

## **Questionnaire survey of personnel at the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus**

People are the main resource of an organization, the most important source of its development, enhancement of efficiency and competitiveness in the market.

Under the conditions of state statistics improvement, the need of its compliance with international standards and principles and prioritization of statistical quality issues set new requirements to statistical workers, elevate the significance of creative attitude to labor and high professionalism. The issue of building workforce capacity with the ability to professionally solve statistical tasks is acquiring today the paramount importance. It is impossible to achieve high and efficient results without using modern methods of personnel surveying.

One of the modern methods of surveying personnel is a questionnaire survey. Questionnaire survey allows to enquire a relatively large number of people during a comparatively short period of time, to reveal problematic issues as well as positive and negative points in human resource management, which is especially important in prompt managerial decision making (e.g. in staff recruitment and attestation, advancement of candidates to managerial positions, studying the reasons of job leaving, organizational diagnostics, etc.). The main tool of questionnaire survey is a questionnaire (enquiry form), i.e. the list of special and specifically grouped questions.

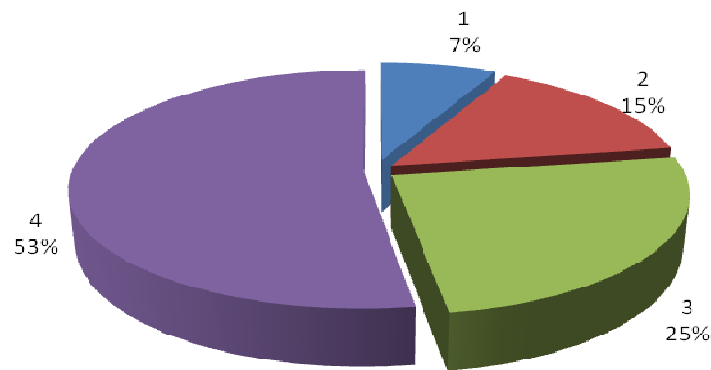
According to the content and the form of questions asked, questionnaires are classified into open ended (questions are asked in an open form implying an unrestricted answer), closed ended (responses are limited to unambiguous options of a “yes-no” type), and combined. According to the method of conducting, questionnaire survey can be direct (in respondent’s presence) or distant.

In staff recruitment questionnaire survey allows to make a conclusion about the qualities of an applicant or specific features of his/her organizational behavior. Questionnaire data would be the basis for the compilation of final applicant lists, interview preparation and further actions related to the recommendation on assignment to a position and preparation of personnel inventory documents. The simplest example is a questionnaire where an applicant lists certain formal personal data partially duplicating passport data, education certificates, work record book, military record card, etc. completing these with the commentary required by employer. Such questionnaires are often supplemented with modules on self-assessment, ranking of motives to obtain the position, and even elements of intellectual tests. Questionnaires can be standardized, semi-standardized and non-standardized. The advantage of the first type is that all candidates who completed the questionnaire can be easily compared with each other on the basis of predefined criteria and assigned a relevant score. The advantage of the last type is that they are more informative.

Questionnaires are most frequently used in staff attestation. To improve the process of managerial staff attestation, I would like to show how the staff of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus was surveyed with the help of questionnaires.

To find out the attitude of senior officials towards the assessment of the results of their practical activities, a questionnaire survey was conducted in the process of attestation at the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (Belstat) (ANNEX 1). The survey covered 40 respondents holding managerial positions of different levels. The study revealed that the attitude of managerial workers to the assessment is different: some officials realize the benefit of such assessment primarily for themselves, for their further professional development and career, while others, unfortunately, do not. Managers who prefer, if possible, not to have the effectiveness of their practical activities assessed, probably do not trust those assessment methods which are employed in attestation.

The study results show that more than 50 % of managers at Belstat take positively the idea to have the results of their activities assessed, 25 % consider it necessary to have their work effectiveness assessed, but without making public its results, 15 % believe that the assessment needs to be carried out, with only positive results being made public, and 7 % stick to the opinion, if possible, not to have their work effectiveness assessed (Figure 1).



- 1 – if possible, I do not want my work effectiveness to be assessed;
- 2 –assessment should be made, with only positive results made public;
- 3 – assessment should be made, without making public its results;
- 4 – assessment should be made, with making everyone informed of his/her strengths and weaknesses

**Figure 1 – Attitude of managers to the assessment of their practical activities during attestation**

Through the attitude of managerial personnel to the assessment of the results of their work in the process of attestation it was possible to judge how effectively or not effectively the system of personnel assessment was organized. It became evident that accurately (well) organized system of personnel assessment employing modern methods based not only on the assessment of practical activities, but also on the estimation of professionally important competencies of a manager would allow to avoid errors during attestation (bias, unreliability, or broad interpretation of assessment results, underestimation or overestimation of their role).

The survey revealed certain problem areas: during attestation at Belstat insufficiently differentiated approach to the assessment of managerial personnel was used, there were no strict criteria to assess professionally important competencies of managers, methods of psychological assessment were used insufficiently, educational attainment and work experience (as compliant with position description) were to a greater extent subject to real assessment, with less attention paid to professional and personal strengths and weaknesses.

Therefore, there was a long perceived need to make changes to the methods of managerial staff assessment, i.e. to develop and implement methods based on the managerial competencies measurement.

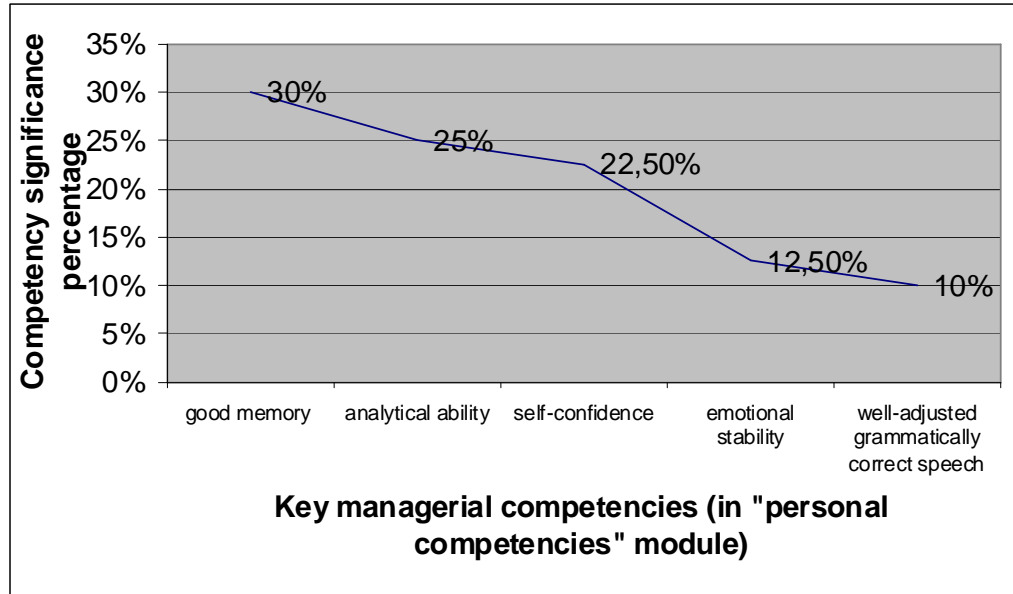
With this in view, one more study was carried out. The study conducted at Belstat covered 40 respondents of different managerial levels.

To identify the key competencies of managerial personnel, a questionnaire was developed (Annex 2). In this questionnaire, respondents were asked to rank competencies a manager should be in a possession of, depending on their importance, according to a five-score scale. The questionnaire was split into two modules: personal and business competencies. Each module comprised more than ten competencies a manager should be in a possession of. As a result of the survey, key competencies needed to successfully fulfill the duties assigned and to measure the degree of identified competencies in the manager under assessment were specified. The first module dealing with “personal competencies” defined five most important ones. Among those five most significant competencies, such quality as good memory was ranked first. Results of the first module are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Key managerial competencies (in “personal competencies” module)

Module	Most important competencies	Percentage share of competency significance
Personal competencies	good memory	30%
	analytical ability	25%
	self-confidence	22,5%
	emotional stability	12,5%
	well-adjusted grammatically correct speech	10%

Key managerial competencies are presented graphically in Figure 2.



**Figure 2 – Key managerial competencies (in “personal competencies” module)**

A more comprehensive description of the competencies content, reflection of their positive and negative manifestations, and competencies assessment methods for this module are provided in Table 2.

Table 2 – Managerial personal competency content

Competency	Competency content	Positive manifestation	Negative manifestation	Assessment method
1	2	3	4	5
good memory	ability to well and quickly memorize and reproduce information	A person: -quickly comprehends information received; -systematizes information; -highlights central key points; -retells in his own words; -productive type	- does not memorize important information; - cannot reproduce the information heard; -without repeating the necessary, important information, he/she forgets not only supplementary, but also a part of the necessary information; - absent-minded	-expert assessment; -tests to evaluate ability for intentional and unintentional memorizing

Table 2 continued

1	2	3	4	5
analytical ability	ability to widely analyze, to think and act sequentially; consistency, methodicalness and particularity in problem solving; rationality, regularity, predictability; ability to take non-standard decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sequential in actions;</li> <li>- logically reasoned in decision taking;</li> <li>- quick-witted;</li> <li>- self-determined;</li> <li>- intellectual flexibility and quickness (quickly and adequately changes actions, techniques and methods of problem solving in changing circumstances, takes correct decision)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cannot explain reasonableness of the decision taken, cannot distinguish the essence from secondary, superficial details;</li> <li>- non-productive;</li> <li>- slowly resolves a problem situation;</li> <li>- partial;</li> <li>- undetermined</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- expert assessment;</li> <li>- techniques for evaluation of ability to analyze, flexibility and lability of mental processes;</li> <li>- attestation tests</li> </ul>
self-confidence	persistent striving to achieve the goal set, self-belief, belief in own potential and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- decisive;</li> <li>- persistent;</li> <li>- goal-oriented;</li> <li>- disciplined;</li> <li>- ready for leadership, with taking responsibility for solving of problems set;</li> <li>- ready to overcome obstacles and difficulties in achieving the target goal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- worrisome;</li> <li>- contradictory;</li> <li>- dependent;</li> <li>- easily affected by others;</li> <li>- cannot stand up for his/her point of view;</li> <li>- unquestionably agrees with a senior manager;</li> <li>- flaccid;</li> <li>- suspicious</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- expert assessment;</li> <li>- attestation interview;</li> <li>- observation</li> </ul>
emotional stability	ability to act effectively in difficult and critical situations, to stay calm and keep self-control, to resist negative emotional impact resulting in high psychological tension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- well-balanced;</li> <li>- correctly evaluates the events causing emotions;</li> <li>- theoretically trained in protection strategies;</li> <li>- has sense of humour;</li> <li>- reserved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hot-tempered;</li> <li>- hysterical;</li> <li>- not self-critical;</li> <li>- egoistic;</li> <li>- aggressive;</li> <li>- conflicting, dominating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- expert assessment;</li> <li>- attestation tests;</li> <li>- Eysenck emotional stability and neuroticism questionnaire - assessment techniques of stress resistance</li> </ul>

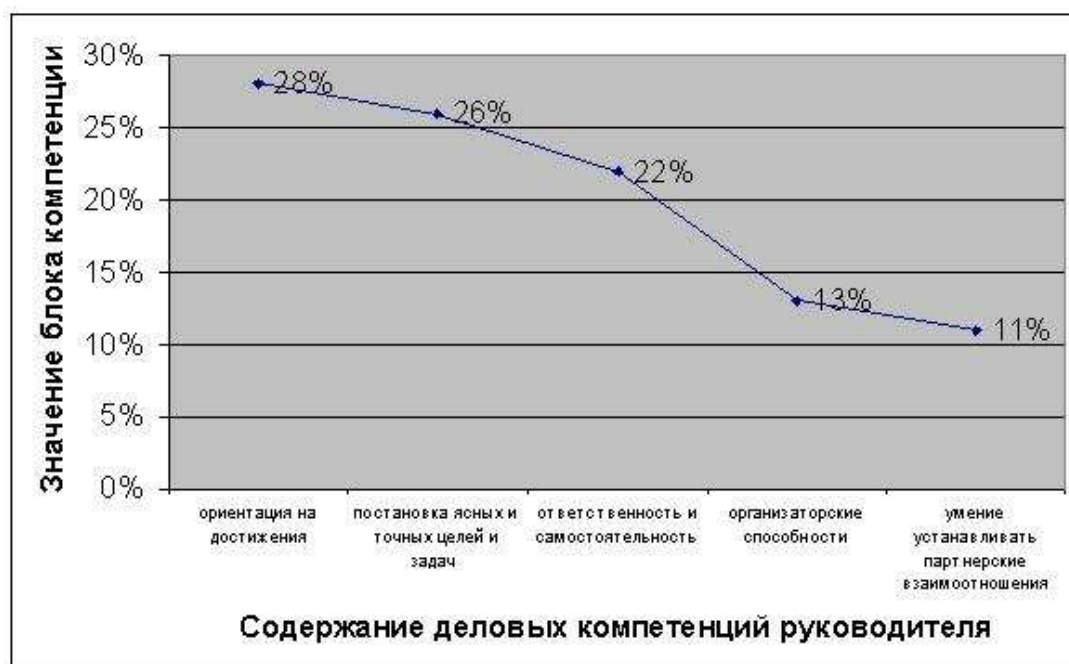
Table 2 continued				
1	2	3	4	5
well-adjusted grammatically correct speech	ability to clearly communicate thoughts both orally and in written form, to speak reasonably; flexible language and comprehensible discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- emotionally reserved though non-monotonous speech;</li> <li>- laconic;</li> <li>- catches quickly the interlocutor's point in conversation;</li> <li>- foresees further development of discourse;</li> <li>- concisely and comprehensibly lays the essence;</li> <li>- able to speak publicly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pleonastic;</li> <li>- unbalanced;</li> <li>- cannot transfer his/her considerations to conversation partners in a concise form;</li> <li>- inconsistent in his/her statements;</li> <li>- illogical, contradictory, confusing;</li> <li>- lacking self-confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- expert assessment;</li> <li>- attestation interview</li> </ul>

In the second module dealing with “business competencies” five most important competencies were identified. Among the five most important business competencies “orientation on achievements” was ranked first. Results of the second module are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 – Managerial business competency content

Module	Most important competency	Percentage share of competency significance
2. Business competencies	orientation on achievements	28%
	setting clear and precise goals and tasks	26%
	responsibility and self-sufficiency	22%
	organisational skills	13%
	ability to establish partnership relations	11%

Managerial business competencies are presented graphically in Figure 3.



**Figure 3 – Managerial business competencies content**

Detailed competencies content, their positive and negative displays, and assessment methods in a given module are provided in Table 4.

Table 4 – Key managerial competencies (in “business competencies” module)

Competency	Competency content	Positive manifestation	Negative manifestation	Assessment method
1	2	3	4	5
orientation on achievements	ability to see and to suggest a variant to improve the existing situation, readiness to take initiative to implement it, to make effort and maintain high-level activity to achieve the goals set	-energetic; -actively influences the events; -does more than formally required; -demonstrates involvement in work; -maintains working spirit in the team	- passive, holds secondary positions; -demonstrates full satisfaction with everything, does not take part in team affairs; -does not complete the work commenced; - not interested in what is going on	-expert assessment; -attestation interview; -Mehrabian questionnaire on achievement motivation

Table 4 continued				
1	2	3	4	5
setting clear and precise goals and tasks	ability to correctly and clearly lay goals and tasks for subordinate officers, to motivate them for achievement striving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- goal-oriented;</li> <li>-strong-willed;</li> <li>-decisive;</li> <li>-recognized by others;</li> <li>- helps to achieve results;</li> <li>- provides feedback to subordinate officers on their activity results;</li> <li>- energetic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- indifferent;</li> <li>- oriented only on personal interests protection;</li> <li>- skeptic;</li> <li>-does not provide information on work effectiveness of subordinate officers;</li> <li>-does not train or develop subordinate officers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-expert assessment;</li> <li>-attestation interview with situational components</li> </ul>
responsibility and self-sufficiency	ability to carry out activities based on own potential without external help; to take responsibility for decisions taken and actions performed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- self-confident;</li> <li>- able to stick to his/her word;</li> <li>-competent;</li> <li>-initiative;</li> <li>-wishing to offer own ideas to solve tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- does not get the job done;</li> <li>- easily excuses own errors and faults;</li> <li>-shifts the blame to others;</li> <li>- pretends the productive activity results of others are his/her</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-expert assessment;</li> <li>-attestation interview</li> </ul>
organisational skills	ability to stimulate people for vigorous activity, to manage them; ability to organize him/herself and the team to solve tasks, to target appropriately resources needed for plans implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- result-oriented;</li> <li>-responsible;</li> <li>-able to inspire workers to achieve goals;</li> <li>- competent;</li> <li>-able to distribute work properly using the potential of each member of the team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- irresponsible;</li> <li>- does not show interest in viewpoint of team members;</li> <li>-does not delegate powers to team members;</li> <li>-does not have required influence on others;</li> <li>-suppresses initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-expert assessment;</li> <li>-test to evaluate communicative and organizational aptitudes;</li> <li>-attestation interview</li> </ul>
ability to establish partnership relations	ability to maintain collaborative climate, to observe rules of conduct and communication in the team, to establish channels of two-way communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- corrects undesired conduct of team members;</li> <li>- able to hear others and receive feedback;</li> <li>- communicative;</li> <li>-sociable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-reserved;</li> <li>-self-assured;</li> <li>- not able to listen and to reproduce opinion of others;</li> <li>- rejects ideas of others and useful information;</li> <li>-indifferent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-expert assessment;</li> <li>-attestation interview with situational components</li> </ul>



At the stage of preparation of the required documents for attestation (attestation forms, requirements for service certificate, performance report of the attested, voting bulletins, proceedings records) an expert group will be established in Belstat to evaluate the practical performance of managerial officer attested, his/her business and personal qualities on the basis of those key competencies that were identified in the process of questionnaire survey. Based on the specified competencies, the expert group would provide an assessment of the manager: to what extent he/she showed his/her skills and abilities, to what extent he/she had the specified key competencies expressed. Evaluation can be made at five-degree scale: for main points, requirements are not met (unsatisfactory results); in principle, requirements are met (regardless of certain errors and unmet requirements, result is generally satisfactory); requirements and criteria are met in all respects (performance result is satisfactory); for most criteria expected results are surpassing (very good result); and for all competencies expected results are surpassing (excellent result). Each member of the expert group can make a comment (for example, to suggest measures to develop certain qualities, to indicate strengths and weaknesses of the person attested). In his/ her turn, the manager under assessment has the right to express own opinion on his/her development and provision of assistance in this matter.

Summarizing of attestation results at Belstat using the new assessment methods would allow to identify unutilized professional capabilities of attested persons, to compile individual plans for managers to improve those competencies that are underdeveloped, to increase work efficiency, and to identify needs for further professional development. Implementation of the new managerial assessment method during attestation would ensure reliable information on the performance results, potential, personality of a manager; it would help to draw the attention of managers to those competencies that need development, to raise motivation, and to identify relevant methods for improvement. This could be achieved through mutual work of both parties, when the level of competencies development is discussed, and developing and training measures needed for further progress are decided upon.

Therefore, questionnaire survey of personnel is an important component of human resource management, allowing for a comprehensive study of potential capabilities of personnel and identification of needs for further professional development.

**QUESTIONNAIRE****How do you treat the assessment of your performance results during attestation?****Please choose one of the suggested replies**

Reply options	Your reply (yes/no)	
	yes	no
1. If possible, I do not want my performance effectiveness to be assessed		
2. Assessment should be made, with only positive results being made public		
3. Assessment should be made, without making public of its results		
4. Assessment should be made, with making everyone informed of my strengths and weaknesses		

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO IDENTIFY KEY MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES****Please rank competencies a manager should be in a possession of**

No.	Competency a manager should be in a possession of	very important	(importance from highest to lowest)					not important
			1	2	3	4	5	
1.	<b>Personal competencies:</b>							
	reliability							
	decency							
	responsiveness							
	honesty							
	good memory							
	openness							
	emotional stability							
	attentiveness							
	devotion							
	never refusing							
	tactfulness							
	well-trained grammatically correct speech							
	sociability							
	tolerance							
	firmness							
	self-confidence							
	analytical ability							
2.	<b>Business competencies:</b>							
	skills of written and oral business communication							
	orientation on achievements							
	setting clear and precise tasks							
	ability to plan work							
	ability to motivate subordinate officers							
	persuasiveness							
	responsibility and self-reliance							
	ability to speak in public							
	initiative							
	persistence							
	flexibility							
	ability to work in team							
	organisational skills							
	ability to implement innovation in work process							
	ability to establish partnership relations							
	tolerance for criticism							
	ability to generate his/her ideas							
	innovativeness							