

CHANGE MANAGEMENT MECHANISM IN THE ORGANIZATION IN CRISIS CONDITIONS

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The article examines current issues related to change management in crisis conditions. The article aims to define an effective change management mechanism in crisis conditions. **Methods:** During the implementation of the research, the methods of analysis and synthesis were used, and the questionnaire method was used to survey managers of 19 enterprises. **Results:** The most common tools of the state's anti-crisis policy were determined. It is argued that the success of implementing changes in crisis conditions depends on the presence of a cohesive team in the organization. A change management mechanism in crisis conditions was introduced. The principles of change management in crisis conditions were formed, and potential methods of giving maximum consideration to the consumers' opinions in managing changes in crisis conditions are given. **Conclusions:** The research confirmed that changes provide an exit from the current crisis situation. It is shown that most organizations conduct typical changes in crisis conditions, regardless of their sphere of activity. It is well-proven that the nature of organizational changes depends on its public anti-crisis policy. Finally, the conclusion is drawn that the efficiency of managing changes during a crisis influences the organization's contact with its clients and how well it manages their queries.

Key words: changes, crisis, change management, change management mechanism

JEL codes: L20, M10, O20

INTRODUCTION

The operating environment of organizations is changing. The management of an organization has to make decisions not only in conditions of stability and predictability of the state of the internal and external environment, but also in conditions of uncertainty and crisis.

The crisis conditions of an organization's functioning should be understood as unpredictable and hard-to-forecast circumstances that can negatively affect the operational processes, the potential of resources, and the organization's performance indicators.

Crisis change management differs from traditional change management in an organization, where attention is focused on actions in crisis conditions that give a significant place to the prerequisites and consequences of a crisis event – which allows one to calculate efforts in advance and prevent a crisis. Thus, in our opinion, change management in crisis conditions should not be limited only to the organization's response in the form of immediate implementation of changes, but should also include ensuring the stability of the organization's activities and minimizing the risks of similar crisis conditions.

Characteristic features of change management in crisis conditions can be called “the need for an

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immediate reaction, lack of resources, experience, and social tension”.

The mechanism of changes in crisis conditions is related to the components of anti-crisis management and involves the analysis and adjustment of the strategy, activity goals, management tools, monitoring of the state of the enterprise, coordination, and the implementation of measures to get out of the crisis.

THEORETICAL APPROACH TO CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The actuality of the research topic is conditioned by the necessity for constant implementation of changes and the understanding that, in crisis conditions, the functioning of the organization in the future may depend on what changes will be implemented, the timeliness of the implementation of changes, and the process of realization of changes. Many authors consider the issue of management during crises in some cases. Nechayeva describes the peculiarities of making management decisions in crisis conditions [Nechayeva 2014, p. 157], and Dyadyuk gives the methodological principles of improving the management of the enterprise’s competitiveness in crisis conditions [Dyadyuk 2016, p. 103].

Frankiewicz notes that a characteristic feature of any crisis is a breakthrough, which leads to changes in the functioning of the subject. In the opinion of the author, a crisis is an unbalance that can cause both positive and negative changes in the functioning of the system [Frankiewicz 2018].

Żebrowski proves that any crisis consists of three elements: time pressure, threat, and surprise. The most common classification of threats is the classification according to the criteria of a crisis in the sphere of state security [Żebrowski 2012].

Vlados calls the condition for overcoming any global crisis to be innovation – that is, always being tied up with procedures of management changes that take place in every socio-economic structure [Vlados 2018, p. 21].

Vlados notes that change is a procedure that occurs continuously throughout the life and functioning of an organization, whether we like it or not [Vlados 2018].

The problem of change management in industrial enterprises – in the conditions of a changing external environment – is not sufficiently studied, while according to the results of research by the leading consulting company Bain & Company, since 2010, change management has been annually included in the top 10 most popular management tools – along with strategic planning, benchmarking, outsourcing, business process reengineering, etc. [Bain & Company].

Syromyanikova notes that in modern science, change management and anti-crisis management are considered separate areas of management that have their methodology and tools. According to the author, anti-crisis management is aimed at preventing and overcoming the crisis and its consequences, and change management involves managing the process of transforming the organization from its current state to the desired future. At the same time, the impetus for change is the emergence of crises, and the type of crisis determines the urgency of changes and the degree of their radicality. This, as the author notes, determines the need to consider anti-crisis management concerning the management of organizational changes [Syromyanikova 2015, p. 229].

According to O. Syromyanikova, organizational changes in the form of structural transformations are applied in the context of anti-crisis management – not only when the enterprise is in a state of deep crisis, but also when its current state can be considered as satisfied when there is a possibility of a crisis and negative changes have not yet occurred acquired an irreversible character. At the same time, the sooner the threat of a crisis situation is detected, the wider the choice of anti-crisis procedures – in particular, methods and means of restructuring. [Syromyanikova 2015, p. 229]. Interpretations of the authors show that the crisis is a catalyst that causes changes in the organization. A choice of the way out of the crisis will depend on whether or not there is an effective change management mechanism.

Z. Dobrowolski calls the formulation of goals at all levels an important management stage in crisis conditions. According to Dobrowolski, three variables affect the organization’s productivity in each of its areas. They show the ways of entry through which goals of the organization are achieved, the way of designing

active connections and methods of management in an organization can influence three levels of performance: organizational level, process level, and level workplace level [Dobrowolski 2020, p. 805].

The given interpretations of the authors show that a crisis is a catalyst that causes changes. The way out of the crisis will depend on whether there is an effective change management mechanism.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The first step of the research is a literature review. The literature analysis was carried out to identify key issues, determine an effective change management mechanism in crisis conditions, and describe management functions and methods. A mixed systematic review of the relevant literature is presented based on recent research articles published in high-profile academic journals that capture how organizations can manage crisis-induced change.

The second step is a systemic analysis to determine the state's anti-crisis policy for businesses operating in crisis conditions.

The third step was to find out the most common directions of change management in crisis conditions at enterprises with the help of sociological research methods. During the research, the methods of analysis and synthesis were used, and the managers of 19 enterprises were covered. For the completeness of the research and the identification of the most typical changes in the conditions of the crisis, the survey was conducted at enterprises of various spheres of the national economy: industry, construction, agriculture, trade, transport, and tourism.

Forty-nine senior and middle managers from 19 enterprises of Lviv and Ternopil (Ukraine) took part in the survey: industry (2 enterprises), construction (4), agriculture (3), trade (5), transport (2), and tourism (3). The main question was about the essence of the changes that must be made during crises. Managers gave different answers. The greatest repetition of responses regarding changes that occurred during the crisis was recorded. As a result of the survey, the number of managers' responses regarding changes implemented at the enterprise of a specific sector of the national economy was recorded. Thus, the most char-

acteristic changes carried out by enterprises of various spheres of the national economy in the conditions of the crisis were determined.

RESULTS

In times of crisis, organizations are forced to make changes to maintain the necessary course of processes and ensure specific indicators. The essence of the changes depends on several factors, in particular: the field of activity, the financial state of the enterprise, the situation that arose in the foreign and domestic markets, the style of management, the presence of a team, experience in implementing changes, resource provision, and state support.

Despite the multitude of possible changes in the organization of various directions, certain changes in crisis conditions are typical:

- cost optimization;
- reducing the number of personnel;
- attraction of credit funds;
- search for investors;
- reducing the amount of delegated tasks and powers;
- adjustment of the range of products, goods, and names of services;
- equipment modernization;
- reengineering of business processes;
- strengthening of advertising activity;
- association of structural subdivisions;
- closing of certain directions of activity;
- activation of attention to customer requests.

Changes in the organization and its direction are influenced by state policy. In particular, the state can use certain tools to regulate socio-economic processes and support certain spheres of the economy. Anti-crisis management is the most important part of the state's national security. Anti-crisis state business policy covers a complex of mechanisms in various directions [Frankiewicz 2016]. Among them, we can single out the most effective and widespread ones in Ukraine and other European countries (Fig. 1).

Such anti-crisis mechanisms of the state include credit policy, grant support, optimization of the number of permits for business, digitization of services, reduction of the tax burden, stimulation of pop-

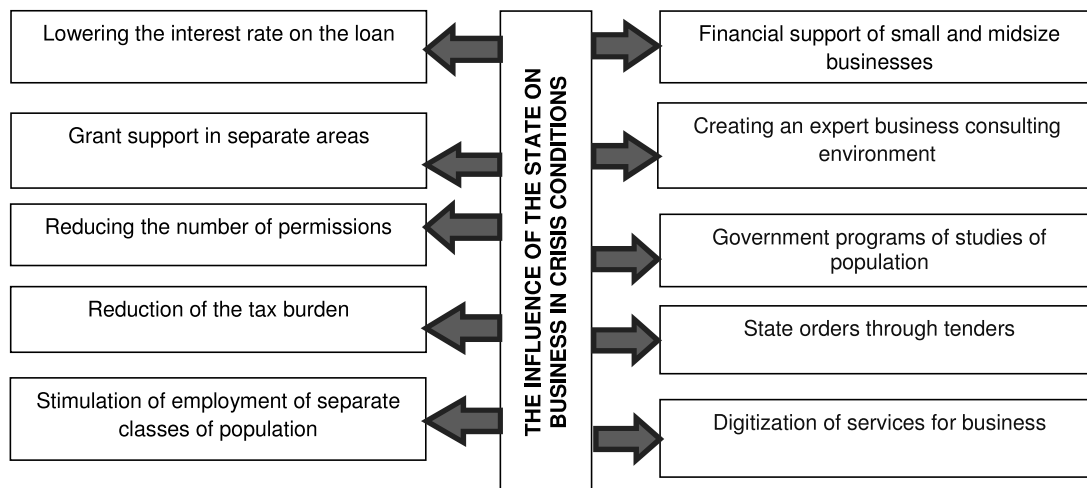


Fig. 1. Mechanisms of state influence on business in crisis conditions
Source: own elaboration based on [Frankiewicz 2018, Narimanov 2022].

ulation employment, financial support of small- and medium-sized businesses, the formation of an expert business consulting environment, training and retraining programs of the population at the state levels, state support through tender offers, and automatic receipt of services for business.

One of the effective mechanisms of the state's influence on business in crisis conditions is the attraction and use of international and foreign funds to implement changes. Interaction with funds and programs requires a professional approach. It should be noted that Poland, which – before the war in Ukraine – was the EU leader in attracting European subsidies per capita (more than 20,000 experts are working with European funds and programs). The expert environment provides high-quality business advice that contributes to the attraction of European money to Poland. Therefore, the emergence of consulting firms in various fields and businesses turning to them during a crisis is quite relevant.

Also, to stimulate the development of particular areas, the state provides grants at the expense of state funds and various grant programs. Thus, during the crisis period in 2022, a significant number of grant programs in agriculture were operating in Ukraine. In Poland, grant programs have been announced for 2021–2027 for the implementation of environmental, energy, and transport projects – as well as for support

in the field of culture and ensuring the sustainability of the healthcare system.

Activating those willing to open a state enterprise during the crisis is realized by reducing the number of permits, reducing the tax burden, and digitizing business services.

The state can also stimulate the employment of specific categories of the population by partially exempting the employer from paying taxes or compensating them for certain expenses. The state can provide businesses with certain projects for implementation by issuing tenders. The main characteristic of such tenders is transparency and accessibility to all participants that meet the requirements, which is determined by the possibility of obtaining free and unhindered all reliable information about tender offers of the state in a specific region in online mode on the electronic platform Prozorro (Ukraine).

State order promotes the appearance of workers of a certain profession on the market. Free second professional education for the population became one of the options during the crisis (military operations) in Ukraine.

Such an anti-crisis policy (of the state) indicates that the business will introduce changes based on the existing situation and the proposals that are valid for it.

Table 1 shows the results of a survey of the management of enterprises in the industry, construction,

Table 1. The results of questioning the leadership of enterprises of different spheres of activity are in relation to changes that were introduced in the conditions of crisis*

Changes	Amount of answers					
	industry	building	agricul- ture	trade	transport	tourism
Reduction to the quantity of personnel, underemployment	5	10	9	13	4	8
Attracting credit funds, searching for investors	5	7	6	9	2	5
Cost optimization	5	10	9	13	4	8
Reengineering of business processes	3	5	5	8	2	4
Closing of certain directions of activity	1	3	4	11	1	6
Activation of attention to customer requests	3	8	6	10	3	8
Adjustment of the range of products, goods, works, and services	4	8	7	10	2	8
Association of structural subdivisions	1	2	2	5	1	1
Strengthening of advertising activities	4	8	7	12	4	8
Modernization of equipment	1	4	3	7	1	3
Reduction to the volume of tasks and plenary powers that is delegated	2	4	4	6	1	2
Reduction to the quantity of personnel, underemployment	2	6	2	4	1	3
Attracting credit funds, searching for investors	1	7	4	5	1	1
Search for new sources of supply	2	4	3	8	1	7

Source: own development of the authors

agriculture, trade, transport, and tourism regarding the changes implemented in the crisis conditions for the period of 2020–2022, which is the period of pandemic COVID-19 and military operations. Therefore, this period can be called a “crisis period”. Of course, the changes are differentiated according to the field of the organization’s activity, but typical changes in crisis conditions can be traced.

The majority of respondents noted that the changes during the crisis included: a reduction in the number of employees, part-time employment, attracting credit funds, searching for investors, optimizing costs, adjusting the range of products, goods, works and services, and intensifying advertising activities.

Most organizations implement changes only at the crisis stage of the development of the situation, choosing a strategy of waiting. The main reason for this is

the inability to react quickly to the situation, the lack of a forecast of the course of change, and unpreparedness for change. In our opinion, change management [in the organization] should be started at the pre-crisis stage, which can be characterized as prevention management [Nechaieva 2019]. In the chronology of a crisis situation, the period between the warning signals and the beginning of the disaster is called the “planning of changes to avoid (partial or complete) a potential crisis situation”. Thus, a crisis plan can be formed with the determination of the necessary changes.

Effective management of changes in crisis conditions contributes to the prevention of a crisis, ensures the use of the opportunities of a crisis, minimizes the impact and size of the crisis, and contributes to the quick and effective neutralizing of the consequences of the crisis. Solving each of the tasks mentioned above

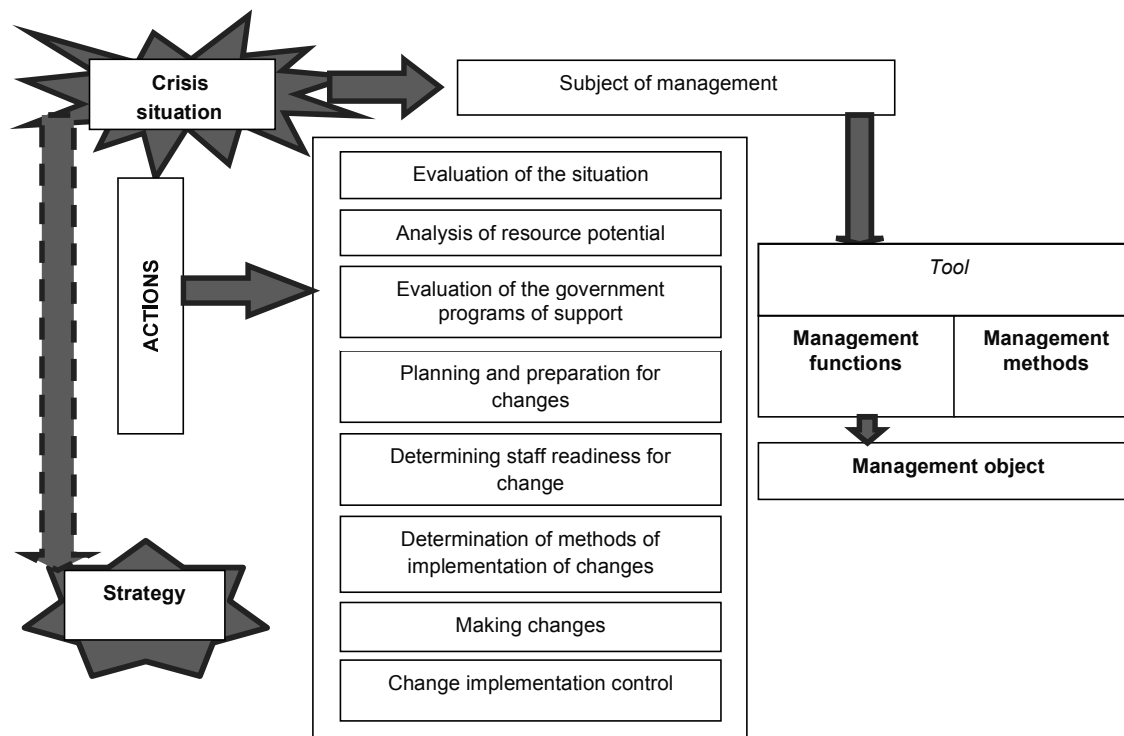


Fig. 2. Change management mechanism in crisis conditions
Source: own elaboration based on [Dyadyuk 2016].

requires implementing changes adequate to the crisis.

The mechanism of change management in crisis conditions includes organizational, technical, and social components (Fig. 2).

The mechanism of change management in crisis conditions involves the influence of the subject (on the object) using several specific tools and the performance of mandatory actions related to the assessment of the situation, analysis of resource potential, assessment of state and other support programs, planning and preparation for changes, determination of staff readiness for changes, determination of methods of implementation of changes, implementation of changes, and control of implementation of changes.

Subjects of change management in an organization in crisis are owners, shareholders, managers, staff, potential investors, and customers. Clients should also play a significant role in managing changes in crisis conditions.

Objects are processes that occur in the external environment of the functioning of enterprises and their

impact on the system of production and economic activity in a certain time period at the micro, meso, and macro levels.

Components of the change management mechanism in crisis conditions are functions (general and specific) that have an important practical role as they determine the organizational structure of the specific type of management.

General management functions that can be considered essential for the successful functioning of any organization and that are present at all levels of its integration (i.e., planning, marketing, entrepreneurship, finance, organization, innovation, information and social development, motivation and control), as well as have specific management functions defined by the subject of change management in crisis conditions, include [Dyadyuk 2016]:

- ensuring managers focus on sustainable development;
- monitoring the characteristics of environmental changes;

- management of personnel development in the direction of realizing the organization's goals;
- formation of a strategy for the sustainability of the organization's development;
- coordination of basic functions in the field of development sustainability parameters;
- formation and regulation of the technical and technological basis;
- orientation of internal communications on the sustainability of the change management process;
- formation and regulation of a leadership style focused on change management.

In addition to functions, the following groups of methods are important elements of the change management mechanism in crisis conditions: studying the object, justification and adoption of management decisions, analysis, forecasting and diagnosis of economic processes, management, preventive nature, collection and analysis of primary information, oriented to tasks and technologies, culture- and people-oriented, and strategy-oriented.

Change always comes with resistance. Even in times of crisis, there is also resistance to change – which is connected with the awareness of the need for changes to get out of the crisis.

Resistance to change is due to several reasons; the main ones, in our opinion, are related to lack of experience in implementing similar changes, the presence of other activity goals, the possible need for additional time expenditure, the inability to form an effective team to implement changes, staff's fear of losing their position, earnings or place of work, or incomplete information about the planned changes.

To minimize resistance to change, you need to focus, first of all, on the company's management and then on its staff. The main motivating factors for implementing changes in crisis conditions for management are: the possibility of preventing significant losses, retention of position or status, stopping a repetition of crisis, and retention or attraction of customers.

An important aspect of implementing change in an organization is having a team working on a change process. A team is a collection of cohesive, purposeful, goal-oriented people who can complement each other, collectively make management decisions, and work to solve economic situations jointly [Fedynets 2022].

Implementation of individual projects and solving certain tasks, especially in crisis conditions, determine the situation of functioning in the organization of temporary teams. A crisis manager must be included in the change team working on a change process. However, most companies do not have such a position.

If the manager wants to form a high-level team, the following criteria must be taken into account [Fedynets 2022]:

- the presence of a leader in the team;
- each team member performs a specific role;
- effective communication between team members;
- readiness of each team member for mutual assistance;
- each team member's sense of their importance;
- orientation of each team member towards continuous professional and personal improvement;
- availability of conditions for team development;
- giving importance to team decisions;
- sufficient autonomy of the team and its members;
- the team's ability to self-organize;
- initiative of the team in generating ideas;
- creation of conditions for rest and recharging of each team member.

Change management in crisis conditions must comply with certain principles. First of all, these are universal (general) principles of management and principles operating in crisis conditions. General management principles are the basis for determining the principles of change management in crisis conditions.

Żebrowski emphasizes that in crisis management, it is also advisable to consider the principle of adequacy. The author distinguishes the crisis levels and notes that, first of all, it is advisable to manage changes in a crisis at the lowest level – in the organization [Żebrowski 2012, p. 42]. Therefore, the following principles of change management in crisis conditions can be distinguished:

- clear formulation of change goals (understanding of change goals by management and their unambiguous and complete formulation contributes to effective change planning and minimization of staff resistance);
- division of labor (presupposes the definition and distribution of shift participants, as well as tasks between them);

- distribution of powers (powers are also needed to implement tasks during changes);
 - limited participation (the involvement of the number of participants in the change process depends on the type of changes and dynamics; transformational changes affect several parts of the organization and organizations aimed at fundamental transformation, and transactional changes have a limited organizational scope and do not fundamentally change anything);
 - planning (it is necessary to have an adaptation plan for making changes to get out of the crisis);
 - discipline (observance of certain rules of behavior in the organization during the implementation of changes);
 - uniformity of management (presupposes compliance with the most optimal method of change management in a certain crisis situation);
 - staff stability (the presence of permanent personnel during a crisis facilitates more effective planning and implementation of changes);
 - teamwork (effective implementation of changes requires a team with a high degree of cohesion and executive performance);
 - accountability (responsibility for the management of changes regarding exit from the crisis of the manager to subordinates, the organization in general to customers);
 - hierarchies (there is a presence of a clear organizational structure of management ticker-coil);
 - universality (presupposes the participation of all change management subjects in anti-crisis measures);
 - a functional approach (presence of an established list of functions necessary for implementation in the process of changes);
 - subordinating personal interests with general ones (presupposes the priority of general collective interests over individual ones, which is extremely necessary in crisis conditions);
 - flexibility of the organizational structure (the organizational structure of the enterprise must be quickly adaptable to changes);
 - readiness for resistance to changes (understanding that any changes are accompanied by resistance and require preventive actions);
 - fixing of changes (changes complete at the complete or partial achievement of results that needs to be fixed and use as experience in the future).
- In our opinion, informatization and socialization has affected the relationship between the client and the business. The value of the client (for the organization) has increased not only in matters of forming the assortment of products, goods and services, but also in the organization of operational processes and the implementation of changes. Business, understanding the client as a vital factor of existence, takes into account their opinion. In a crisis environment, change management – in our opinion – is a process in which the client should be an important element. In addition, the relevance of such a modern method of change management as crowdsourcing has long been proven. Crowdsourcing is the transfer of certain production functions to an undefined circle of persons to obtain the necessary ideas and services, oriented mainly to the internet community while coordinating its activities with the help of information technologies. Crowdsourcing is a way of involving the “collective mind” of various individuals in solving the organization’s problem and productively achieving its goals [Ruda 2017].

CONCLUSION

Therefore, in our opinion, an effective change management mechanism in crisis conditions should be based on the maximum possible consideration of the consumer’s opinion. Potential ways of implementing the mentioned measures can be:

- availability of a blog for communicating with clients on the organization's website;
- participating in associations in social networks for the discussion of certain problems;
- comments in relation to the discussion of certain problems on state websites.

The ways adopted above can be the direction of further research.

In general, it should be noted that change management is a complex process – the effectiveness of which depends on many factors. Changes carried out in a crisis are often operational, as they must be carried out in a time-constrained environment.

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MECHANIZM ZARZĄDZANIA ZMIANĄ W ORGANIZACJI W WARUNKACH KRYZYSU

STRESZCZENIE

Cel: W artykule dokonano analizy aktualnych zagadnień związanych z zarządzaniem zmianą w warunkach kryzysowych. Celem artykułu było zdefiniowanie skutecznego mechanizmu zarządzania zmianą w warunkach kryzysowych. **Metody:** Podczas realizacji badań wykorzystano metody analizy i syntezy, badania przeprowadzono wśród menedżerów 19 przedsiębiorstw. **Wyniki:** Ustalono najczęstsze narzędzia polityki antykryzysowej państwa. Sukces wdrożenia zmian w warunkach kryzysowych zależy od obecności zespołu w organizacji. Wprowadzono mechanizm zarządzania zmianą w warunkach kryzysowych, co doprowadziło do powstania zasad zarządzania zmianą w warunkach kryzysowych. Podano ustalone potencjalnie możliwe sposoby maksymalnego uwzględnienia opinii konsumenta w zarządzaniu zmianami w warunkach kryzysowych. **Wnioski:** Podczas badań ustalono, że metodą wyjścia z kryzysu jest dokonanie zmian. Większość organizacji w warunkach kryzysu, niezależnie od sfery działalności, dokonuje typowych zmian. Udowodniono, że istota zmian w organizacji zależy od publicznej polityki antykryzysowej. Badania pozwoliły wyciągnąć wnioski, że na sprawność zarządzania zmianami w warunkach kryzysowych wpływają: kontakt organizacji z klientami i uwzględnianie ich zapytań.

Słowa kluczowe: komplementarność, dwustronne stosunki handlowe, polsko-ukraińska współpraca handlowa, partnerstwo strategiczne, przewagi komparatywne, konkurencyjność