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## РОЛЬ МАЛОГО И СРЕДНЕГО ПРЕДПРИНИМАТЕЛЬСТВА В ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИИ КОНКУРЕНТОСПОСОБНОСТИ РОССИЙСКОЙ ЭКОНОМИКИ

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**Аннотация.** В статье рассматривается текущее состояние и тенденции развития малого и среднего предпринимательства в российской экономике. Проанализированы основные объективные и субъективные причины, вызывающие проблемы функционирования российского малого и среднего предпринимательства.

**Ключевые слова:** малое и среднее предпринимательство, экономика России конкурентоспособность, устойчивое развитие, инновации.

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The last two decades in the Russian economy can be characterized as the period of constant transformations: the 1990s witnessed the fall of the command economy and the beginning of the market economy. Alongside with the transition of the Russian economy to the market, innovation and knowledge began to increasingly gain importance as key factors for sustainable development in the global economy. Thus, the Russian economy faced the double task: to overcome the problems of the shock transition to the market economy, as well as to seek the sources for optimal transformation of the market relations of traditional or industrial type into the innovative or post-industrial one.

Overlapping of transformation processes in the national economy could not but affect the quality of its main sectors, industries and segments. In this case, negative effects in industries and sectors of the national economy which accompany any transformation were characterized by the synergy not only because of the shock scenario transition. The reason was the urgent need for accelerated integration of the Russian economy into the global economic system. At the initial stages, the process of the Russian economy

integrating into the world economic system features stochasticity, multidirectionality and determinism [1, p. 93]. The level of competitiveness of the Russian national economy was rather low.

In particular, if we consider the indicators of competitiveness of the Russian economy in the global ranking (GCI) for the past ten years, we can note that the quality of the Russian economic system has increased considerably (See Table 1 below).

It is obvious that over the past ten years the Russian economy has managed to significantly increase the level of its competitiveness in the global market. However, the national economy is sufficiently behind the leading economies such as the US, UK, Japan and Switzerland. Besides, the Russian economy is behind its partners in the BRICS intergovernmental alliance in terms of the competitiveness: in this ranking, India holds the 60th position (as of 2013–2014) and China holds the 29th position (as of 2013–2014).

The abovementioned implies that not all transitive problems of the Russian economic system accumulated during the period of transition to the market economy in the period of development of new

Table 1

**Dynamics of the rating position of the Russian economy according to the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) [4]**

Period	Rating position and total points
2004	75th position (4 points, max = 10 points)
2006	66th position (4.08 points, max = 10 points)
2012–2013	67th position (4.19 points, max = 10 points)
2013–2014	64th position (4.25 points, max = 10 points)

market relations have been solved yet. No doubt, however, the Russian economic system enjoys the sources for the further growth and has accumulated a certain potential for development taking into account the advancement of the Russian economy in the global competitiveness ranking. The quality of sources for the growth and development of the national economy can be estimated from different viewpoints. In this line, there are innovation, investment, industry and other aspects to be considered. However, most researchers agree that the basis for the competitiveness of the national economy is primarily an institutional aspect, and the greatest significance is given to the quality of the performance and development of one of the key drivers – small and medium businesses.

The importance of small and medium businesses in terms of the global social and economic development is difficult to overestimate. In particular, the key determinants of the importance of small and medium businesses abroad are as follows:

- firstly, small and medium businesses in developed countries provide 60% or more of gross domestic product;
- secondly, small and medium businesses in developed countries provide basic employment and are essential for stimulating the growth of self-employment;
- thirdly, small and medium businesses in developed countries feature high innovation activities and ability to quickly evolve into a large business.

In Russia, the situation is different in terms of the development of the institutional segment of small and medium businesses (Figure 1).

The data in Figure 1 show that the share of Russian small and medium businesses in insuring employment of the economically active population in Russia accounts to 23% and its share in producing the gross domestic product does not exceed 21%. Thus, the Russian small and medium businesses do still not

sufficiently fulfill their potential in terms of promoting the accelerated development of the national economy at present; and there are external and internal reasons for this.

Entrepreneurship is understood as initiative and creative activities aimed at creation and development of economic structures in order to meet social and economic needs, and consequently to gain profit (definition by V.S. Balabanov<sup>1</sup>).

The external reasons for the lack of activities of small and medium businesses in the Russian national economy include, first of all, insufficient institutional development of this segment. This is mainly due to several stages of transformations that the Russian economy as a whole, and the segment of small and medium businesses have passed. It is obvious that foreign small and medium businesses in developed countries, which have been developing for at least during the last century, make a greater contribution to their national economies because of the higher level of institutionalization. Russian small and medium companies are only passing the important stage of their development as a significant institution of the national economy.

The second external reason for the Russian small and medium businesses being behind foreign ones is that small and medium businesses have been recognized as an independent institutional segment in Russia only recently. In 2007, the federal law 'On the Development of Small and Medium Businesses in the Russian Federation' was adopted. Therefore, at present the legal and legislative basis of performance and development of small and medium businesses is rather weak on the one hand, and there are objectively apparent tendency to over-regulate business activities on the other hand. In particular, small and medium business structures are established and operate on the basis of regulatory documents.

It should be noted that the law enforcement practice can very often see the provision of one regulatory act contradicting the provisions of another act, and this causes the necessity to develop additional negotiating documents within the sectors or departments. Lack of harmonization of the national legislation in terms of regulation of the activities of small and medium businesses significantly hinders their development.

It can be also concluded that inadequate national legislation regulating the activities of small and medium businesses is complicated by the insufficient development of educational programs aimed at

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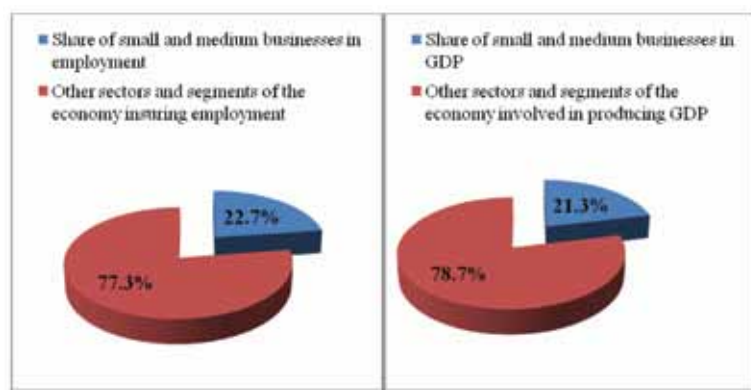


Figure 1. Share of small and medium businesses in GDP and employment (2014) [3]

training staff for this segment of the national economy and raising the professional level of the owners of small and businesses, as well as of individual entrepreneurs. It should be noted that small and medium companies are significantly different from large businesses because their management is always personalized, i.e. the owner and manager of a small or medium company are usually the same person. Given that small and medium businesses are always limited in their financial abilities, consequently they are limited in the possibility to be fully-staffed. Therefore, the owner, who is also the head, has to fulfill various official duties at the first stages of the company's development. The other employees have to do the same. However, in practice there are very few comprehensive educational programs which meet the needs of the performance and development of small and medium businesses; as an option, these programs are expensive and quite often geographically removed from those interested in them.

The scientific and newspaper articles quite often express the idea that underdevelopment of Russian small and medium businesses is determined by the lack of the state support. We consider this thesis rather disputable because the currently available measures of the state support of small and medium businesses in Russian are quite versatile and include complex solutions implemented at both the federal and regional levels. These solutions relate to both the economic and fiscal aspects, as well as organizational and institutional aspects of support for business activities of small and medium companies. However, the quality and efficiency of the performance and development of small and medium businesses under measures created remain at the same insufficient level as they were before the measures have been introduced.

The trends of legal nihilism and opportunistic behavior of small and medium businesses in the aspect of

fulfillment of their obligations to the state and society are obvious, as well underdevelopment of the institutional segment considered. Increased volumes and state support for Russian small and medium businesses are unlikely to be effective and appropriate without eliminating internal factors which limit the development of this segment of the Russian economy.

The internal reasons reducing the rate of development of small and medium companies in the Russian economy include the abovementioned legal nihilism

and opportunist behavior of these market agents. The trends of legal nihilism and opportunistic behavior cause the next reason, the general unwillingness of small and medium businesses to intensively develop under new social and economic conditions (under the innovation economy and information society).

The innovative activity of the Russian economy in general and of small and medium businesses is rather low. According to our estimates, the share of companies implementing various innovations does not exceed 9–10% of the total number of enterprises registered in Russia. The innovative activity of small and medium businesses is much lower and is approximately 4–5% of the total number of economic entities in this segment.

Due to the low innovation activities of economic entities, including the segment of small and medium businesses, firstly, the Russian economy cannot develop reserves and potential to ensure its sustainable development, and, secondly, the Russian economy is almost non-competitive in the innovation aspect. In the global innovation ranking, the Russian economy hold the 65th place only, as of 2013 [5].

Thus, at this stage we can say that small and medium businesses in the Russian economy as a special institutional segment do not develop intensively enough, giving preference to extensive development. The world practice, however, shows that small and medium companies is one of the key drivers of sustainable development of the national economy. We believe that to become a driver of the economic growth the Russian business must constantly strive to improve its level of innovation activities. The set of practical measures to develop local capacities and innovative potential of business structures includes solutions on creating performance and development potentials. The first line associated with the creation of the performance potential is a range of measures and solutions aimed at addressing the current problems,

and reducing the level of a local potential and of the company's total innovative potential. The second line related to the development potential is a series of measures and solutions aimed at qualitative renewal or transformation of the components that make up given local potential and company's total innovative potential.

Summing up it should be noted that management of the performance and development of business structures based on the innovative potential is a successive set of activities aimed at creating organizational conditions for development of the potential and its implementation (transformation into a commercially successful product or process).

This would enable to gain the desired results and effects that, according to terms of strategic management, are expressed in ensuring sustainable and competitive development of modern business structures.

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**RESEARCH**

## ROLE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE IN SECURING COMPETITIVENESS OF RUSSIA'S ECONOMY

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#### Abstract

*The article considers the current state and trends in development of small and medium businesses in Russia's economy. The authors analyze key external and internal reasons causing the problems of Russian small and medium businesses.*

**Keywords:** small and medium businesses, Russia's economy, competitiveness, sustainable development, innovations.

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