the process. Otherwise, the rights of the owner will be harmed, and the violator of market relations under their jurisdiction will not be punished. The situation with legal support for quality management is complex. The market has separated the producer and the consumer, squeezing intermediaries (and more than one) between them. Therefore, it is necessary to differentiate the concepts of "quality of production"; "quality of the manufactured product"; and "quality of the product purchased" by the consumer.

An intermediary—a "speculator"—is quite capable of violating technical specifications during delivery, storage, and preparation of goods for sale. This will result in changes in the product's quality. Consumer protection laws outline all possible situations and the seller's liability.

Consumer protection legislation emerged in European countries and North America long ago and

has been refined over centuries. In its current state, it is quite effective, forcing violators to comply with it to avoid serious financial penalties from deadly negative advertising.

Russian experience in legal regulation of relations in this area is significantly poorer, and, moreover, it developed under the specific conditions of the socialist market.

The Russian Federation Law "On the Protection of Consumer Rights" was adopted in 1992 and has been amended several times (January 9, 1996; December 17, 1999; December 30, 2001) to make it more relevant to the evolving economic situation. The party whose interests this law protects is the consumer who has purchased a product, or more precisely, a product that does not meet all consumer and technical specifications. The object of legal relations is the quality of the product.

Thus, the Law has a dual effect: it protects consumers from low-quality products and shields the market from low-quality goods. Manufacturers (and intermediaries) received a legal signal about the need to offer quality products for sale on the market. Legislators also paid less attention to the increased

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activity of several federal agencies: those responsible for standardization, metrology and certification, sanitary and epidemiological surveillance, and environmental and natural resource protection. The categorical apparatus of the Consumer Protection Law consists of the following concepts: "consumer," "manufacturer," "seller," "standard," "product defect," "significant product defect," and "product safety." As we can see, the categorical apparatus of the Law makes no mention of "quality," despite the fact that it protects consumers from low-quality goods and, through its double clause, seeks to protect the market from defective and counterfeit products. Those who developed the Law's ideology acted logically. They dissected the concept of "product quality" into its constituent parts: "product manufacturer," "contractor," "seller," "standard," and "consumer," constructing a system from these components, with "standard" as the defining factor. The relationship between consumer and producer is regulated in the Law through the concept of "standard," which is subject to change within a specific system of units. "Standards" are understood to exist at two levels: a universal, state-controlled level, and an industry-specific, private level, established independently by producers and having undergone the necessary certification procedures. According to the logic of subordination relationships, the requirements of a higher organizational level serve as benchmarks for the rest of the "pyramid." In the event of a conflict, priority goes to the one who (or what) is higher, i.e., more important. Introducing the concept of "quality (of a product)" into the Law's conceptual apparatus was unnecessary. It was successfully replaced with the more verifiable concept of "standard," reminding all market participants, from the manufacturer and contractor to the consumer, who is boss.

From a philosophical and economic perspective, the law's main flaw is its localized nature. The state remains hypnotized by the effectiveness of American-model economic liberalism, overly delicate in expressing its economic interests, forgetting that these interests are not those of the state administration, but of the Russian people. The state, especially the executive branch as the top manager, should pursue the interests of the people instead of fearing misunderstanding by foreign partners. Foreign partners, when necessary, tighten the screws. The state should implement a more comprehensive economic policy regarding quality; then its impact will be more significant, and private, judicial practice, which has considered private claims against a seller for defective goods, will be sharply reduced. A private lawsuit for a manufacturer of a defective product and the wholesaler who controls it in the market is as insignificant as a mosquito squeak. The market must be protected from low-quality goods, as Henry Ford Sr. did when he assigned the

"pre-rejection phase" to a specialized facility, removing quality control from the core production process. As a result, low-quality components stopped entering the assembly line. The state shouldn't strive to be a market participant; it should be above the market, incentivizing producers of high-quality goods and preventing low-quality goods from entering the market. In the former case, economic incentives are required; in the latter, administrative and criminal sanctions. Currently, the state is approaching quality management issues with a half-turn, modestly distancing itself. It is necessary to turn its attention to them and tackle quality head-on, rolling up its sleeves. Only then will the time come when ministers will no longer be able to use their authority to postpone the implementation of presidential directives for years.

The modern economy is increasingly described as "smart," "efficient," and innovative. This is a more understandable definition than "post-industrial," but whether it adequately characterizes its state is a pressing question. Character manifests itself in development and determines economic policy planning. The recent crisis clearly demonstrates this:

firstly, that planning is not only compatible with the market economy, but is necessary to prevent and mitigate the negative phenomena generated by undivided economic freedom bordering on arbitrariness;

Secondly, the ongoing crisis has revealed the limitations of the desire to present the existing economy as "smart." A smart economy must exist; it cannot be built with intelligence alone.

The central figure in commodity production is not finance, as many politicians, including Russian ones, believe. Money is merely the equivalent of a commodity and will always remain so. A commodity, however, creates labor, which is itself a commodity. Consequently, the movement of production is rooted in the collective expression of human activity, primarily the work of consciousness and its potential.

The mind is not equivalent to consciousness. The mind is a tool for constructing consciousness. "An intelligent consciousness is knowledgeable, cunning, flexible—but nothing more. The mind, like any force, needs a vector to guide the application of the mind, to construct consciousness. The role of the vector is played by values, namely:

- professional;
- national;
- universal.

Consciousness fuses them into a unique, personal expression. A "smart" economy is worthless unless it is grounded in values. The most important aspect of a person—the decisive factor in social reproduction—is their morality. Not everyone is cut out to be a top manager, a chief designer, or a political VIP. Some must work with their brains, others with their hands. Trouble occurs when the "brains" and

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"hands" become sticky and are contaminated by things they shouldn't be. Immorality undermines the foundations of professional culture and professional activity, transforming their creative power into its opposite—destroying what has been created. A "smart" economy could become a terrifying reality if it continues to be immoral. We are not utopians or idealists; we understand the concrete, historical position of morality. Today, we are not talking about equality and brotherhood, but exclusively about conscience and responsibility. The economy can and should be, first and foremost, responsible and "conscientious," and only then "intelligent." So far, free competition is subordinated to calculations of how best to deceive partners, consumers, competitors, and the state; it is built on corruption, lobbying, and manipulation of media outlets, all of which are natural to market development. Cyclical economic crises will be compounded by unnatural, systemic ones. The system-forming factor of the latter is the unscrupulousness and irresponsibility of the largest manufacturers. The classic "greed ruined the sucker" seems childish compared to what American and transnational companies have done. And what should the state, called upon to be the social guarantor in a democratic society and the protector of citizens' rights, have done? It was forced to "add fuel to the fire"—subsidizing businesses bankrupted by fraud—in order to avoid economic and social collapse. True, European leaders simultaneously dispatched "firefighters" to the "sources of the fire," making the future operations of offending firms contingent on moral principles, and introducing moral and financial regulations designed to sober up the insolent businessmen. It's symptomatic: it was France and Germany—the initiators of strict moral and financial monitoring—that first felt signs of economic recovery. Greater corruption and less inclined to moral dictates, England and the United States, continue to reap the benefits of their magnates' freedom from conscience and social responsibility. Russia, as expected, missed a real opportunity to use the crisis to galvanize national industry. First, they injected funds into the banks, then took very vague steps to awaken the conscience and responsibility of bankers. As if forgetting that a banker with and without liquidity are two very different things. There was a chance, through national funds, to force banks to act as a financial lever for boosting industrial production, science, and technical creativity in the country. They shouldn't have worshiped the banks; they should have educated them with the ruble (currency). It's naive to hope that, having had their fill, the "wolves" will, instead of continuing their robberies, begin to serve their savior. Ultimately, the currency earned on the global market has flowed back, and we have to "start all over again." How many more opportunities do we have to step on the same rake, standing in the same

corner? There's certainly a margin of safety. The situation can be changed by combining intelligence—we have plenty of that—and conscience—the deficit of which has grown surprisingly quickly over the years of democratic reforms. The reason for this state of affairs should be sought in economic chaos and the disproportionate growth of the administrative apparatus. It's strange: the more officials there are, the less effective the administration—the dynamics are obvious, but the course remains the same. Our lagging behind others is natural. In a historical "peleton," subjects have their place, and they change places—that's how it should be. It's a tragedy for national development to fall behind the times, to lose our place in the pack. We were eighth in the G8, but we were still in the G8. Time will tell what we'll be like in the G20 in 5-10 years. Economically, we're no longer eighth, but we're still holding on to a place in the top ten. Yet, most Russians still remember the time when the USSR ranked second in the global economic rankings. History doesn't return, but that's no reason to forget it. Whatever the continuation of history, it is its continuation. By abandoning national traditions, you can end up with nothing. Not only is World War II being falsified, but the country's scientific, technological, and industrial achievements are being distorted and hushed up. Faith in national strength and the people's ability to regain lost ground is being undermined. The current situation is extremely complex, yet it is no more critical than those turning points in Russian history that seemed hopeless: the devastation following the civil war, the loss of the most developed territories in the early years of the Great Patriotic War, compounded by the colossal loss of life among the working-age population and specialists. Back then, the finances available as seed capital today did not exist. Therefore, the solution to the problem of creating a modern economy rests technically on the need to develop an effective management system and oversight of the implementation of adopted programs. A program has replaced a plan. And what has replaced responsibility for plan failure? The lack of an effective oversight system is the most serious flaw in current economic policy, which allows amateurs to lead while feeling like they have something to do. Economic revival is impossible under the current conditions of professional irresponsibility. Only professionalism and the associated responsibility for the cause one serves can achieve the necessary transition to a new economic quality, building a lean and flexible economy based on the comprehensive development of science, the stimulation of technological progress, and the improvement of professional training. The economy of the 21st century can be called by many names. The essence of the definition lies not in the name, but in the content of the concept. The diversification of names demonstrates the

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multifaceted nature of the modern economy. Methodologically, it is important to identify the leading element or elements within this multitude. Undoubtedly, the quality of the economy is among the obvious contenders. The presence of quality in the characteristics of any phenomenon is invariant, as quality combines its most essential attributes. At the same time, it must be clearly understood that quality itself changes—it is historically specific. Accordingly, the concept of quality changes—and must change. From the first attempts by A. Fayol, G. Ford, and F. Taylor to control product quality, which were crowned with significant success, it became theoretically clear: the future quality of the economy lies in activity. The determining factor for the economy will not so much be the quality of the product accepted for production, but the quality of the organization and management of its high-quality production. For artisans and small-scale production, the quality of the sample and the finished product are combined with technology, which generally remains unchanged. Here, quality depends entirely on mastery of the technology and adherence to the stated technology under conditions of limited production scale. Often, the foreman, technologist, manager, and marketer are all one and the same. Henry Ford pioneered the production of complex products by separating operations and responsibilities, thereby defining a turning point in the fate of quality. From then on, the fate of quality was determined by "introduced" factors—production organization, management, and control. The skill of the direct manufacturer came to the forefront, rather than the ability to masterfully organize production, including its expanded reproduction—that is, procurement, marketing, and personnel management.

Diversification of activities revealed its unique position in achieving high-quality results. World War II confirmed that personnel and management are everything! Since the 1950s, the search for quality management programs through operational quality has sharply intensified. While technical regulations for products and components gained relevance at the beginning of the 20th century, half a century later, the significance of technical regulations has been significantly clarified. Technical regulations for the organization and management of production have become the focus of interest, a fact confirmed by the modern international quality regulation system.

The shift in the focus of economic policy aimed at ensuring the qualitative sustainability of

production toward technical regulation of activities was not without costs and dead ends, which was, in principle, expected. The activities integrated into production are neither homogeneous nor autonomous, so problem-solving ran into methodological and theoretical shortcomings in professional thinking. The concept of "key activities" was first substantiated by A. Feigenbaum. His book "Total Quality Control" was published in 1951.

ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 were developed based on A. Feigenbaum's proposals. Both series of international standards were expected to facilitate the transition from "conglomerate enterprises" to "system enterprises." As industrial production developed, driven by scientific and technological progress, a contradiction rapidly emerged and intensified between the pace of material change and the evolution of management thinking regarding the organization and harmonization of the production process. The latter clearly lagged behind the former, hindering progress and increasing risks and costs. The rigidity of centralized planning only worsened the situation, explaining the stagnation of the 1970s and the decline of the 1980s. The organizational structure of the "conglomerate enterprise" was poorly suited to the transition to a systemic organization of enterprise work, primarily because it failed to stimulate initiative and creative potential. It's no coincidence that "shock workers," "innovators," and "rationalizers" in the USSR were primarily the work of party, Komsomol, and trade union organizations, which essentially stood outside the immediate production process and formed a superstructure above it. A simplified organizational chart of such an enterprise looks like this (Figure 2). A management structure in which the main production units are functionally autonomous and indirectly linked through a common manager is counter-systemic. When someone designs something, others must manufacture it, others must monitor quality, and still others must market the product, this disunites production participants and hinders creative collaboration. Everyone is a nominal participant in the process and has little understanding of who is doing what and why. Team spirit is absent; everyone acts independently, at their own risk, often at the expense of their colleagues, thereby undermining them.

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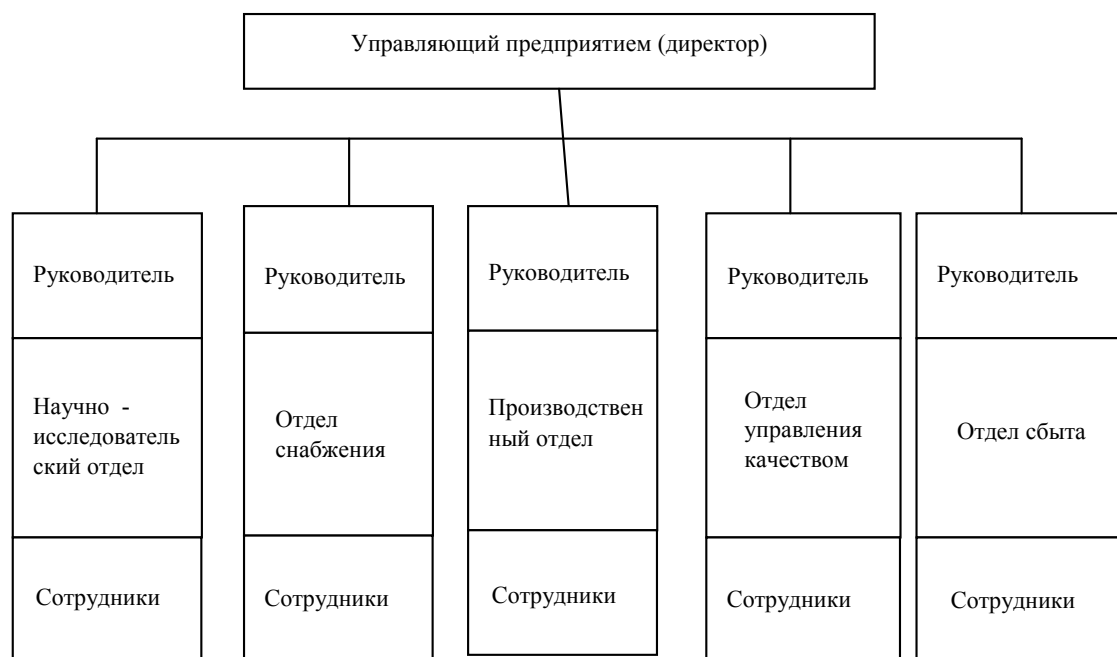


Figure 2. Organizational chart of the enterprise

The fundamental misconception of "conglomerate enterprises" managers is the belief that their "brains" are sufficient to promptly recognize and correct force majeure in the production process. Despite the presence of a specialized department, the management scheme of a "conglomerate enterprise" essentially coincides with a quality management scheme, as the functions of the quality management department are reduced primarily to control activities. In 1924, W. Shewhart proposed optimizing this management method using the principles of the theory of statistical variation, providing managers with a statistical control chart. Improved performance was immediately reflected in results, but the impact was limited to partial improvements. The "philosophy of the theory of variation," instead of being used as a basis for management, was relegated to the level of statistical tools used by technical specialists with limited and highly specialized areas of responsibility. Ignorance of the theory of industrial process behavior rendered management incapable of correctly recognizing situations requiring or not requiring action. This left management extremely vulnerable to three types of costly management errors, namely:

- treating all variations in the output parameters of a process as unexpected behavior and, in fact, suppressing their apparent causes, which leads to destabilization of the process;
- treating all variations in the output parameters of a process as natural manifestations and failing to detect and suppress the causes that cause them, which leads to unstable behavior;

the assumption that process optimization and stabilization are technical decisions for which a

specific department is solely responsible, rather than solutions to organizational problems that require full management support and the efforts of several departments."

Restructuring enterprise management based on the principles of systemic organization ensures, namely:

1. Interconnecting key activities so that various departments of a company are consistently involved in coordinating actions, for example, revising product quality based on specific customer feedback, improving staff training, advertising campaigns, etc.
2. Integrating other processes into key activities.
3. Integration of new key activities into existing ones.

A dangerous misconception in the development of "enterprise- system" management is the interpretation of optimality as the sum of optimal restructurings of individual divisions. In this case, the enterprise is still viewed as a conglomerate, a sum of departments each playing their own specific role. A view of activity as the integration of all its components is absent. A new term, "quality revolution," is increasingly encountered in European literature. We will not discuss how adequately it captures the dynamics of policies aimed at improving production quality; we will simply note that the inclusion of the concept of "revolution" in this study seems entirely natural. A comparison of modern quality management practices with the not-so-distant past clearly demonstrates a radical restructuring of the understanding of quality technology. The "quality revolution" is divided into four stages, namely:

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1960s – the stage of self-determination of product quality as the main factor in market competition;

1970s – shift from the dominance of product quality to the quality of technology and production;

1980s – transition from the quality of technology and production to the quality of the “quality system” or “quality management system”;

1990s – an ascent to the quality of education, the quality of intellectual resources.

The Europeans' path to the Bologna Accords was long and difficult. It revealed many shortcomings and contradictions. In particular, namely:

- the obvious gap between the demands of societies in industrialized countries on the education system and its capabilities;

- the discrepancy between the fact that the most significant discoveries and inventions are made primarily at the intersection of sciences; while education is based on the separation of subjects;

- insufficient mobility of the organization of retraining of specialists, its increasing lag behind the acceleration of changes in technology, engineering, and science;

- inertia in the development of new educational paradigms, programs, and methods, and a lag in the development of new educational literature.

Nevertheless, there has been significant progress – three levels of education quality assurance have been identified and balanced: university, national, and European.

The intellectualization of the economy, reinforced by the transformation of science into a direct force of production, a theme so beloved by 21st-century experts, has exposed the fundamental contradiction in human consciousness between intelligence and decency. Philosophers sought its resolution in the rationality of homo sapiens, emphasizing the basic function of morality. By hypertrophying the activity of consciousness through the actualization of intellectual abilities, emphasizing the creative powers of the mind, and reducing consciousness to thinking, proponents of the “smart” economy fail to see, or refuse to see, the dependence of intelligence on morality, contrasting the role of intelligence with the significance of moral values. We have already noted that the power of knowledge can only have its own vector on a private scale. Systemically, the power of knowledge is guided by the fundamental, rather than the private or corporate, interests of the producer. Morality emerged as the primary derivative of labor, as a means first of survival and then of human development. The primary criterion for social progress cannot be production efficiency—it is a purely economic parameter. Man is a social being, and the extent of his achievements is determined by the extent to which movement strengthens human relationships—primarily moral

ones. Economic activity must be wise, when the mind focuses not on itself, but on collective, personal, national, and universal human interests. It's time to understand the dangers of treating humanity like a mass of idiots and building corporate happiness through the hands of others. Without a strict moral code that subordinates all other aspects of human existence, there is no historical perspective. Intelligence is only effective as an operator, clearing the path toward the economy of the future. If someone likes to call the economy of the future smart or intellectual, then it is imperative to clarify that by smart we mean a rational economy, built not on cunning and private gain. The current crisis has exposed the vulnerability of democratic relations. The amorphous nature of democratic postulates, the unintelligent worship of the market's regulatory powers, and the inadequate perception of the actions of the “powers that be” allowed freedom for the actions that led to the crisis. Innovations in economic development express a new human mindset, fusing intellect and morality.

The first to build an innovative economy will be the Chinese and Indians—those nations that have preserved the authority of moral values in their consciousness, subordinating scientific and technological achievements to national interests. They will, in the near future, “swindle” the Europeans, the Americans, and, apparently, us too!

One hundred and fifty years ago, Karl Marx wrote, “In our time, everything seems pregnant with its opposite. Even the pure light of science can apparently only shine against the dark background of ignorance. All our discoveries and all our progress seem to lead to the material forces being endowed with intellectual life, while human life, deprived of its intellectual side, is reduced to the level of mere material force. This antagonism between modern industry and science on the one hand, and modern poverty and decline on the other, this antagonism between the productive forces and the social relations of our era is a tangible, inevitable, and incontestable fact.”

One may disagree with Karl Marx's communist conclusion, but one thing is certain: he was absolutely correct in his assessment of the socio-economic situation of the mid-19th century. A restructuring of public consciousness was and remains necessary. Money must not rise above morality, otherwise the main citadel of homo sapiens—his wisdom—will collapse. The validity of Karl Marx's conclusions is confirmed by the socio-economic situation that has developed in the Russian footwear industry today. The liberalization of foreign economic relations played a fatal role in the catastrophe that has unfolded. On the one hand, a flood of higher-quality imported footwear poured in, resulting in a decline in demand for Russian footwear. On the other hand, exercising their right to set prices at will, our manufacturers raised them to the

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level of imported footwear, while the quality remained unchanged. And for this reason, people stopped buying them, too. The government should have intervened and protected its producers (with cheap loans and customs barriers), but it did not. The government didn't provide assistance due to the erroneous belief that our light industry was uncompetitive, there was no point in investing in it, and it would be cheaper to import it from abroad. In short, the government considered light industry, like agriculture, a "black hole," unworthy of investment. And in both cases, we ended up with what we have today. When we hear about protecting Russian manufacturers of anything—machine tools and cars, clothing and footwear, food and furniture, etc.—we always think about the downside of such innovations: product quality. Footwear companies lose the incentive to improve and update their footwear selection, since without imports, people will buy anything. But manufacturers have something else in mind: decriminalizing the entry of clothing and footwear into the domestic market. The demand for the Russian light industry market, with a total volume of 1.25 billion rubles, is generated by the following sources: 230 billion rubles (18.4%)—legal Russian manufacturers; 240 billion rubles (19.2%) are legal imports; 780 billion rubles (62.4%) are illegally imported and counterfeit goods. The same picture is typical for the footwear market. Today (2025), the Russian population buys about 600 million pairs of shoes, the domestic industry produced only 52 million pairs (in 2017 - 46 million pairs), 100 million pairs are officially imported. Where do the remaining four hundred million come from? They are imported by all sorts of illegal means, i.e., a huge volume of shoes remains that would be in demand if domestic shoe companies were provided financial support and legal protection. Why is there no end to those wishing to invest in the oil and gas industry? Why are automobile companies coming to Russia? Why are there even those willing to invest in agriculture? And why, against the backdrop of all this "why aren't investors going to light industry?" The general answer is: there are no favorable conditions for investors. That's why joint ventures in the oil and gas and automotive industries are so easy to establish, as ministers and governors oversee each enterprise. Officials are certainly wary of taking bribes and won't push investors through the bureaucratic rigmarole. Meanwhile, the opening of light industry enterprises, due to their small scale, is entirely in the hands of officials. Furthermore, foreign companies reason: why set up enterprises in Russia and take risks when our products are already selling well there? So, Russian and Western firms are turning to China, where investment conditions are ideal; where there's a cheap, disciplined labor force; and where there's a stable, favorable tax system. Today, equipment at light industry enterprises is extremely worn out. The

replacement rate in recent years has been 0.4-0.6% per year. Meanwhile, at foreign enterprises, technological equipment is replaced every 5-7 years, or 15-20% annually. How can one compete here? Resources are needed for technical re-equipment of the industry. These resources can be earned by the companies themselves, provided as loans, or received from foreign investors. The companies' own resources are quite limited. Commercial bank loans are expensive, the government doesn't encourage preferential lending, and, as already mentioned, foreign investors are not interested in the industry. This leads to the question: what to do?

Firstly, provide enterprises with loans at minimal interest rates, or even better, without any interest rates (as for food producing farms, under the national project "Development of the Agro-Industrial Complex").

Secondly, to create such conditions that in Foreign companies entered the light industry, bringing, in addition to capital, their design, production culture, management, etc.

It's worth noting that the last twenty years have shown that light industry enterprises are very responsive to even the slightest attention from the authorities and to changing economic conditions. Take 1991, for example, the year known for the default. Import prices rose, and the light industry immediately revived. Growth continued for three years. Another example: exceptionally low export duties on raw hides led to their massive export abroad. Leather and footwear factories found themselves without raw materials. In 2000, a prohibitive duty of €500 per ton (instead of €100) was introduced on the export of hides. As a result, finished leather production in Russia increased from 1.1 to 2.2 billion square decimeters. Leather goods began to be exported instead of imported. The fact that reviving the light industry is not only necessary but also possible is supported by examples of successful operations by individual enterprises in the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts, both established and newly established. Let's name at least a few. The Novorossiysk shoe factory "Breeze-Bosfor" (CEO I.K. Zykov), created from scratch, produces 16 million pairs of shoes annually, and all of them are in demand. The Rostov enterprise "Gloria Jeans" (CEO V.V. Melnikov) is also new, having started as a cooperative. It produces 7 billion rubles worth of products (up to 10% of all Russian clothing and up to 30% of children's clothing). Its products are exported, including to the United States. So, if *Rodina* lends a helping hand, its light industry, which has found itself in such a dire straits, especially in the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts, will start working again. *Not to mention that a revival of light industry would also help solve the social problems of small towns in the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts, which are currently home to over 16 million*

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people. Here, with the onset of reform, small factories (branches of associations) were the first to go. But they seem small on the scale of the country or the industry. Meanwhile, for a regional center with a population of 10,000-20,000, a shoe factory with 300 employees is a large, city-forming enterprise that not only contributed to the budget and produced goods needed by the population, but also provided a decent living for many residents of the small town or regional center. And now the factory is gone. It's unlikely that these cities will ever see the construction of automobile factories or defense plant branches, while light industry factories are welcome. But so far, as far as we know, the government isn't even discussing the issue in this way.

There's no sign of concern about another problem, or even threat, arising from the collapse of the light industry. Previously, every light industry enterprise, like any other, had mobilization reserves (equipment, tools, materials, etc.) that would allow them to switch to production of the goods needed by the army within 24 hours if war broke out. Instead of fashionable shoes, they would make tarpaulin boots; instead of suits and coats, they would make tunics and greatcoats; instead of "fashionable sheepskin coats," they would make soldier's sheepskin coats, and so on. God forbid this happens—we won't have anything to clothe and shoe our army, especially since the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts are border districts in a difficult situation. This is yet another reason why we need to seriously address the light industry. The supply of children's footwear has become extremely pressing. Most Russian footwear companies continue to reduce production of children's footwear due to high price increases caused by the cancellation of federal budget subsidies, and some shoe factories, including those in the Southern and North Caucasus Federal Districts, have ceased production altogether. In 2024, children's footwear production decreased by 21% compared to 2018. In the consumer market of children's goods in the Southern and North Caucasus Federal Districts, domestic manufacturers have been actively displaced by foreign suppliers, who can afford to transfer shoes for sale with the condition of payment after their actual sale. However, the flood of beautiful and fashionable children's shoes flooding our markets from abroad, for the most part, lacks certificates of conformity, not to mention hygiene certificates, which is a crime against children. Consumer demand is the main factor influencing the formation of the product range, which, in turn, is aimed at maximizing and satisfying public demand. Consumer demand encompasses a whole group of indicators that will shape the niche for domestic footwear.

taking into account age characteristics and work activity, namely:

- shoes for children;
- shoes for the elderly;

- leisure footwear;
- special purpose footwear;
- office shoes.

for socially vulnerable groups of people:

- shoes for unemployed people receiving social benefits;

- shoes for pensioners;

taking into account regional characteristics:

- national footwear;
- exclusive shoes;
- Elite footwear.

Thus, implementing the key parameters that shape consumer demand will help define the distinctive features that a new footwear range must meet. These parameters determine demand, namely:

- comparative competitive advantages;

• the product must have clearly defined features or clearly defined advantages compared to existing market analogues, products, or services of competitors;

• social orientation; it is necessary for the product to fit into existing social conditions, so that the proposed product corresponds to the established lifestyle and value system of the consumer; the ability to satisfy the consumer;

• The product must perform all functions to satisfy the key needs and demands of the buyer.

The following set of measures is proposed, namely:

- *creation of regional programs for the development and support of domestic footwear production in the districts;*

- *Taking measures to reduce the import of imported footwear into the regions. These measures should include, first and foremost, preventing the sale of footwear smuggled in and without permission to sell it on local markets;*

- *help in the employment of young specialists and university graduates in existing and newly established footwear enterprises;*

- *Assistance to businesses in promoting domestic footwear brands in local markets. First and foremost, it is necessary to develop a sound marketing strategy for regional footwear companies;*

- *creation of a special lending program for regional light industry enterprises, taking into account the specifics of production: the seasonal nature of the products sold and the specifics of the turnover of working capital of enterprises in the industry.*

In our opinion, the successful implementation of all of the above measures requires the commitment of both federal and regional governments to the organization and development of the footwear cluster. This will lead to lower prices for components, energy costs, and transportation, allowing manufacturers to offer domestic consumers competitively priced

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footwear through a price niche. All of this combined will ensure the longevity of such a cluster and a stable position not only in domestic but, crucially, in international markets as well. All that is needed is the goodwill and commitment of all participants in implementing the proposed measures. Progress has been made; now, the strong will and commitment of stakeholders is required. The product range for developing a consumer niche is shown in Figure 10. Once again, the quality of domestic goods is the fundamental foundation for the success of modern domestic enterprises. This conclusion is valid, as quality is humanity's oldest value. It is precisely in the quality of Russian goods, services, and management that we are losing out in global competition. Have you ever seen complex products labeled "Made in Russia"? We haven't seen it either. We long held out hope for a global ISO system. Unfortunately, in Russia's conditions, it has descended into crisis. Sorry, dear colleagues from the world of quality certification, but it's time to publicly list what it has become, something that almost everyone acknowledges, namely:

- an immense number of documents that make it difficult to navigate;
- the senselessness of many of them (for example, ISO requires job descriptions, and everyone rushes to jot something down on the fly, and then forgets them without a trace);
- An entrepreneur once said, "We're ISO certified." And then he quickly added, "Don't get me wrong, we were certified by such-and-such a Norwegian company." Guess what he was talking about? Yes, selling certificates. Not everyone sells them, of course, but reputation doesn't happen by accident.

So what, you say, should we stop focusing on quality? No, we simply need to understand that ISO isn't the only way to achieve it. Let's agree on some terms. What is quality? Most people will answer, "Compliance with standards." Of course, where standards are possible, that's true. However, standards have tolerances. And the difference between the upper and lower limits of these tolerances can be significant. And there are also limits to standardization. Take customer contact, for example. Everyone knows that the quality of such contact is critical to business success, when prices, product range, and deadlines are balanced under the pressure of competition. A certain set of friendly words, a dress code, and so on can be considered a standard. However, we know very well what they mean. The current obsession with describing business processes is also gradually approaching the absurd. And in some places, it has already reached this point: at various companies, we now encounter rigid descriptions of interviews not only during hiring, but even standards for meetings and negotiations. Now a different approach is emerging: quality is meeting the needs of the client,

the user. The buyer is the one who evaluates. We just need to understand more precisely what exactly they value. If we hit the mark, that's the required quality, i.e., the degree of consumer satisfaction with the product's properties. But this approach is also limited and harks back to the last century. Back then, the formula was considered indisputable: the customer is always right. Nowadays, another imperative is far more accurate: the customer doesn't know our capabilities. Where are we heading? Understanding quality as conformity (to a standard, a need) is becoming outdated. Today, understanding it as a comparison with another product or with the same, but previous one is becoming much more comprehensive. Comparison posits the superiority of a product over a product, a service over a service, a specialist over a specialist, an organization over *an* organization. Comparison with a standard or a need, however, does not imply superiority. Only equality is possible. Standards and needs indicate a minimum. And who is satisfied with the minimum? Few. But superiority is of interest to everyone, because the law of increasing needs is inexorable.

In practice, this means switching the quality assessment system into levels. For example:

A. Sufficient quality, below which there is a defect, i.e. the minimum acceptable, the use of which will not cause damage.

B. Benchmark quality – based on the principle of conformity to a benchmark, i.e., the best available. A benchmark can emerge from a standard, but it can be any sample: something we have in our own company, our competitors, or at least somewhere else in a form we're familiar with.

B. Avant-garde quality is something achieved for the first time, surpassing standards, but can count on solvent demand and achieving profitability immediately or in the long term.

This is the vertical of quality. It may even allow for more degrees. And one more thing: it's time to abandon the idea that any quality can be measured. Everything can be assessed, but only a few of the things that matter to us can be measured.

Figure 3 presents a model of the integrated quality management process for products and services produced both in individual regions and in the footwear industry as a whole. The model represents a closed-loop control (regulation) system implementing the "by deviation" regulation principle. Product quality in the consumer market can be characterized by a multidimensional quality indicator, Q. Through the process of conformity assessment, testing, and product certification, a documented quality indicator, Qd, is generated. The required high quality indicator, Q0, is specified in technical documentation for the best global standards, technical regulations, national GOST standards, and international ISO standards.

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Figure 3. Assortment for forming a consumer niche taking into account regional characteristics

In the process of comparing these two values, carried out by the competition committee, the

deviation of the actual quality indicator from the specified one is determined:

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$$\Delta Q = Q_0 - Q_d \quad (1)$$

This deviation Q (mismatch in control systems) in our case is always non-negative ($Q \geq 0$), since a correctly selected high preset level Q_0 is always higher than or equal to the actual Q_d , which is extremely rare in practice. In this case, we have a system with a non-zero static error, which is most typical of static systems with their inherent stability and speed of response, the accuracy of which is determined primarily by the gain and power of the "proportional" controller. In our case, the controller function is performed by the "Measures to ensure the specified level of product and service quality" link, which models the enterprise's quality management system and the quality service in production, whose actions take into account the product quality assessment and the recommendations of the tender committee. As can be seen from Figure 4, the quality Q of the products manufactured and supplied to the market is formed during their production as a result of measures to improve production and enhance the quality of products and services, carried out by the quality service and quality management departments. These targeted actions, in turn, are determined by the results of product assessments during their sale. In the new economic environment, only production that actively and dynamically responds to emerging problems is considered progressive. The principle of "producing only what is needed, when needed, and in as much quantity as needed" requires footwear companies to adapt to the conditions of small-batch production with frequent changes in product range—

that is, to the conditions of multi-product, small-scale production. The efficiency of a footwear company, and to a large extent its ability to survive in the competitive environment, depends on the ability to quickly and cost-effectively adapt to footwear production in response to fluctuations in demand. The development and implementation of flexible manufacturing systems offers significant opportunities for this.

Technological and organizational flexibility in production systems determines the variability potential of enterprises, their ability to quickly and adequately respond to changing market conditions, and serves as a mechanism for optimizing the structure of the technological system to reduce footwear production costs. Thus, the development of flexible technological processes for the production of leather goods ensures high efficiency in the production of a wide range of footwear and will provoke a sharp increase in demand for footwear products from companies in the Southern and North Caucasian Federal Districts. Similar problems are characteristic of other sectors of the light industry. The problems are common, and their treatment may differ slightly, but the consciousness and desire to lead them out of this quagmire are possible only if "Rodina" lends a helping hand, and the light industry can once again thrive, because the core values of society still remain, namely:

- professional;
- national;
- universal.

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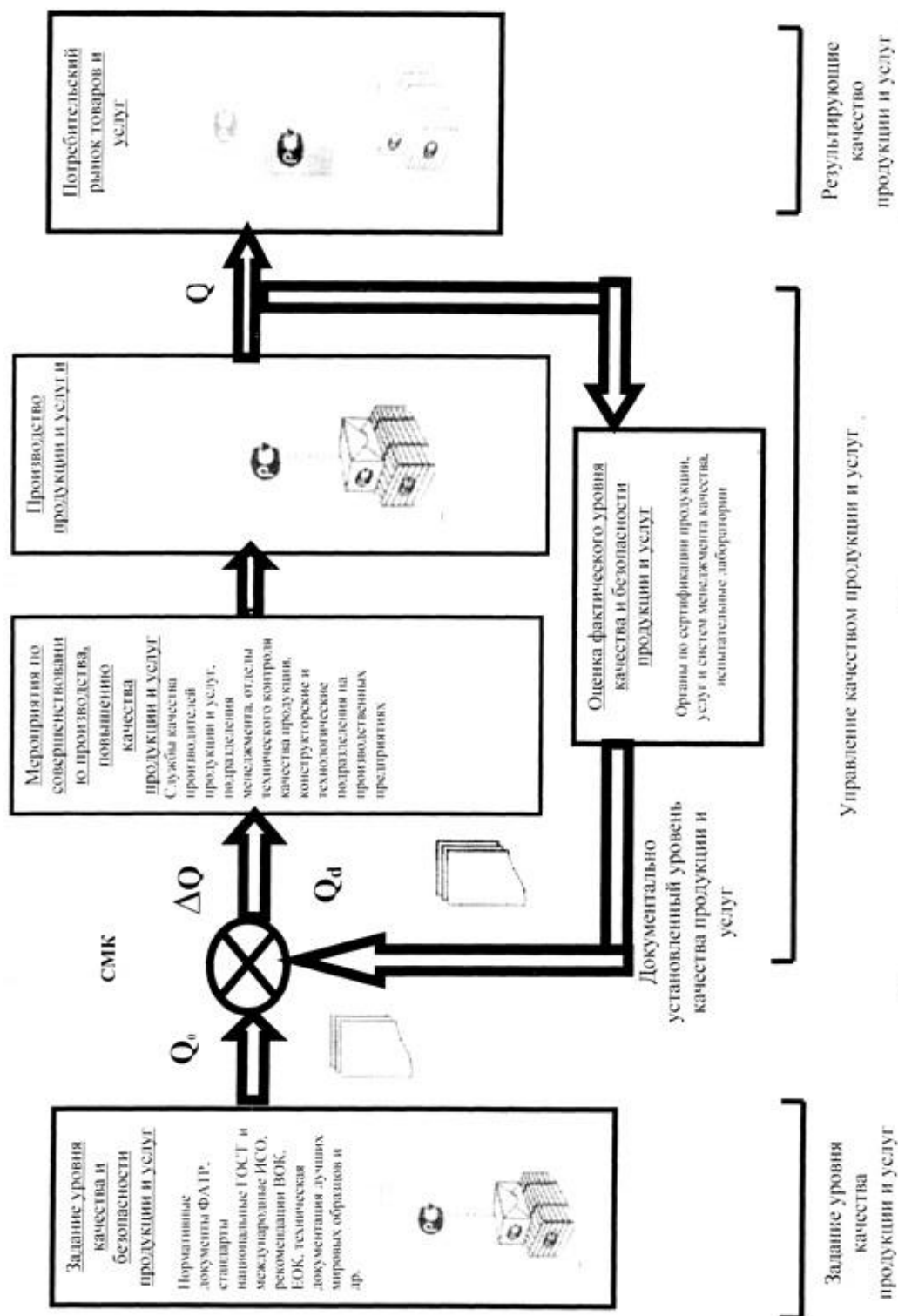


Рисунок 4. Модель комплексного процесса управления качеством продукции и услуг в регионе

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	JIF	= 1.500	SJIF (Morocco)	= 6.004	OAJI (USA)	= 0.350

The characteristic features of the modern global economy are unstable production and unstable demand. Traditionally, the former is believed to be determined by the latter. This formed the cornerstone of the economic theory that replaced classical political economy. According to dominant economic ideas of the 20th century, the demand for goods is the driving force behind development, meaning that the market, not production, drives the economy. Karl Marx's famous formula—one of the pillars of classical political economy—C–M–C is now understood locally, as it appears in its final form: the sale of goods depends on the amount of money circulating in the market, in other words, the real purchasing power of consumers. The revenue received by the seller, in turn, determines the quantity and quality of new goods—the prospects for production. The market should strive to be self-sufficient. To function properly, it requires maximum freedom. The idea of the founder of classical political economy, A. Smith, about the need for freedom of activity for the producer of goods in the newest, non-classical economic theory was transformed into the position on the freedom of the market in accordance with the shift of ideological priorities from production to distribution.

A. Smith was undoubtedly right in his fight for the freedom of the producer, but market freedom is far from identical to the freedom of those who create real wealth for humanity. Under conditions of complete freedom, the spontaneous movement of the market, even at the regional level, is doomed to instability. Unlike producers, who have the opportunity to enter into genuine cooperative relationships and regulate production by assortment, quantity, price range, and other parameters, sellers, most of whom are resellers, middlemen, and speculators, are not fundamentally bound by the interests of production. They have long since become professional sellers, middlemen. They don't care what they sell, as long as they make good, quick money. The future of a particular production facility is of no concern to them. The flaw in the market we deal with in Russia is this: instead of providing normal opportunities for buyer-producer interaction (through the product and demonstration of its production culture), our market "divorces" the main market participants, absolutizing the role of the intermediary, who is generally disinterested in the fate of the producer. It seems that the market exists so that buyers don't have to worry about the interests and actual culture of a particular producer; being a businessman is quite sufficient, and, incidentally, essentially bears little responsibility.

"Freedom of the producer" and "freedom to organize commercial activity" (the formal legal, financial, and narrowly organizational instruments of control over the latter are irrelevant to our problem; they have no significant impact on achieving sustainable production, stabilizing financial flows, or mutual satisfaction between producer and consumer)

are fundamentally different freedoms. The state should not view the market solely as a source of tax revenue, a prerequisite for a healthy lifestyle, and safe consumption. The market is a link in the normal development of regional and national production. It is precisely this market function that should be the first line of all state economic policy documents. Economic activity itself must be structured as a policy aimed at consistently protecting the interests of producers, not so much from foreign competitors as from fellow countrymen and officials of all sorts who have adapted to the practice, who have legitimized themselves with the help of officials, criminal organizations that have traded in their crimson jackets and gold chains for couturier suits and pectoral crosses, and who don't hide in "raspberries" because no one is going to look for them—they are well known, occupying their "legitimate" niche in the structure of administrative-financial mechanisms. Our laws allow them to earn more legally than they would through mugging. The imagination of the restless Comrade Bender was limited to four hundred ways to circumvent criminal code articles. It's unlikely anyone would even attempt to count how many such methods exist today. The saddest thing is that today there's no need for the extraordinary creative abilities of Ostap Ibrahymov, which is why there are far more scammers than producers. Ilf and Petrov's antihero realized the futility of being a millionaire in his own country, fled to Romania, and lost a million at the border. For today's millionaires, the episode with the border crossing and the robbery of Lieutenant Schmidt's enterprising "son" is the funniest part of the novel.

Historical parallels are relative, yet instructive. Repeating history is pointless; it's wise to learn from history, to learn from historical experience, primarily national experience, without disdaining the past practices of other nations. The experience of Peter the Great is more relevant than ever in the 21st century. Peter the Great earned the title "Great" after resolving an equally complex situation that had developed in the country by the end of the 17th century. For Europeans of that era, Russia's western borders were the line where civilization ended and barbarism began. Two thousand years earlier, the Greeks and Romans viewed their borders to the north, west, and east in much the same way. Almost everything declined: education, science, industry, agriculture, construction. The arguments of church leaders, who insisted that Russia was destined to be the "Third Rome," meant little to anyone. Moreover, becoming the "Third Rome," inheriting the faded glory of Byzantium, didn't seem a particularly enticing prospect. Byzantium had become an ordinary stronghold of Orthodoxy and, under the influence of the Church, was selective in its embrace of the scientific and philosophical achievements of Antiquity. Byzantine culture blended the ideas of Aristotle, medieval patristics, and scholasticism. The understanding of science that developed in Western

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Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries was resolutely rejected by the Byzantine heirs. A focus on Byzantium was reasonable in the 8th-10th centuries. The adoption of Christianity and an alliance with a powerful patron facilitated the integration of the Slavs and the formation of Rus' as a unified state. At that time, such an alliance was progressive in all aspects of cultural development. Peter the Great accepted Rus' in a state of extreme backwardness; Europe was rapidly advancing, leaving Rus' to its Asian destiny. The greatness of Peter I, unlike that of his contemporary politicians and spiritual leaders, was manifested not in greater suffering and prayer, but in his ability to understand the intricacies of reality, to identify and personally control the key links in the socioeconomic chain of events—past and present. He correctly assessed the situation, focusing his efforts on the country's economic revival, essentially setting about building a new economy. Economic development revealed to him a deficit in education and training, as well as a general cultural component. Peter I launched a cultural "revolution." Radical cultural innovations did not please the church. Here, too, Peter I demonstrated character. He did not persuade anyone or adapt to anyone. The Tsar assumed the rank of patriarch. Politics cannot be effective if it merely adapts to the peculiarities of the economy and culture. Politics must be the locomotive in everything, acting ahead, guiding. For politics, it is fatal to accompany socioeconomic movement. Western ideologists are disingenuous when they portray the state as an intermediary between production and consumption. They argue that the task of politics is to ensure social justice in the distribution of national wealth, and that the state should not interfere with economic activity—it is self-sufficient. The fallacy of such lobbying concepts becomes obvious during crises. As soon as a recession begins, production declines, debts mount, and liquidity shortages develop, producers, especially financial intermediaries, immediately turn to the state for aid and are the first to receive it. Peter the Great governed the country through decrees. He usually composed the text of these decrees himself, always explaining the precise purpose of the decree, how it should be implemented, and the consequences for those who fail to comply. A.S. Pushkin, who studied Peter the Great's archive, noted that decrees were often not fully thought out, the result of impromptu

decisions. The great poet and thinker is right in his own way, with the caveat that Pushkin was not a great ruler. Peter the Great was forced to be swiftly and cruelly responsible. He was responsible for the fate of the Fatherland. Anyone who has taken on such a fate cannot constantly look back at the current laws and be afraid of not complying with their letter.

Conclusion

Historical routes aren't created by God, nor are they planned a priori; they must be forged through the exploration of new historical spaces. A professional traveler doesn't hide behind the laws of nature when exploring the unknown. Politicians, too, must take an innovative approach, improving the established order of things. Laws aren't absolute; they reflect reality generalized in legal terms. Politics, on the other hand, is the art of managing a historically specific, time-varying reality. Situational, problem-solving thinking is essential here. Recognizing that building new industry and stimulating agricultural production without free access to maritime transport was impossible, the first Russian emperor resorted to extreme measures. Today, thanks to Peter the Great, such a necessity no longer exists, which alleviates the burden of politicians without diminishing the level of responsibility and innovation in their actions.

It's easiest to attribute the crisis in Russia's traditional industries to instability and the economic transition process. The transition period, clearly prolonged due to unclear policies, will eventually end. As for instability, politicians will be disappointed. In all likelihood, capitalism has left the cyclical nature of crises, discovered and explained by Karl Marx, behind us. Contemporary crises testify not so much to the peculiar dynamics of industrialized countries as to the crisis of the bourgeois mode of production itself and the weakness of the social superstructure to control mounting negative trends. The separation of finance from real production, the absolutization of the freedom of financial capital, and the concentration of financial flows are leading development to a dead end, leading to anarchy provoked by stock market speculation. Instability is becoming a persistent, general characteristic, and it's time to discuss the nature of instability, which, like everything else, is changeable, and to hope that instability will not become rampant.

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