Deliberate reorganization of the system of social relations in oil and gas companies in the period of changes in economics

Reorganización deliberada del sistema de relaciones sociales en empresas petroleras y gasistas en el período de cambios en la economía

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ABSTRACT:
The problem of adapting oil and gas companies to the continuously changing conditions in the economy is becoming one of the urgent ones for the sociology of management. Most of the oil and gas companies are vertically integrated complexes, which have huge and rigid managerial structure that keeps social and economic efficiency of companies at very low level, especially in the conditions of serious transformations. Flexibility, high level of adaptability to the changes, the ability to be socially active and stable in spite of any changes, political and economic environment are vital for the companies. All these features are usually formed by the proper activity of the management in the sphere of social relations in the companies. The main aspects of the modern social changes as well as the ways of oil and gas companies’ adaptation to them are considered

RESUMEN:
El problema de la adaptación de las empresas de petróleo y gas a las condiciones continuamente cambiantes de la economía se está convirtiendo en uno de los más urgentes para la sociología de la gestión. La mayor parte de las empresas de petróleo y gas son complejos integrados verticalmente, que tienen una estructura de gestión enorme y rígida que mantiene la eficiencia social y económica de las empresas a muy bajo nivel, especialmente en las condiciones de las transformaciones graves. Flexibilidad, alto nivel de adaptabilidad a los cambios, la capacidad de ser socialmente activo y estable a pesar de cualquier cambio, ambiente político y económico son vitales para las empresas. Todas estas características suelen estar formadas por la actividad adecuada de la dirección en la esfera de las relaciones sociales en las empresas. Los
1. Introduction

The modern period of continuous social changes makes the search for the optimal ways of companies’ personnel management, perfectly adapted to them, one of the urgent problems. The new managerial paradigm presupposes the development of the social aspect of the systematical changes. That leads to the appearance of the new functions of the companies’ management, oriented at creation of such a way of a company’s optimization that would be based on the social assessment of the staff.

For the personnel management that means that they should be looking for the sources of survival not only outside, but also inside the companies as well as that they should consider not only external but also internal threats for the companies when making plans of their development. For example, internal barriers, preventing a company’s development may be considered as one of such threats. (Gaisina, Gareev, Valitova, Khairullina, Ustinova, 2015). The new understanding of the personnel management presupposes the qualitative inner reorganization of companies based on the principles of synergism and the system theory. The use of these principles presupposes understanding of reorganization processes as a way of the staff self-organization and adaptation to the new market reality.

Two ways of analyzing companies’ self-organization parameters are considered in the scientific literature. The first one was formed in the sphere of the classical cybernetics, which considers a self-organizing system as a complex unit, consisting of a lot of self-organizing subsystems, as well as of the subsystem, which causes this self-organization. (Glushkov, 1975). The second one was developed in the sphere of synergetics, where the process of self-organization is not considered to be a kind of centralized process, but is thought to be an inseparable feature of any system as it is (Prigozhin, Stengers, 1986). The synergetic conception of self-organization considers this process to be caused not only by the systems’ environment but also by its’ internal state.

The authors of the given article consider adaptability to be one the main features of any social and economic system. V.B. Yakovlev thinks that “this very property contributes to the organization’s successful functioning and keeps its’ work stable even when the properties of the ruled objects, the purposes of management or the conditions of the environment go through some unexpected changes due to the change of its’ functional algorithm or by the search for an optimal state.” It should correspond to the processes taking place in the self-organizing systems, leading the spontaneous ordering of their inner structure.

It’s impossible to give an exact description of the processes going on in self-organizing systems due to the continuous changes in their complex environment, if the divergent interests in their parts are not considered. The results of the investigations of such scientists as A.A. Bogdanov, R.L. Daft, and R.L Ack off show that such simply arranged models lead to conflict situations in the systems. (Bogdanov, 2003). That is why the theories of the organization development
based on the investigation of adaptation processes have appeared. We can consider the “E” and “O” theories created by the Professors of the Business School of Harvard University M. Beer and Noria as examples of such theories. The first theory considers the financial goals of the companies’ shareholders to be the priority of a company’s development. The other is based on the investigation of a company as a kind of a self-organizing system, which makes such characteristics as corporate culture and the personnel interests the priorities of a company’s development. The latter theory seems to be more corresponding to the new business realities, as it considers long-term improvement in an organization to be connected with the personnel involvement in the production process, which leads to better partnership among the employees, creation the atmosphere of mutual trust and responsibility, indispensable for a company’s adaptability (Bennis, 2000).

In the 1960 the adaptive model of social dynamics was suggested by J. Lorsch, P. Lawrence and J. Tompson. In this model the process of changes is understood as a kind of deliberate adaptation of a structure and the ways of its’ constituent parts activity to the changes in its’ heterogeneous inner environment caused by a certain situation. Passive rational adaptation of the organization’s subsystem to the state of the outer environment was taken as the basic mechanism of a system adaptation (Lawrence, Lorsch, 1967).

The theory of accidental transformations suggested by J. March and J. Olsen may be considered interesting as it is based on the ideas of Karl Weick, who used to take into account both internal and external factors when considering systems’ transformations. The given theory considers transformational processes at the level of a single organization, understood as “organized anarchy”, where the process of acquiring a balance between of the state of a system and its’ environment is not considered as the factor determining the results of the transformation. (March, Olsen, 1976).

The other theory concerning the peculiarities of the process of a system adaptation was suggested by A.A. Alchian, M. Oldreich and J. Pfefer, who considered changes as a process “caused by external and internal factors and based on the logic of the whole process of the previous system development” (Alchian, 1950). The main idea of this approach is that the existing functional patterns of a system stop working under certain circumstances which leads to the necessity of creation of a new system of strategical and tactical decisions so as to correspond to the current changes. In fact the system in this case should have a kind of choice between several alternative strategies chosen on the basis of maximal efficiency of business interaction. As soon as the best variant has been chosen the new functional pattern is introduced into the system’s activity.

According to the theory suggested by M. Hannen, J. Freemam and G. Gerrol the internal environment of any system is usually characterized as very conservative, and the level of conservatism grows with the size of an organization, that is why all the changes there are understood as caused by the influence of external factors only. Besides all the changes are based on the previous experience of the organization functioning. What makes the given theory different from those mentioned above is the fact that there the system of any organization is understood as a kind of institutional population, existing in the 3-D space filled with numerous alternative resources and opportunities.

The concept of the so-called “learning organization”, created by P Senge (Senge, 1990) seems to be valid for the investigation discussed in the given article. It considers the level of the employees’ knowledge and competence improvement as a kind of business. In this case an organization is understood as a conglomerate of many self-ruled groups of employees, based on similar business ideas and consisting of people absolutely aware of the responsibility for the whole business process they take. This theory presupposes a company’s managerial system to self-adjust to the state of the external environment due to the people’s ability to improve their business competence.

A lot of investigations of management activity have been done recently. Many of them have been devoted to the correspondence of the managerial decisions to the influence of the social
changes. Such new terms as “innovational managerial process” and “reflexive management” and many others have appeared in the special literature. Some of the researchers consider transformational activity in companies as a sort of reflexive management, which is quite close to what we call adaptive management. As it has been stated by Yu. D. Krasovsky, reflexive management is such management which provides such a passing of critical moments in a company’s life that after it both the managers and the employees get a new understanding of their roles in it. Such a process may be successfully ruled with the help of using special psychological training of the employees such as solving different crisis management tasks, participating in business games and so on. (Krasovsky, 1997).

The usefulness of adaptive management in the times of social changes in proven by the fact that it is used when the external factors influencing the system are have not been investigated properly and may cause the system collapse.

2. Investigation methodic

The term “adaptation” has been introduced into the practice of Humanities from natural sciences, where it was first used by Lamark and Charles Darwin at investigating the interaction of living beings with the environment. Adaptability is understood not only as the ability to adequately and timely react to the changes of the environment but also as the ability to do so using all the knowledge about the organization’s (or the organism’s) potential. The peculiarities of understanding this term vary with the field of science where it is used. Some general ideas of this term are given in Table 1.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Encyclopedic Dictionary</td>
<td>The adjustment of the economic system and its individual subjects to the changing environmental conditions, such as ways of production, labor, type of exchange and life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gorsky D.P. et al</td>
<td>The system’s ability to maintain its structure and carry out its’ functions under changing environmental conditions. The response of the system to the changes of the external environment can be either a short-term adaptation to these changes or a long-term evolution of the system as a result of this adaptation. Adaptation is considered structural if any modification to the structure or structural properties of the system does not entail a change in its functional properties. If this condition is not met, then we speak of functional adaptation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cybernetics Encyclopedia</td>
<td>The system’s ability to change its state and behavior (parameters, structure, functioning algorithm) depending on the changes of the environmental conditions using the accumulated information about them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorsky D.P. et al Sklyarenko V.K. et al</td>
<td>The process of transition from a certain production volume achieved in the current period to another output level corresponding to the requirements of the new period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Encyclopedic Dictionary</td>
<td>The process of the adaptation of the structure and functions of organisms to the conditions of existence</td>
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Through the generalizing of all the given definitions we come to the understanding of adaptation as a feature of any organized system. It is the ability to adjust the functional algorithm and the logic of the processes to the momentary or repeated changes of the strategic
Adaptation in personnel management is based on the consideration of three states of a company: the current state, the transitional state and the expected one. That is why it should be understood as a kind of activity aimed at better preparation of the system to the possible changes. It presupposes the interaction of a person or a social group with the environment, during which the requirements and expectations of all the participants of this process are adjusted to each other. The Philosophical Encyclopedic Dictionary when giving the definition of adaptation mentions correspondence of the self-esteem and psychological expectations of all of the participants of this process as one of the basic factors of its’ going smoothly. They should also correspond to the reality of life and the opportunities it may suggest. These characteristics should not be taken stationary but should take into account such factors as personal development of the participants of the social interaction and the development of the environment. (Philosophical Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1992).

The term adaptation is referred to different processes nowadays. Each science investigates its’ own variety of what is taken as adaptation. That is why we have physical, psychological, professional and other types of adaptation depending on the field of science. The given investigation is devoted to the processes of social adaptation. Social adaptation is taken as a process of dynamical changes of the features and characteristics of an object connected with its’ adaptation to the changing condition of the production process or social life through the adjustment of the personal ideas and expectations to the social requirements. Most of the modern companies do not have management systems corresponding to the current social and economic situation, especially considering how quickly they react to the changing market conditions (Gaisina., Bakhtizin, Mikhaylovskaya, Khairullina, Belonozhko, 2015; Sultanova, A.P. Chvanov, 2015). That is why many of the companies find adaptation processes very hard to go through. But adaptability itself is the readiness of the company to be reformed any time to catch up with the changing world. It also means that the system should be ready to get rid of any of its’ elements if its’ functions are not useful in the new situation. Just the lack of such readiness makes most of the companies hard to adapt.

3. Results

Using the basic ideas of the system theory and the system self-organization theory, the management of companies should realize the multilevel system of adaptation. We consider the ideas of A.I. Tatarkin, who thinks that “management transformation caused by social changes should be based on the investigation of the systems’ adaptation to the new elements of the environment and on the investigation of the company’s ability to adapt to the process of changes. Adaptation processes should take place at three levels: the level of the management system, the level of business processes and at the level considering the state of the external environment”, quite actual. (Ttarkin, 2003). Adaptation processes going on at each of the mentioned above levels have some peculiarities. Some of them are shown in figure 1.

Figure 1. The hierarchy of the adaptive management of an enterprise
The essence of the social adaptation of a company is the ability to predict the possible states of a self-organizing system and to choose the most suitable of the alternatives based on this prediction. This process also presupposes the choice of the best means of achieving the chosen state. That is why the transformation of the system of personnel management should go through the following stages:

1. Awareness of the appearance of a new social requirement by social interaction participants and its introduction into the paradigm of social relations.
2. Creation of a new type of social interaction aimed at the reform of the existing social system.
3. Transformation of the newly formed social interaction into the new type of personnel management, its fixation through a series of repetitions, and creation of a new systems of business norms, rules, and sanctions.

The following aspects of personnel management should be involved in such a reform:
- creation of adequate interrelations between the labor market and the staff of an enterprise;
- creation of an adequate communication policy;
- the choice of the best style of managing the company’s human resources in the period of changes in business conditions;
- the choice of the best type of labor conditions organization (including the ergonomics of the working place);
- revealing of the peculiarities of the staff motivation;
- creation of a new system of material reward of the employees as well as of other means to show appreciation.

The diagram illustrates the levels of the control system, business processes, and environmental factors.
recognition of personal business achievements;
the choice of the best system of payment;
Reform of the staff training and qualification improvement policy.

All the existing adaptation models may be classified into the following four groups:

1. Structural and innovation adaptation presupposes a wide use all the achievements of science and modern management to create and introduce the new ideas of personnel interaction with the environment into a company’s practice. The main information to be used in this process is the results of the market conditions in the sphere of the company’s activity. The results of such research may be of great help to find the best instruments to motivate the employees to work more efficiently with the aim to preserve the staff. The use of this adaptation model makes the employees feel satisfied with the work they are doing and the labor conditions and greatly decrease the amount of conflict situations between the workers and the managers.

2. Compensational adaptation is the way of a company’s adjustment to the state of the environment connected with making the workers take some new functions from the adjacent spheres of competence. Sometimes the workers have to take up some types of activity that are absolutely new for them. In the latter case the workers have to go through some training to become useful in the new sphere of responsibility. This type of adaptation is characterized by quite a low amount of conflict situations between the staff members and the top management of companies and quite a high level of the workers’ satisfaction with their work.

3. Deprivational adaptation is characterized by the reduction of the requirements to the personnel mainly in the amount and quality of work done as well as narrowing of the scope of the workers’ responsibility. Such a type of adaptation seems to be most efficient in the crises times. It lets the top managers preserve the staff either with the hope that situation will change soon or as a result of their believe in the laws of social justice.

4. Destructive adaptations means that no measures are taken by the company’s management which usually leads to a company’s degradation.

Personnel adaptation may be caused both the positive and negative social factors. The first ones motivate the employees to reforms and efficiency improvement while the latter ones lead to people’s moral and social degradation. Three groups of factors preventing adaptation are traditionally distinguished:

- personal factors
- the factors connected with the workers’ qualifications and the state of market,
- the factors connected with the political and economical situation in the country.

The first group of factors is connected with the peculiarities of the personal characteristics of the employees based on their stereotypes, archetypes as well as on the norms of morale and religion learnt by them at the early age. Generally such characteristics are named as “character”, “psychological features”, “type of breeding”. These characteristics are quite stable and they usually predominate how fast and easily the people will welcome the changes in the interpersonnel interaction.

The second group of factors is connected with the peoples’ belonging to certain professional or social groups which usually determines the way they accept different processes and changes. Some people belong to the groups “dictating” market conditions, the other are usually subjected to the influence of the market situation. People with rare specialities or highly qualified specialists, who are in a great demand, adapt to the new situation quite easily and much faster than the others, making the market system adjust to their requirements. These factors make the level of acceptance of the new situations heterogenic.

The third group of factors is referred to the peculiarities of the political and economical situation in the country, which influence the smoothness of the adaptation process as well as its efficiency.

Summing up all the mentioned above, we can say that adaptation presupposes mastering the
new social and economical situation by an individual or a social group. The positive role of adaptation increases with the dynamic of the changes in the internal and external environments of a company. Nowadays the amount and the speed of social changes increase, which fastens the external environment renewal. All these factors make adaptation processes more complex.

The improvement of a company’s adaptability increases the personnel efficiency. It’s a well known fact that the transformational period is the time when a company is most assailable, but it gives opportunities to get some new potential. That is why these times may be considered the period when social groups and individuals show the level of their adaptability. In short this period may be called “adaptation”. The quality of the adaptation process may be understood as the correspondence of the real adaptation results to the ideal ones. But the authors of this article think that the results of adaptation may be considered good if the results people get in the transformational period are not worse than those got previously.

The prospects of developing oil and gas fields in the Far North makes investigation of oil and gas companies’ adaptation to the new conditions one of the urgent issues for the social and economical sciences. According to A.N. Silin the economical and social feasibility of the use of the shift system of work there should go through a detailed interdisciplinary investigation. On the one hand such a type of work greatly decreases the anthropogenic influence in the environment and the lifestyle of the native population there, but on the other hand the psychology of the workers is under the influence of the state of “temporary being”, which leads to their irresponsible behavior with the nature and the hosts of this territory. (Silin, Yermakov, 2013; Sultanova, Shingareev, 2014; Maier, 2011).

The world practice of the new lands development widely uses the shift type of organization of work. The idea to use the method of “shift expeditions” was born in the end of the 1860-th when the new sparsely populated regions were being developed. The main purpose of the method was to provide these regions with highly qualified specialists, who came from other regions.

A unique infrastructure system was created in the North of the Tyumen Region. Its’ authors took into account all the peculiarities of this diverse territory. In the middle of the Ob region every big oil or gas field had a town nearby. That is why there appeared 17 new cities and dozens of towns in the period of twenty years. But in the Polar Regions the situation is quite different. There appeared settlements of a new type called “shift settlement”, like those in Pangoda, in the Nadym region, the settlement of Yamburg, the New Polar settlement in the Tazov district of the Yamal Region, Vyngapur in the Noyabrsk district, Pionerny in the Tomsk region, etc.

The new system of the development of the West Siberian Oil and Gas Complex was put into practice in the middle of the 1980-th. At this time the shift system of the development of the Yamburg field. The settlement of Yamburg was arranged so that it didn’t presuppose the workers’ staying with their families there. That is why the work was organized so that the workers had little spare time. The new standards of shift work at the field, considering medical, biological and social aspects of living a mobile life, were approved by the top management of the “Gazprom Ltd.” Company in 2008-2010(Andreyev, Arabsky, Kramar, Silin).

Now the peculiarities of shift work are regulated by the Labor Code of the Russian Federation. But A. N Silin thinks that while considering such aspects as the period of work, the system of payment and different types of material reward for the employees, length of the personnel work and some restrictions of the use of the shift method, it doesn’t touch upon such problems as the standards of medical service in the shift settlements, the rules of industrial sanitary, the general arrangement of a shift settlement, the problem of organization of feeding the workers and so on. (Silin, 1987). So, though some of the principles of a shift settlement organization have been covered in the Labor Code many of the other very important aspects of life and work there should be subjected to sociological, economical, medical and biological investigations done on the basis of the interdisciplinary approach. The results of such investigations will be expressed in the managerial decisions made and the new regulatory documentation on the use
of the shift type of work in the Far North regions, created by the oil and gas companies’ top management as well as by the ruling organizations (the local administration of the Far North, municipal ruling bodies regions as well as by the Federal Legislative Structures) (Silin, 2011; Belonozhko, Skifskaya, 2011; Abdrkhmanov, Abdrakhmanova, Vorokhobko, Shaibakov, 2015).

The research done has revealed the fact that a lot of conflicts are caused by the cohabitation of representatives of different regions, ethnic groups and confessions, which leads to the negative psychological state of the workers. Most of the workers complain about the lack of normal rest in the hostels due to such conflicts, which causes the rapid loss of their power and decrease of their efficiency. It’s quite normal that the shift workers coming to the North bring there the ideas and stereotypes of their culture, but this fact shows the necessity of finding a way to create some mutual understanding between them.

4. Discussion

It should be the routine practice for oil and gas companies choosing workers for shift work to examine their health carefully, as there are many moments when the work in the unfavorable conditions of the Far North may be prohibited for people. For example, one of such unfavorable factors, influencing a shift worker’s health is climate change when he comes to the place of work or goes back home. The other factor adversely influencing the workers’ health is the change of time zones.

The shift workers labor is characterized by hard physical and emotional loads. The amount of work hours in an average week may be equal to 52-60 hours (while the so-called “continental” norm of work is 40 hours). Emotiogenic factors add to this physical exhaustion, among them are unstable light and dark periods of a day (the so called Polar Night and Polar Day), necessity to adapt and readapt to climate and time zones changes, repeated communication with the same people in the settlement, everyday troubles, worries about the family living far away from the place where people work and many others. Taken together all these factors lead to frustration, emotional burnout and even serious mental diseases.

Many of the shift workers have mentioned lack of privacy. But just this opportunity to stay alone for some time lets people think carefully about life but get rid of psychoemotional tension. The research has shown that the amount of the cases of insomnia, emotional exhaustion, lack of appetite or, on the contrary, overeating, nicotine, coffee and alcohol addiction increase with the period of work in shifts. But on the other hand, the results of the polls held 1990-2014 have shown that most of the shift workers (82-88%) are quite satisfied with the mobile character of their work and wouldn’t like to change it into the settled type of work.

The polls held have shown the dynamics in the relevance of the problems, the workers think to be the most important. The factors causing the changes in the relevance of the problems have also been considered by these investigations (see Table 2). The results of the investigation could be taken into account at making managerial decisions concerning the use of the shift system of work for oil and gas fields’ development, which could make them more flexible, able to neutralize the above mentioned negative processes.

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<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequate system of payment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor working conditions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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As it can be seen in table 2 the social situation in the shift settlements in the Far North has not changed greatly. The psychological climate in the crews seems to remain the same. The main causes of the conflicts there are unsatisfaction with the salary got, bad living conditions, lack of parts and materials for work, the necessity to do someone else’s work, personal qualities of some of the colleagues and so on.

5. Conclusion
The research of the peculiarities of the shift method of work is so relevant not only because of the necessity to develop the mineral resources of the Far North and the Far East of our country. This variant of organization of work seems to be the means of decreasing time and financial expenses connected with the achievement of the goals of the companies, as it gives them the possibility to react quickly to the changes of the market situation. Besides, the use of these methods lets decrease the level of unemployment and supports the mobility of workers and their families, as well as improves their material and social status. Generally talking we may consider the shift system of work quite economically feasible as it decreases the unit costs on creation and support of settlements at the fields and the amount of specialists living there. This type of work organization does not presuppose the movement of the workers’ families to these places, which also leads to a serious economy of recourses. The workers themselves don’t have to change the environment of living and lifestyle. As an example of the territories where the use this method is most useful we can mention the Republic of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan.

The workers of oil and gas companies of the Middle Ob regions suffer from serious social problems, as the level of recovery there has been greatly decreased, and the companies have to send their employees to work to other regions, thus trying to preserve the collective. Considering this we see some prospects for the use of the shift type of work in the future there. But the way of its use will be different: if previously workers from other regions used to come to the North of Ob to work, now the specialists from these regions have to go to other places to work in the East Siberian region.

The social technologies used to neutralize the negative aspects of the shift type of work should be improved. Among such technologies we can mention the ways of the workers selection for being moved to the remote places of work, means of the physical and psychological adaptation of the specialists to the new environment, motivation of the workers to be more efficient, creation of an optimal regime of work for the specialists, creation of a better system of the workers’ transportation to the places of work. The reasonable amount of social benefits and guarantees for the workers can also make the work in shift in the Far North attractive. The
relations between the companies working in the Far North and the local authorities both at the places of the workers' permanent residence and work should also be improved.

All the mentioned above factors presuppose permanent monitoring of the use of shift labor. Such means of monitoring may be in the form of sociological and other types of investigation, the results of which should be the basis of the possible managerial decisions.

Summing up all the mentioned above oil and gas companies can exist only in a stable inner social environment with an adjustable system of personnel relations. Provision of a high adaptability of the social atmosphere in a company is one of the urgent problems for its’ survival in the market. It may be done by means of maintaining stable relations between the employees, corresponding to the abilities of the inner structure of an enterprise and the social and economical situation outside it (Gaisina, Mikhaylovskaya, Khairullina, Ustinova, Shakirova, 2015; Belonozhko, Lavrischev, 2013). That is why it’s necessary to make models of the principles of special conceptions, create such form and methods of management that would be oriented at utilizing the whole potential of Russian oil and gas companies.

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