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Strategic Aspects of Anti-crisis Management of Enterprises in the Context of Digitalization

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Annotation

The strategic aspects of anti-crisis management of enterprises during a crisis are considered. The concept of crisis management is clarified, the stages of crisis management are analyzed, and possible threats arising for enterprises in the context of the current coronavirus pandemic are identified. The use of the author's approach, based on the methods of scientific generalization, comparative analysis, systemic and situational approach, made it possible to establish that actions taken to manage the crisis must be based on a carefully developed plan, be effective, and be applied as quickly as possible. It is important to understand that the tools and mechanisms of anti-crisis management have changed due to widespread digitalization of business processes both at the level of providing public services and at the level of building relationships between enterprises and clients and suppliers, new opportunities have emerged for timely and rapid response to weak signals, etc. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the fact that, the advantages of creating a strategic crisis management plan were identified; a sequence of actions was proposed for developing an anti-crisis plan; an example of the implementation of an anti-crisis plan during the COVID-19 pandemic is given; In order to ensure the sustainability of enterprises in the post-crisis period, strategic recommendations were proposed. The practical significance of the work done is that it can serve as the basis for further scientific research in the field of strategic management based on anti-crisis technologies. Anti-crisis management is important so that businesses can better prepare for future crises and reduce their impact, thereby maintaining the effectiveness of their business.

Key words: *Strategic management, crisis management, global competition, strategic aspect, digitalization, pandemic.*

Introduction

Special management strategies are necessary for any enterprise affected by the crisis. Crises can come in many forms. One of them is the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

The pandemic poses a serious threat to people, businesses and economies around the world (Trofimova, 2020). As governments take significant measures to combat coronavirus, companies quickly adapt to the changing needs of their employees, customers and suppliers, while solving financial and operational problems.

F. Kotler noted that companies need a strategy in order to correctly set priorities when allocating resources: they need it to adequately respond to changes in the environment and to the behavior of competitors (Kotler, 2008). M. Porter believed that the development of a strategic plan is based on a comparison of the company and its environment. Industry and competitive analysis is the main object of attention of company managers (Porter, 2020).

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The world community, including the EAEU, faced a collision in 2020–2022 with serious challenges (COVID-19 pandemic, then the Ukrainian crisis). It is significant that the current turning point coincided with profound changes in the architecture of the existing economic legal order, including integration processes. But like any drastic revolutionary change, it is preceded by a period of accumulation of contradictions, making ineffective decisions that lead to the inevitability of change, just as at one time the collapse of the Soviet Union affected not only the countries of the former USSR and Eastern Europe, but also all states, less or less more involved in his orbit.

Thus, the euphemistic characterization of the economic legal order formed in 2022, given by the last World Economic Forum in Davos (World Economic Forum) - a fragmented world - in reality means just a new iron curtain around the Russian Federation (Thompson A.A., Strickland A.J.,2020).

Another attempt to exclude Russia from the existing international division of labor poses probably the most difficult challenge for our state in recent decades after the collapse of the USSR: will it be able to build with friendly countries, primarily within the framework of the regional association of the EAEU, a format of relations that will be beneficial to all players and will demonstrate to our allies the economic feasibility of focusing on building foreign economic relations specifically with the Russian Federation.

This primarily concerns Russian-Kazakh relations, which must finally take on a systemic character and show that all the advantages of the geographical, accumulated historical, cultural, etc. ties of our peoples, helping to strengthen the integration of strategically important production chains, will be mutually beneficial. At the first meeting in 2023 of the High-Level Working Group on ensuring the sustainability of the economies of the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union, including ensuring macroeconomic stability, the results of the work for the past year were summed up and priorities were identified for 2023.

Due to the consequences of the crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, which has affected all countries of the world, it remains to be assessed by experts. The International Monetary Fund estimates that global output contracted 3.5% in 2020. For comparison: in Russia – 3.6%, in Germany – 5.4%, in France – 9.0%, in Italy – 9.2%, in the USA – 3.4%, in Japan – 5.1% , while in China the increase was 2.3% [12]. Statistical data presented in the report of the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) “The Socio-Economic Situation of Russia” also confirms the level of decline of the Russian economy in 2020 (by 3.1%). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that in 2020, decisions were made on state support for certain industries and enterprises, a moratorium on bankruptcies was introduced, etc., which overall allowed a number of enterprises to overcome the crisis to one degree or another.

However, in the context of increasing global competition and rapid scientific and technological progress, most companies will be faced with the need to implement anti-crisis measures.

Scientists substantiate the increasing influence of external factors on the activities of an enterprise, explore basic approaches, vectors, models of strategic management, and characterize their signs and characteristics in a changing environment (Gomes, Santos, Facin, 2022). Of particular relevance are works devoted to issues of strategic management during periods of serious macroeconomic shocks, such as a pandemic and sanctions of Western countries (Sharma, Leung, Kingshott, 2020).

Experts classify, formalize, show practical applicability, and offer options for calculating the effectiveness of various management methods and tools.

Within the framework of this area, strategic and tactical solutions are developed and proposed, the use of which is advisable in any specific areas of activity, industries, territories (Brovko, Petruk, 2016).

According to Gartner for 2020, among the new scientific and technological trends are composable enterprise architectures (a new type of enterprise based on the principles of modularity, efficiency, continuous improvement and adaptive innovation, with a modular business model that allows them to quickly rebuild and more flexibly adapt to new requirements of the external environment), algorithmic trust models (ensure data confidentiality), post-silicon computing (development of new advanced materials with advanced capabilities for storing and processing data, computing), formative artificial intelligence, capable of transforming under the influence of external conditions and generating new algorithms and models for solving specific problems, as well as creating a “digital twin” of a person capable of representing him in the real (bidirectional brain-computer interfaces) and virtual (health passport, etc.) world (such technologies can reach a productivity plateau after 2 years) (Gartner, 2020).

All this means that in addition to macroeconomic shocks, enterprises will soon be faced with a situation where some of them will be able to make a qualitative leap in their scientific, technical and, consequently, financial and economic development, while for others new barriers to further development will appear and they will find themselves on the verge of crisis.

Due to the multiplicity of views, opinions and approaches, there is no single definition of strategy as a scientific category. Popular publications provide a multifaceted understanding of strategy as a concept for achieving success, a comprehensive development plan, a general direction of development, a desired end state, a set of goals and objectives, etc. (Kochetkov, 2020).

Therefore, it is important to understand that the tools and mechanisms of anti-crisis management, which, for example, were used in 2008–2009, with a high degree of probability may turn out to be ineffective, because macroeconomic, scientific and technological factors have changed, approaches to organizing and conducting business activities have changed due to widespread digitalization of business processes both at the level of providing public services and at the level of building relationships between enterprises and clients and suppliers, new opportunities have emerged for timely and rapid response to weak signals, etc.

In this regard, the purpose of this study is to characterize the features of anti-crisis enterprise management in modern conditions and their impact on management processes.

Methods of Research

Quite a lot of research methods in Kazakh and foreign literature are devoted to the issues of crisis management. The goals of crisis management in many of them come down to the development and implementation of measures to neutralize the greatest risks that could lead to a crisis, reducing the likelihood of bankruptcy, bringing the enterprise out of the crisis, developing financial and management mechanisms to overcome the crisis, reducing the negative impact of the crisis, etc. (Mazelis, Rakhmanova, Solodukhin, 2012).

In the report “Russia 2025: from personnel to talent,” experts from The Boston Consulting Group emphasize that digitalization is the use of the potential of online opportunities by many counterparties when carrying out market transactions. It is important to emphasize that for

digital transformation it is not enough just to have online resources and technologies, it is also necessary to form a system of requirements for their creation and use.

Thus, digital transformation of a business is possible only in the case when there is a business model, or in exceptional cases, a separate business process is described and clearly formalized, the choice of relevant information and communication technologies is justified, and there are resources, including time and material for the transformation, existing or creating a new digital business.

Thus, the “post-Covid world” is the world of the digital economy, its spread, development and implementation in various forms of business and its modernization. The digital economy is an antifragile foundation of reliability and protection from threats of a non-social nature. The statement is absolutely not new, but the covid-19 pandemic has updated it, showing that digital technologies are the current technological standard that can adapt forms of contactless interaction for the further development of the economy and society. But it is difficult to imagine a person’s life without traditional, contact communication, and it will certainly persist in those forms that today are often called outgoing and dying, such as family, marriage or household. The value of such institutions in the context of the spread of contactless communications will fundamentally change.

Separately, it is worth noting that the list of anti-crisis measures must certainly include technologies to support business reputation.

Thus, Professor of Management at the University of Exeter Business School W. S. Harvey believes that business reputation is an invaluable intangible asset that influences the perception of employees, customers and other key stakeholders of the organization and, consequently, the sustainability, productivity and future trajectory of the business (Harvey,2020).

What needs to be changed, what makes business models innovative? Mckinsey surveyed approximately 300 senior executives to further understand their organizations' responses to the crisis.

“It is necessary to form a scientific and theoretical model of the mechanism of anti-crisis management of industry in the digital environment, which is a reserve for increasing production efficiency, saving and optimizing the use of resources, and choosing appropriate mechanisms for preventive regulation of enterprises’ activities” (Oborin, 2020).

Results of Research

The features of anti-crisis enterprise management today are determined by new external factors associated with the trends of the onset of the fourth industrial revolution, digitalization of all areas of activity (from classical automation of business processes to public administration and the provision of services in a digital format). The 2020 coronavirus pandemic also had a certain impact.

Here, the forms, methods and tools of planning are updated and improved in order to reduce the risks of uncertainty, expand the production potential of the enterprise even in an unstable environment (Weston,2020).

Modern information and communication technologies make it possible to solve such problems of crisis management as identifying and analyzing factors influencing the socio-economic system, describing, modeling and forecasting the state of the enterprise as a socio-economic

system, developing enterprise development scenarios, creating a unified database, etc. (Chereshkin, Tsygichko, 2019).

Crisis management is slightly different from risk management, which requires assessing potential threats and finding the best way to avoid them. In crisis management, the threat has already arisen, and the enterprise needs to fight it.

However, crises are not always harmful for business, since they can motivate companies to perform successfully in the short term.

For example, many businesses are investing in digital transformation by implementing web applications to facilitate team collaboration and improve data security when working remotely from home.

Crisis management traditionally includes three stages.

1 Pre-crisis stage. The first stage of crisis management is the prevention of possible crises. This process includes:

- strategic planning;
- recruitment and training of an anti-crisis management team;
- conducting modeling to implement the strategic plan.

2. Crisis stage. The second step is to respond to it and implement the crisis management plan that was created in the pre-crisis period. Any actions taken at this stage must be carried out promptly.

For example, during the pandemic, many businesses implemented remote work from home policies to reduce the risk of coronavirus transmission, as required by the government.

Obviously, no one knew in advance how long this policy would have to be in place, so for the purpose of crisis management in the second stage, the company should already have an application that supports the efficiency and continuity of remote work.

3 Post-crisis stage. The final stage occurs when the crisis has passed or has already passed. However, the crisis management process is still ongoing. At this stage, it is advisable to evaluate the applied strategies for overcoming the crisis, whether they were effective or whether they need to be improved. This will help the company to better prepare for another crisis in the future.

So, the actions taken to manage the crisis must be effective and immediately applicable, and a crisis management plan is necessary to enable the company to reduce the impact of the crisis.

Here are some of the benefits of creating a crisis management plan:

- helps maintain the business reputation of the enterprise, especially in the eyes of customers, competitors and industry leaders during and after the crisis;
- increases the safety, health and well-being of all employees of the enterprise;
- increases productivity during and after a crisis, since strategic goals and operational tasks for the duration of the crisis are communicated to all employees.

In our opinion, to create an effective crisis management plan, it is necessary to implement a number of actions.

1 Identify the crisis facing the enterprise as quickly as possible. It should be found out

whether the crisis is caused by internal or external circumstances, whether this impact is felt by enterprises only in this industry or by enterprises in almost every industry, etc.

2 Assess the impact of the crisis on the enterprise. Having determined the type of crisis, you should assess the impact of the crisis on your own company, employees, customers and other stakeholders. This is important for making the right management decision, since the impact of the crisis may be as follows:

- decrease in production and/or sales volumes;
- customer dissatisfaction and reduction of the client base;
- deterioration of business reputation (including reduction of goodwill);

decreased brand loyalty; increased costs (Levshukova, Matveev, Pozoyan, 2020).

3. Develop anti-crisis measures. When the type of crisis has been established, and its possible consequences have been clarified, it is necessary to work out measures that can be easily and quickly implemented using the existing resources of the enterprise in order to overcome the crisis and minimize its negative effect.

At the same time, A. Uzakbaeva and A. Abdimomynova propose to consider regional anti-crisis management in two ways:

- from the position of reactive regional anti-crisis management - as a process of planning and implementing a limited list of local anti-crisis measures to restore the pre-crisis socio-economic state of the region;
- from the position of anticipatory regional anti-crisis management, aimed at long-term goals of regional anti-crisis management, covering all spheres of the region's life and linked to its development strategy (Uzakbaeva, Abdimomynova, 2015).

For example, the activities of a non-profit organization called the Risk and Insurance Management Society (RIMS) have been focused on promoting and improving the practice of crisis management together with risk management for six decades.

The members of the association are certified specialists and annually hold world exhibitions and seminars in this area. In addition, the Irish company RMI (Risk and Crisis Management International), founded in 1993, is a leading independent provider of risk management and crisis management services not only among national companies, but throughout the world.

It has associated branches throughout Europe, the USA, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. It should also be noted that the Institute of Crisis Management (ICM), which has a database of more than 111,000 cases of business crises, and the European Academy of Crisis Management (ECMA), which promotes the exchange of ideas and experience of specialists and members of the academy, the acquisition of knowledge to prevent crisis situations.

In a study conducted by the analytical center NAFI (National Agency for Financial Research), 85% of entrepreneurs indicated that the spread of coronavirus had a negative impact on the financial performance of their organization.

Small businesses are under attack: in companies with up to 100 employees, the negative consequences are especially noticeable (87% of entrepreneurs noted them); in companies with more than 100 employees, negative consequences were noted a little less often (78%) (Trofimova, 2020).

To avoid a scenario involving staff reductions or layoffs, most businesses have implemented work-from-home policies. In cases where this was not possible, conscientious employers reduced hours of work and provided protective equipment for their employees (e.g. hand sanitizer, masks, gloves, etc.).

To analyze the factors that arose during the pandemic and impact the enterprise, incl. risks, today various methods and approaches are used. Among the newest are model methods, including artificial intelligence methods, in particular multi-agent systems, collective behavior of automata, etc. The latter can be used in the development of digital twins, in the creation of smart enterprises, etc. (Chereshkin, Roizenzon G, Britkov,2020).

We summarize the features of anti-crisis enterprise management in the context of digitalization in Table 1.

Table 1 Features of Anti-Crisis Enterprise Management in Modern Conditions of Digitalization.

1	Peculiarity	Impact on crisis management processes
	The ability to use automated control systems for collecting, processing and analyzing big data in real time, as well as generating new models and behavior algorithms using artificial intelligence	Prompt provision of data, incl. already calculated financial and economic ratios and other indicators necessary for making management decisions. Using the capabilities of artificial intelligence to generate new models and algorithms for the system's response to certain values, markers
2	Digital ecosystem: internal and external	Efficiency of interaction with government agencies, clients, suppliers.
3	“The profitability paradox” (described in detail by E.P. Kochetkov	An additional advantage over “traditional” companies not involved in the digital ecosystem
4	High rate of change	Growth of capitalization of digital companies against the background of their unprofitability
5	Dynamics of the macroenvironment	The need to accelerate management decision-making and forecast the dynamics of development of the macro- and microenvironment
6	Opportunity to reduce costs through the use of digital technologies	
6.1.	Distant work	Opportunity to reduce office maintenance costs
6.2.	Using digital twins	The ability to reduce costs for real testing through the use of digital twins (study of technical characteristics such as strength, reliability, functionality, etc.) with the ability to design for a given cost
6.3.	Digital sharing platforms	Possibility of reducing costs for maintaining fixed assets

Note: Compiled By the Author.

The transition to a digital economy also places new demands on the head of an enterprise, on his professional competencies in the field of management, personnel management, and IT technologies. The issue of creating a corporate culture based on effective interaction at all levels of management and readiness for change is also important (Kosareva, Samarina, 2019).

Thus, there are many reputation support technologies that can be effectively used to manage an enterprise during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Even after the pandemic subsides, everyone faces an unpredictable future that requires more flexibility than ever before, and while the COVID-19 crisis is unique in modern history, a look at previous global disruptions reveals some winning strategies that have helped businesses remain resilient through the crisis

Today's business leaders are rightly focused on the enormous business continuity challenges presented by COVID-19, and the first thing they must do is continue to:

- ensure maximum safety of employees;
- ensure financial stability;
- assess the sustainability of supply chains;
- Strengthen critical systems to support unprecedented levels of remote work while addressing a surge in cyberattacks.

Organizations that were furthest along their digital transformation journey before COVID-19 adapted to the crisis better than others. Their business models and operational processes were able to more quickly accept and respond flexibly to ongoing changes. Businesses that lack a robust digital network or online presence are facing challenges.

Meanwhile, software companies providing collaboration tools, software as a service, and cloud resources are facing high levels of demand to meet rapidly changing customer needs and business behavior (Kulagina,2020).

However, businesses, no matter how digitized they are, need to try to look beyond the immediate business continuity issues caused by the pandemic. As restrictions imposed by governments are increasingly lifted today, strategic steps should be taken for the future, taking into account the lessons already learned, in order to prepare for new living conditions after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lessons show that organizations must act quickly and decisively to maintain resilience in the current crisis and in the uncertain future following the COVID-19 pandemic (Kirgizova, Durynin, 2020).

As the impact of COVID-19 continues to be felt, many businesses have begun their road to recovery. But in some regions the situation is completely different. As businesses began to reopen, the situation changed. Social and political reactions are trending negatively as the pandemic continues to peak or, in some areas, return to previous levels.

Where possible, businesses are re-imagining growth opportunities as they reopen, taking win-win strategic actions that will help them emerge stronger in the face of crisis competition:

- becoming more digital, with data-driven and cloud-based applications;
- make business processes more flexible and cost structures more variable;
- increase the safety of employees and customer service.

However, amid renewed uncertainty about the pandemic, the assumptions that companies previously used to formulate scenarios and determine their strategic course are now being called into question.

Leaders are reassessing how the evolution, strength or recurrence of the pandemic in different geographic markets affects their recovery strategies. This means adjusting assumptions, re-evaluating all scenarios, and strengthening their ability to predict and respond accordingly.

Discussion

Today, in most companies, the CEO's direct reports are not directly responsible for profit and loss. Instead, they serve as the liaison between core business operations and the CEO, or are operational and functional leaders.

Against the backdrop of macroeconomic instability, the situation of economic entities is aggravated by their unpreparedness before the crisis. Failure to take into account the likelihood

of the emergence and development of crisis phenomena in the activities of business entities and the low level of management have become the causes of numerous bankruptcies. Considering such circumstances, anti-crisis management becomes of great importance for market agents, which should be aimed both at preventing the occurrence of a crisis, minimizing its impact, and at post-crisis stabilization of activities.

Clarification of the place of anti-crisis management of entrepreneurial activity in the theory and practice of management goes through clarifying the concept of crisis, as well as the factors and causes of its occurrence in the activities of business entities.

Foreign practice of anti-crisis regulation and the institution of bankruptcy is characterized by an emphasis on communications and social aspects, that is, the priority and priority in the process of reorganizing an enterprise is restoring the solvency of business entities and preserving jobs.

That is why the focus on achieving strategic objectives, timely response to “weak signals”, as well as adequate state and legislative regulation of bankruptcy and reorganization procedures are especially important when business structures emerge from a crisis.

Conclusion

Now, with the crisis of the pandemic, most business leaders have begun to understand that automation is a powerful way to respond to the ever-increasing pressure to improve efficiency, innovation and the speed of the economy. Moreover, the cost of automation is falling due to better and less expensive technologies and ready-made solutions, while demand is growing.

At the same time, most business processes of an enterprise can be at least partially automated using advanced analytics and predictive modeling, which allow making optimized decisions in real time and also reduce labor-intensive manual operations. To quickly begin digitalization and automation, companies can implement ready-made solutions or develop custom ones.

As businesses implement the proposed changes, there will be a need to evolve across the entire enterprise. To support the new strategic model, change management techniques must be rigorously implemented in a crisis.

The current crisis should not be a cause for concern, as it may serve as an incentive for the enterprise to develop better strategic solutions to other obstacles in the future. Anti-crisis management is important so that businesses can better prepare for future crises and reduce their impact, thereby maintaining the effectiveness of their business.

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