

New Public Management Model based on an Integrated System using the Informational and Communication Technologies

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Abstract: *The paper is based on a special research started few years ago through a research project¹ implemented by the International Centre for Public Management from the Academy of Economic Study. The main objective of this research is to contribute to the innovation of the public management from the Romanian local public administration based on the best practices from the developed European public administration and not only. Our research team set up a new public management model supported by the informational technologies and communications. The research started with a diagnosis of the public organizations from the Romanian local public administration and intends to demonstrate that there is an alternative for transforming our Romanian public administration in a more transparent and more effective one. The key component of this model is the public management component, but this is supported by other two components: informatics and communication. The model is defined for each managerial level: top public management, middle public management and low public management level. The paper contains a synthesis of our New Public Management Model for the Romanian Local Public Administration.*

Keywords: *public management model, informational communication and technology, public administration*

Introduction

In the last two decades, fundamental changes have been transforming societies all over the world. These changes include the development of a global economy, the end of the Cold War, and the rapid progress and widespread adoption of information technology. The public sector too is being transformed, leading to the emergence of what has been called the New Public Management. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) observed in

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1995 that “a new paradigm for public management has emerged, aimed at fostering a performance-oriented culture in a less centralized public sector.” The report noted that implementation of the new paradigm was far from complete, and varied from country to country (OECD 1995: 8).

Based on this international context, a set of common themes in the experience of public sector reform in this diverse group of countries and outlined the major characteristics of NPM:

- providing high-quality services that citizens value;
- demanding, measuring, and rewarding improved organizational and individual performance;
- advocating managerial autonomy, particularly by reducing central agency controls;
- recognizing the importance of providing the human and technological resources managers need to meet their performance targets; and
- maintaining receptiveness to competition and open-mindedness about which public purposes should be performed by public servants as opposed to the private sector or non-governmental organizations (Borins 1995: 5-11). Defined in this way, the New Public Management can be interpreted as an agreement between the public and their elected representatives on the one hand and the public service on the other. The public and politicians want high-quality public services and better performance by public sector organizations, what former Vice President Al Gore called ‘government that works better and costs less’ (Gore 1993). To get it, they are willing to give public servants more managerial autonomy, as well as the human and technological resources (i.e., training and information technology) to meet their goals. In addition, the public and politicians are willing to reward strong performance, for example through performance pay. The last component of the NPM paradigm is a way of enforcing this agreement. If public servants do not improve performance, politicians and the public are willing to introduce competition within the public sector, or move activities to the private sector or NGOs.

This new agreement marks a significant shift from traditional practice. Under the old model, public servants were expected to give politicians unbiased policy advice and to implement the decisions taken by them. In return, they could expect to work in anonymity, with security of tenure. While security of tenure explicitly referred to changes of government, it was implicitly taken to mean lifetime employment. In marked contrast, the new agreement is silent about lifetime employment. Indeed, the combined impact of budget cuts needed to restore fiscal balance and the growing application of information technology (IT) is expected to reduce the size of the public service until a new, lower equilibrium is reached.

Three factors, operating together, have tended to drive the adoption of NPM. They are economic pressures, high-level political commitment to change, and a set of ideas to shape change. The new model has been developed on the above premises, which are presented in figure 1.

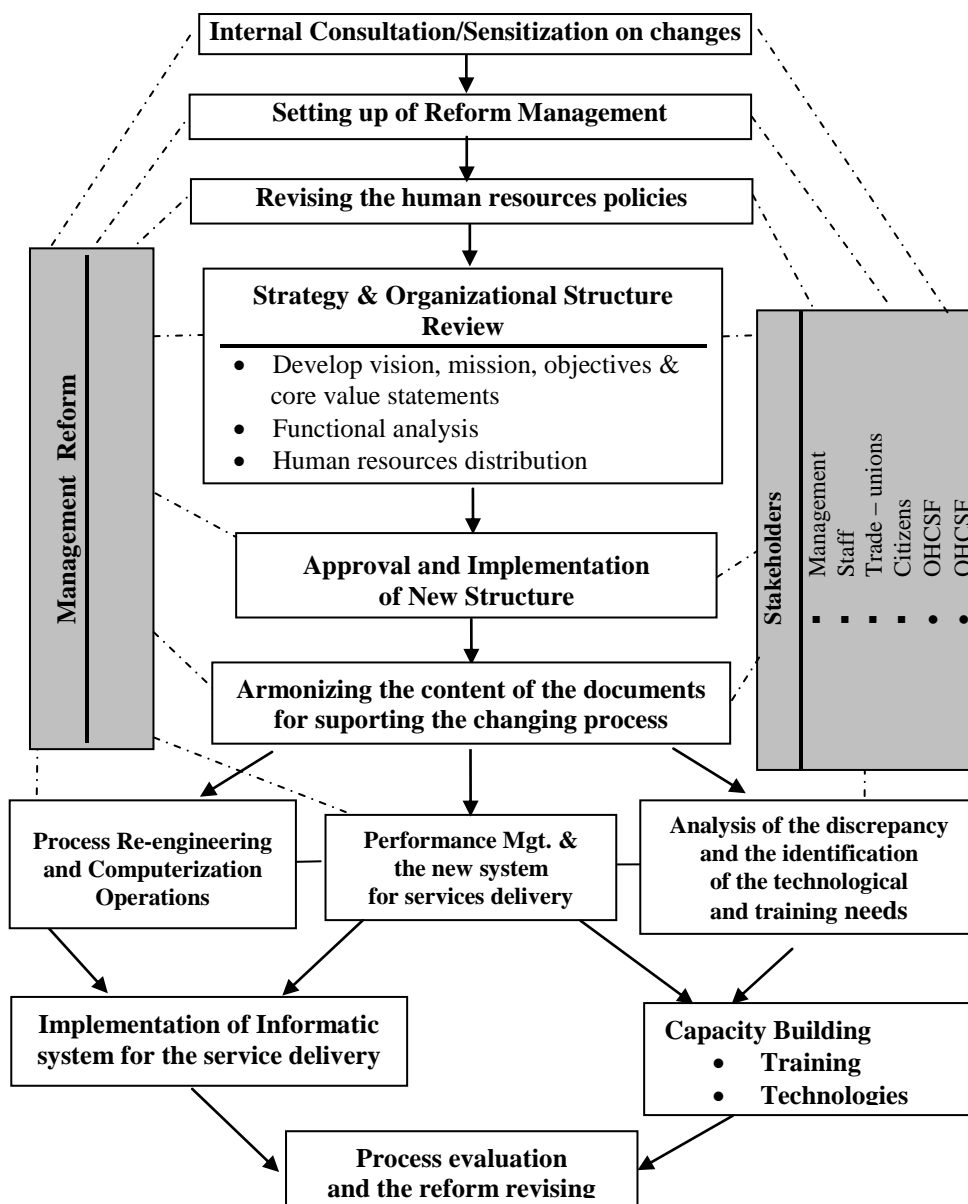


Figure 1. The premises of the new model

In relation with this reality, our research team designs a new public management model for the Romanian local public administration which is based on Information and Communication Technologies.

The new model is based on very deep comparative analyses in few developed EU countries, but is designed for our local public sector. In figure 2 are presented the key components of the new public management model for the local public administration and the way of approaching the public management process.

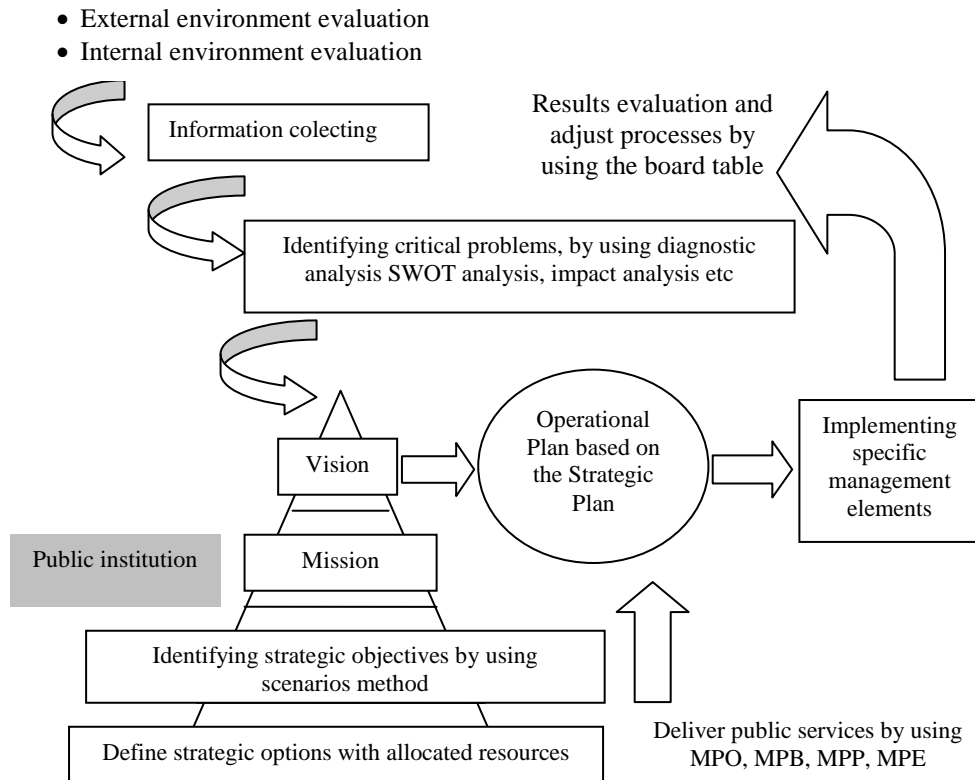


Figure 2. The main elements of the new public management model

Based on these essential elements, the research team designed the new integrated public management model which includes the communication and informatics components. If we can see how looking the scheme of the new model for public management is designed for the Romanian local public administration, we can see figure 3.

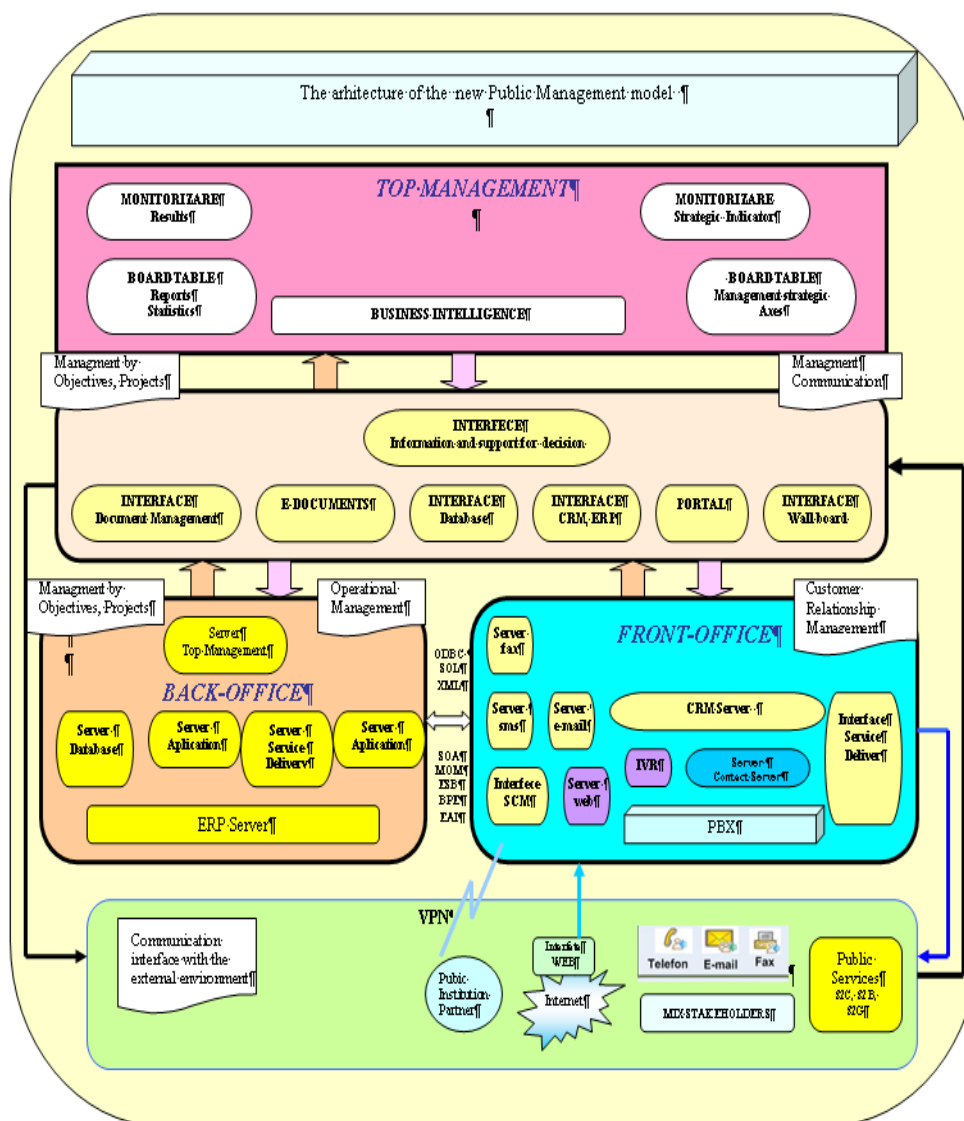


Figure 3. The architecture of the new integrated public management model for the Romanian local public administration

The main advantages of the new model are:

- the reduction of the written documents circulated in the informational system;
- the reduction of the period for delivering public services;
- the time reduction for producing and for delivering the public services;

- increasing the transparency of the delivering process;
- improving the accessibility of using the public information by the civil servants and by other stakeholders;
- improving the quality of the decision making process;
- more efficient informational systems based on an IT platform and a very special call center station;
- improving the quality of the decisions and public policies;
- the substantially reduction of the total cost for delivering public services.

Conclusion

The new model represents an alternative for managing the Romanian local public institutions more efficient in the interest of the public citizens and other stakeholders. The model involves a lot of changes on each managerial level, and some very special technical investments. That means financial efforts, but if we look on a medium and long term, we can understand the major advantages for the public institutions: low public expenditure, better quality decision, accessibility and transparency and also flexibility and sustainability.

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