

Beyond The Dark Portal

by Alex Vert



Russian Local Election (RLE) makes aboriginals be afraid of the local policy. Northern People are used to treating it as very dangerous and difficult. It blocks people's free will and that is a real dark side of the Russian politics

The main problem of the Russian progress in the XXI century is decay of the local state management.

People living in the Russian North can't promote themselves to the local government and parliament.

Why cannot they? The aboriginal leaders do think politics to be blocked for "un-rich & unpretentious" people. Their being in political life is less than I can possibly say.

But I ought to write about these actual problems.

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The main damages of RLE

What about damage

Talking about local political problems in Russia I would say not “problems” but “damages”. The more distance is between people and politicians the more damages destroy policy here. Some guys have never imagined how the politics influence their business decision. Working in the Russian North we always depend on regional administration, laws and the social system, which determines our life. The Russia is known to be a socially changeable country.

During XX century we saw great political changes in Russia. We’ve passed the Tsar Empire, the communism and the socialism. And now we are living in the capitalist age. Our being in market economy is less successful than in Western Europe.

That’s the challenge... to be a country with rich history, unique peoples and very problematic political system. But now we have a chance to change our ‘political being’ especially in the Russian North. We ought to help aboriginals’ leaders to promote themselves to local governments and parliaments. That’s why I am writing about blocked free-will and call it ‘damages of RLE’.

The Damage #1. Indoor political activity

A kitchen is the most popular political meeting place for Russians. Life circumstances make Russians be careful and apprehensive. Moreover memories about political repression have been living here. Dwellers prefer referring to politics as “dirty deal” but not good one. To talk about it is better than to do it. Activities, meetings, marches etc. need power, time and health.

Besides Russians need money more than anything else. Small wages and unemployment are the biggest problems of our being. Intelligent youth chooses economical sector. They have not any time to do politics. Their being in business is more successful than politics.

And what about their parents? Old Russians don’t believe politicians. Members of parliament and officers seem to be crook men. They are talking every time and everywhere, declaring human values. But it usually means desire for money and power. Knowing it people try to be far from politics. That’s why they prefer to talk about it at the kitchen.

Fact only

Politics and stupid idealism

Once upon a time I worked in the Archangel region election. It was the first democracy election. Our being in political campaign was extremely interesting. I worked in the team and we didn’t care about money, thinking about social achievement only. We were young idealists. But people we saw were far from ideals and politics. We told them, ‘How can you be so indifferent to future? You’d go to the polling-station for making your free-will’ But they didn’t. “We are far from policy. We would prefer to chat about politicians at the kitchen”, they said.

The real story: I love my family more than politics

My fellow Artem has never promoted himself in political topics. “I think it is so imprudence”, he tells me, “I don’t want see my posters at the street. I know my enemy to show me like gay-boy or gigolo lying into the bed with girl friends. I do worry about my family and children. I love them more than I want to be a politician’.

The Damage #2. Shortage of ambition

Another big free-will damage is a shortage of ambition. Traditionally only 5-7 percents of the population are active. Western governors find a way to develop peoples' activity involving them into small businesses, political and social organizations. But trivial Russian corruption and blocked legality prevent to develop political activity of people.

For decades political and social obstacles make personal activity of Russians as impossibly as can be. But now some aboriginal leaders comprehend importance of the political promotion. There is one more problem, the problem calls "shortage of knowledge". Some guys try to involve themselves into the politics but they don't know the way.

Political advertisement in Russia becomes more expensive than we can possibly say. The perfect knowledge is known to be the only way to win on the election. The aboriginal leaders should study and get experience in politics. Our practice makes us more successful and effective.

Fact only

The Granny's voting

The local St. Petersburg election-2002 is known to be the oldest voters act. So 60 percents of voters were older than 50. Moreover 64 percents of voters were female. The biggest problem of the St. Pete's voting was real young men being passive (8,2% of voters). Youth ignored local election preferring another deals. Their outdoor activity includes music and clubbing but not politics. Unfortunately young people didn't think about theirs future creating the biggest problem of the local electoral.

The real story: 'I hate politicians'

Once I told to local social activists. They told me about theirs problems for 30 minutes but I couldn't understand what they did do. They said about communal infrastructure destroy, criminal & corruption usurping but there weren't any words about theirs political activity. I had to remark to the speaker: "Where is your political activity? You do promote yourself to the local government to help people living in this town, don't you?" And I was shocked by the activist's answer: "Should I go to the government? NEVER! I hate politicians more than I can possibly say! All of them are stupid idiots having a lot of money. But the only way to keep up our communal problems is "entreaty" to authorities. Maybe they help us..."

The Damage #3. Sexism blocks

Russian ladies are known to be active and independent. But now we have to refer it to be possibly in past. The sexism is spreading invisibly all our life. Russian corporations try to hire a man not a woman. The higher wages are there the more he-men are there. I prefer to consider these matters as to be the main problem of Russian society.

The sexism situation in politics is similar. There are many he-men politicians but it is not the same for women. That is a result of the old prejudice like "ladies as active as authorities wish".

Fact only

Ladies against ladies: who is the winner?

More than 60% of voters are women. But only 5-10% of politicians in the Russia are women. What has happened? Some ladies go to the polling-station to make a favorite choice thinking, "The man is the best". They would like to see politicians as supermen. "What can we do in political field? – Women ask – The politician lady is a mad lady. It's abnormality".

The real story: Heart to heart

The Russia makes a choice by the heart. This is a basic truth of the Russian nature. Knowing it you comprehend the matter of political and economical processes. The Russian President Election-1996 (Mr. Eltsyn) was known to be an example of the "Heart believing vote". Every time and everywhere it was declared by posters and broadcasting. The more sensitive the advertising was the less comprehensible it was. People living in poverty and workless forgot injury and came to the polling station to elect Mr. Eltsyn. It was the Great Russian sensitive testing.

The main Damages of RLE

Factors of the Russian policy

INSIDE FACTORS

Voter's psychology

Indoor activity

Trivial passivity

Shortage of ambition

Shortage of knowledge

OFFSIDE FACTORS

Russian political & economical system

Sexism blocks

Crime usurping

Corruption capturing

“Rich man attack”

Blocked free-will

The Damage #4. Corruption capturing

Let's move up to the most interesting damages of RLE. The above damages concern human factors of voters. The following topics will concern the global Russian political specifics like corruption, crime and “rich man attack”.

Traveling Russian regions you can notice strange attitude towards local governors. Some guys call chiefs of local administrations like “Big Papa”. There is original system of relation between businessmen and the head of administration. The system works, the system calls “You'll do one for Papa, He'll do one for you”. It's so funny but it's not a joke.

Russian calls it “The resource of administration”. I'll try to explain it. For example, you are a perspective aboriginal leader and you want to be a deputy of the local parliament. But you should know that local governor has his own plan for it. His son could promote himself to the regional parliament to ensure own future. And you will be on the way of his son.

So, and what would head of local administration do in this case? He is unlikely to say, “You are welcome!” He is possibly to make barriers to you. For example he could forbid officers to vote for you. They should do the way the chief said. But if you want to strike up a friendship with local governor you must find a way to do something for him. He will appreciate you. That is the only way to keep up your business.

Fact only

30 billion dollars can buy all of us

On January 2003, The New York Times published the article about Russian corruption. The experts said the Russia to be a greatest corruption country with 33 billion dollars net corruption volume. Readers were really shocked.

The real story: Your Majesty! My General! My chief!

My friend Vasily is on the way to be a member of Russian State Duma. Firstly he addressed the head of the region administration where Vasily's voting area was placed. “I'd go to local governor to request the permission to be a member of the Russian Parliament. It's very important”, he said, “I couldn't elect without the head's permission. Otherwise he makes me such difficulties”

The Damage #5. Rich man attack

The most important businessmen promote themselves to the Russian state, local parliaments and governments. Having a lot of money they prepare a nation-wide advertising campaign. Top capitalists engage the best specialists to make his advertising campaign as effective as could be. And they certainly win.

I think “the rich man attack” is fewer problems than crime usurping. The criminal authorities get both political posts and indulgence from the law. But the federal political posts are limited and crime authorities are going to small towns and countryside polling areas. They have a lot of money and will to win.

Fact only

Top capitalist becomes the deer-breeder

In 2000 the election in the Chukotka region was completed (the Russian Far North-East). Taking 90 percents of vote rate Roman Abramovich won an election. This person was the biggest Russian businessman and the owner of “Sibneft” (the Siberian oil corporation), “Russky Aluminy” (the Russian Aluminum Inc.) and “Airflot” (the largest aircraft corporation in the Russia). Moreover he was the deputy of Russian State Parliament (1999-2000). After the Chukotka win an election Roman Abramovich is known to be “the first capitalist becomes the deer-breeder”. In 2002 another businessman won an election in Krasnoyarsk.

The real story: My by-working is a politician

One of the deputies of St. Petersburg City Parliament is known to be a crime authority. His election victory was a real surprise for experts. But there wasn't any objection. By the way criminal persons bring their activity to the local election.

And what should we do?

We need to act. We need to help each other making our land better. We are able to change our reality to achieve the world-advanced standard being in politics. This is real new thinking of XXI century.

I worked in election in various Russian regions. I helped to promote local leaders in European North (Archangel, Vologda, Pskow), Far East (Yakutia) and the central Russia (Penza). Wherever I worked I did my best to make honest advertising campaign. More than 80% of my partners won an election. I had usually seen difficult situation but I had never called for help crime authorities. I had never used corruption.

I see the aboriginals' leaders have won an election to prove the perspectives of free-will in the Russia. I believe well-educated intelligent people wished to change there being and political reality.

The system of aboriginals' leaders promotion will be observed in the next part of my article – “The greatest challenges of RLE”.

The greatest challenges of RLE

What about challenge

In the first part of the article I covered damages of RLE, making people free-will blocked. But nevertheless we should not only talk but also make something to change our reality and political situation in Russia. The only way to do is practice. Having wide experience of political action and electoral campaign I ought to tell our leaders about advantages of well-made political activities. It helps aboriginals' leaders to take part in politics in their land.

But I have to warn you of difficulties of these deals. There are real challenges of RLE. Starting of your political campaign in Russian regions you should accept some rules and traditions of political behavior in our country. It makes your choice more difficult than you can possibly think. Thought I know you are on the way.

The Challenge #1. Composing political team

Coming to any PR & advertising agency in Moscow you are said you will be the deputy, mayor or (maybe) The President. There is the only thing you should certainly remember about: the money (see price list in the Fact Only appendix).

It is comprehensible to make political campaign in a team. United leaders are able to make their activities more effective and inexpensive. I covered it in 1996 when I took part in political campaign in Archangel (Russian North). We established new political and social organization. The name of that was "My comfortable city". We united progressive activists who were anxious about city development.

Election took place in 10 areas, and every voting area elected 3 deputies of city parliament. It should be 30 deputies of Archangel city parliament. "My comfortable city" united 30 candidates who were men and women (fifty-fifty). They were known as teachers, architects, doctors of medicine etc. They were known as activists of city development.

It was hard time. There wasn't much money; there was a lot of enthusiasm and power to win. We made well-organized political promotion system, being full of control and activities. "My comfortable city" published more than 30 papers to inform voters and prepared more than 45 political promotion activities. Common experience and upgrading knowledge gave us necessary basis to reach success. Political cooperation was the only way to win and we did it perfectly. 12 of 30 candidates won. That was a great result of fierce election campaign.

Fact only

Price list of RLE

In order to do a political campaign you should be ready for financing, according the level of election:

The Russian State Duma election (one-voting area) – about \$500.000;

The City Mayor election (in the large city) – about \$300.000;

... In middle city – about \$200.000;

The Town Mayor election – about \$100.000;

City parliament election (one-voting area) – about \$30.000;

Regional parliament election (one-voting area) – about \$50.000

Rules leading to success: Making up a team

To make the team as effective as possible it should include people who:

- Do feel themselves as politicians;
- Do plan future in politics not business;
- Are ready to work in the team, making themselves coordinated;
- Do become the leader of team and of local policy;
- Do understand politics to be difficult and dangerous deal at least.

The Challenge #2. Facts and Dreams are the best

Traditionally candidates use various ways of political promotion such as propaganda booklets, papers and posters. But sometimes candidates don't get well-made political promotion. Why cannot they do successful political campaign? They are writing about themselves as industrials, businessmen or political leaders but not as honest and affable men. But I think leader's correct presentation is a most important.

Do you remember my little chapter "The Heart believing Voting" from the part one? Working in Russia you certainly know magic power of warm hearting and sensuality. That's why you should write article and interview as heartedness as possible. Don't make it boring and biting.

There is shortage of hope and happiness in Russia. Political leader should install hope to voter's hearts. He must be a "Knight of the best future", and voters will elect him to local government or parliament. You can tell me it is so naïve and simple to understand. But I do think that's right.

Perspective political leader becomes a creator of stable future and hope. Russians used to believe in the best future. Sometimes that's wrong, but sometimes that's right I think. Our traditional belief in future makes us sensitive and gentle. At the same time you shouldn't be a clown, making razzle-dazzle or fling-flanges in the face of voters. That impolite act makes you political promotion as bad as possible. Some incorrect ways of public relation, such as "boring propaganda" or "razzle-dazzle", result deep fiasco of your political leadership. That's why I call rash-made newspaper "propaganda sheet" or "pulp fiction". I have never recommended doing it for my friends.

Fact only

Preferring a pulp fiction

Experts cover the law-governed nature of favorite kind of advertisement. For example:

- About 20-25% prefer making large posters at the street walls;
- About 30-35% prefer making commercial at the TV or radio;
- About 40% prefer writing articles to publish in newspapers.

Rules leading to success: Composing information

Give facts only. Use nouns and verbs; don't use a lot of adjectives and adverbs.

Give dreams about the best future. Show your voters as much perspectives as possible.

Show yourself as a model of life. People living in your polling area interested in your personality not in your function and management practice.

The Challenge #3. New thinking about newspaper

For decades newspapers have been lead in informational sphere. Especially it happens in political promotion field, making them point of information wars. Year by year papers provide a victory. In the XXI century web technologies become new leader of information field. Western country involve hi-tech in election, giving people a possibility of voting by e-mail.

Moreover, the biggest part of voters are used to communicate in Internet and used to read information in computers. At the same time observing Russian political practice we have to note: papers remain the biggest source of information besides TV. But TV is too expensive for local political leaders. And we would like to note papers ensure success an election. Hi-tech and new printing technologies make newspaper more effective than I can possibly say.

To make paper successful you should know some details of that business. For example, you could prepare a "newspaper serial", consisting of three issues. In the first issue political leader introduces himself to his voters. I made similar papers in Russian North for election in 1996, 1998 and 2000.

A content of the second issue is a discussion about local economical and social problems. A political leader ought to know all ways to develop the region in the XXI century and to protect people living here from social cataclysms.

The last issue of political promotion newspaper is held in sensation. New political leader speaks about up-to-date political events and show voters some secret information about political being in the region. It must be a sensation to draw peoples' attention to the electoral eve.

There is timetable of publishing those papers. The first issue is likely to be distributed up to four till three weeks before electoral day. The second issue must be distributed about two weeks before election. The last issue is to be distributed up to 7 till 2 days before voting at least.

Fact only

Papers keep up their efficiency

By 2002 parliament election in Yakutia (Russian Far East) had been completed. I worked in the team, promoting some of the local political leaders from west and central Yakutia the "Il Tumen" (parliament). 8 of 10 candidates using papers won an election. We provided 80-percents efficiency of paper as political promotion method.

Rules leading to success: Structure of paper

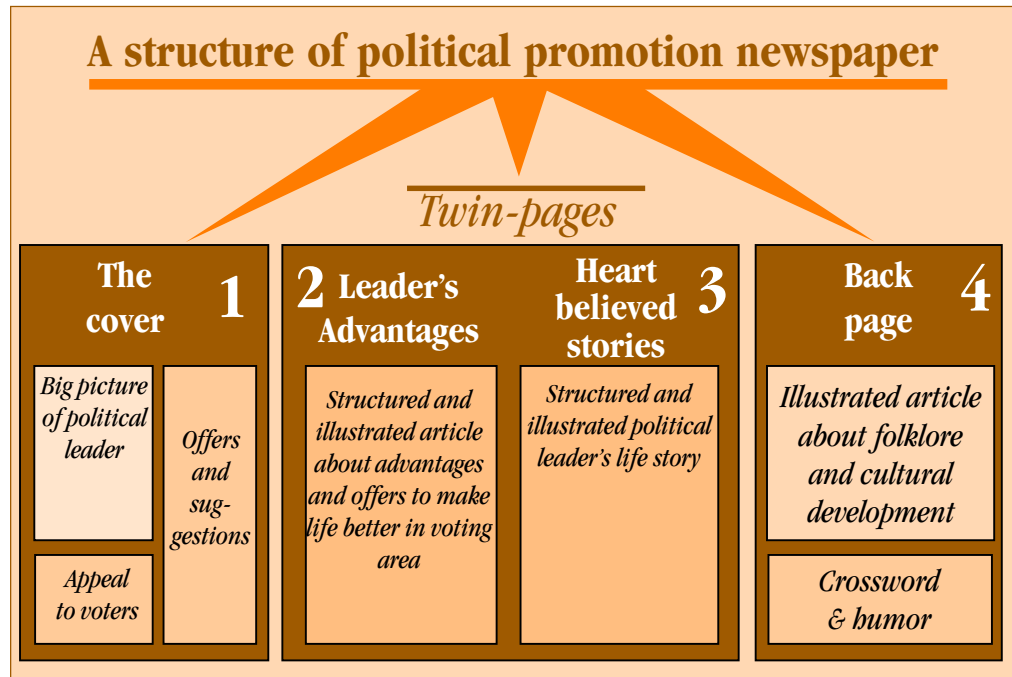
There is arranged structure of electoral newspaper. For example, preparing 4-pages A3 (tabloid) paper you should know:

The first page is a cover. Place on the 1st page large picture of promoted political leader. He should look smiling and friendly. On the lower half of the page he should place an appeal to voters to help them make a choice. The shorter positive facts on the right column are the better paper is.

The second page is being made for positive offers. Political leader should write about his economy and social advantages. He proposes a course of action to make social system in his vote area better. The more facts and constructive suggestions are there, the better a paper is for reading.

The third page is a story about political leader. You do remember Russian specifics of the voting. Political leader should be not official but "hearty" for his voters. He is likely to be a good man, having family values, good reputation, famous parents etc. The closer he will be to his voters the better they will be thinking about him.

The fourth page is being made for a culture and relaxing. There are many culture values on the last page. Political leader should present himself as an expert in folk music, culture projects etc. He should know folk songs and stories.



The Challenge #4. Explore broadcasting

What do we usually see during political campaign on TV? Federal TV-channels make up-to-date TV shows and live reporting. By the way local TV-channels don't try to create original programs, making "single speaker show". A boring man is talking about difficult and hopeless things up to 30 minutes till an hour.

Spectators start hating that tiresome person. Self-confident speaker gets a plan to win an election but voters say to him, "Absolutely not! Negative! That boring man takes too much of our time. What will he do in parliament? He will talk a lot, won't he?" The best opening of broadcasting is preparing action political TV/radio shows. A political leader takes part in meeting, discussion and another forums. All of it should be broadcasted on local TV channels. The shorter report will be the more effective it will be.

At the same time political leader shouldn't get keen on TV shows. That's more expensive than his candidate's budget allows. In this case I recommend making short-budget public relations program. As-a-matter-of-fact people look forward not to brilliant TV show but to hearty appealing. You might prepare congratulations or personality appeals to local authorities by TV or radio (see Rules For Success appendix). In this case candidate saves his money and, all the same time, reaches good promotion activity.

You do remember local TV/radio channel is more popular than nation-wide one. You prefer choosing local TV to place you political promotion clips. But nevertheless you can choose nation-wide channels in case your polling area is situated far from civilization and out of zone of operation regional TV/radio.

Fact only

The "Talking head Middle Age" gone away

Comprehensibility of active TV shows is higher than static interview. It takes up to 40 till 45 percents of voter's attention. The more active political leader is, the more attractive in society he is.

Rules leading to success: Creating TV or radio actions

I would like to tell you about my discovering in inexpensive TV/radio promotion.

- **Firstly** political leader should know local authorities' dates of birthday.
- **Secondly** he should prepare short congratulations for those persons.
- **Thirdly** he chooses local-wide favorite music video clip.
- **Fourthly** he broadcasts prepared congratulations with clip on TV or radio on the date.

The more personified congratulations are, the shorter is the way to win.

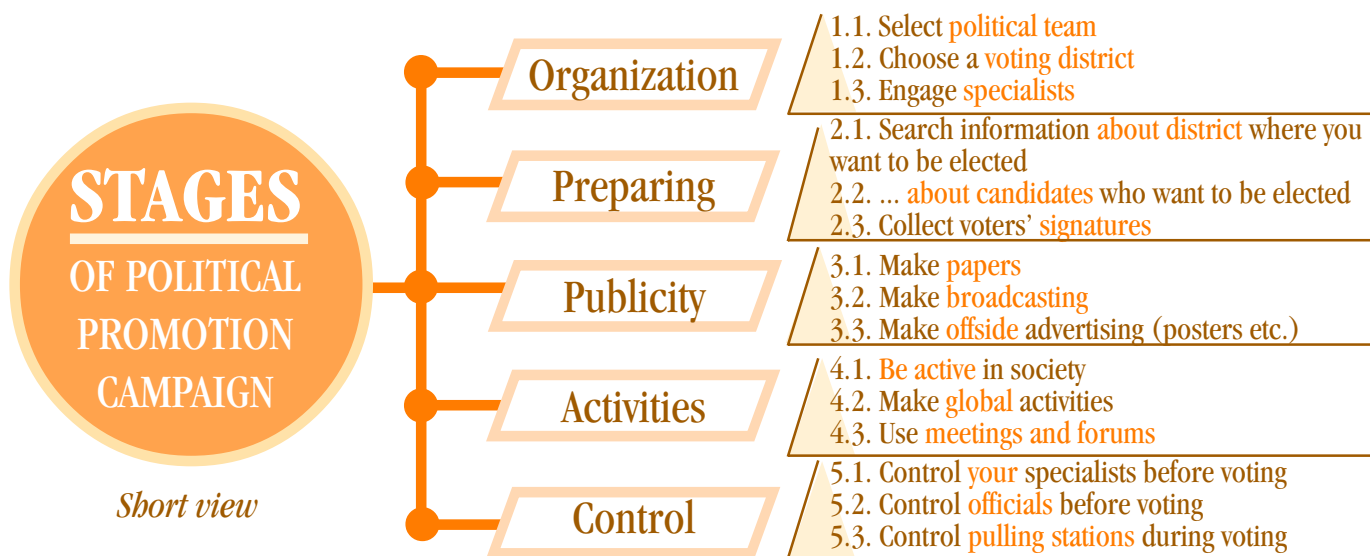
The Challenge #5. It should be a total control system

I have observed the most important challenges of RLE. But nevertheless you will lose the victory if you don't control electoral and promotional systems. Really that is the biggest challenge of RLE I want to talk about.

All of PR activities need control. You are able to control voters' signatures collection; preparing articles and printing; distribution of papers and other information. As-a-matter-of-course daily control provides you to victory. Be careful in case of involving contractors, making public relation and publicity activities. They can make mistakes deliberately or especially following your competitors' directives at last. Don't care your harsh image. Your friends can call you "Mr. Stalin" or "Our iron politician" but your behavior is comprehensible in case you are going to the parliament.

To prevent your competitors' massive attack you should prepare several groups of PR specialists being able to continue political campaign. If one of them gets sabotage, another can bring you to success.

I remember political campaign-2000 in St. Petersburg where I offered a system of distribution control. There were so many kinds of papers and posters we couldn't control. After all we engaged some students, giving them right to control



distributors. Every day 10-20 guys went round polling area asking people if they received papers and saw posters. After it our volunteers prepared a report of checking and we could correct or redirect distributing. That was the great discovery in political promotion field.

Fact only

Missing the victory

Working in Archangel regional election-1996 and 1998 (Russian North) I usually observed some situations at the end of electoral campaign. Up to 5 days before election political leader's team got tired and lost attention. Finishing political campaign, enemy tried to make more problems for competitors than we can possibly think. For example, in the election eve the enemy distributed PR papers. You should know that's impossible and illegitimate. It may result in sanctions of officials, making your political campaign vulnerable. I saw some situations where top-candidates were gone away from politics in this case. It is very important to understand. I call that situation "Missing the victory".

Rules leading to success: System of control

You should check the course of your political campaign. There are several rules:

Check your voters' signature collection system. Before your registration as a candidate you should get some voters' signatures (about 300-500 for local election). If you got false signatures, you would put an end to your political campaign. Your enemy could make it for "your special benefit". Don't let them do it.

Find some people who are able to control public relations. There shouldn't be politically incorrect notes in leader's articles.

Check your distribution system. Don't distribute papers and PR-sheets in the eve of election.

And will the future be better?

Political promotion needs active life position of aboriginal leaders. Some of them are ready to make politics, but some are not. National political system is certain to be changeable for new local leaders.

What should a state do in this case? There is one traditional problem in Russia. The problem is called "limited municipality" including problems of local budget deficit, shortage of well-educated specialists and management recourses.

The system of local power upgrading will be observed in the last part of my article – "The best future of RLE".

The best future of RLE

Society upgrading: to make our future better

So, I have covered some special features of Russian local election. You know damages of RLE and challenges to make political campaign as accessible as possible. But nevertheless we ought to think not about Present but Future. We have to upgrade our political system, making it more and more acceptable to aboriginals. We ought to think about children and youth who will govern our lands and countries tomorrow. That is why I am writing about future upgrading too.

And what about future of RLE? Firstly, I should mark about levels in Russia. Different levels of the power are known to determine different styles of political promotion and, after all, political being. While covering methods of political promotion, we can use advanced methods of political PR of the federal political level for the local one. For example, making political campaign to top politicians, we could use all resources such as a lot of money, well-educated specialists etc. Moreover, there are many candidates of the federal level. Their political courage is known to determine the victory and high-class political campaign.

Talking about RLE we ought to remember all of damages and all of Russian life realities. There is nobody to work, there is no money and aboriginals' leaders have to work in corporations and small businesses. But nevertheless we could change our political being. I call a way to change it "upgrading". There are three objects of upgrading: power, leaders and society.

Passage #1. Local power upgrading

One. Keep up democracy of the local power. We need to create free-access political system in the Russian region. We have seen an accidental adventurers promotion for many years. Those people get benefit from theirs being in local politics but they don't worry about voters' demands. It happens in case of losing democracy in the region. But I ought to notify a problem of "losing democracy" is a nation-wide problem.

Two. Creation the money basis of the RLE. As you understand, the richer you are, the more chances' you get to win election. I prefer calling that situation "abnormal leadership". In case you have a lot of money, you win. But if you had no money, you would lose a game. I think it is abnormal as local politics should be closer to ordinary people. The state should create local election foundations to make election as honest as possible. RLE should be completely financed. For example, state TV or newspaper should give more chance to introduce local political leaders. We need state-founded talk show on TV where aboriginal leaders could introduce themselves, speaking about essential local problems.

Three. Local political organization. At the same time it should be created well-organized political system uniting different parties and movements. Before elections authorities should found political committee consisting of political leaders. The state should support local people movements, which purpose to develop the city or district. We need municipal organization uniting enthusiastic people. Not only businessmen, but teachers, doctors or engineers should have a chance to govern their town or city.

Passage #2. Aboriginal leaders' upgrading

One. Knowledge. The local power will be abnormal in case aboriginal' leaders don't worry about political education. The only way to win an election is perfect political and public relation knowledge. Preparing conferences, the Northern Forum support local leadership in Russia. There is another way to develop local leadership. It is PR and leader education grants by advanced international organization.

Two levels of Russian election

Nation-wide (Federal)

*Advanced
PR-technologies*

A lot of money for election

*Political leaders'
attention*

Local (Regional)

*“Naive”
PR-technologies*

The shortage of money

*No volunteers
to be elected
(except businessmen)*

We need to change something, don't we?

Two. Raising sex and ethnic blocks. To elect as much women as possible we should spread ideals of female local management using in western countries. There is abnormal situation in Russia where women are the most active voters but they are not present in the power. The state should support women politicians' movement to make political system more dynamic. The same problem of RLE is an ethnic blocks. Some of region (such as Yakutia) has a good experience of aboriginal development but other has no. We ought to promote positive experience of aboriginals' leadership in our country.

Three. Creating young politicians' team. Working in St. Petersburg, I have seen young political leaders development. There was the Young Parliament, involving teenagers' leaders to the politics. This is a good experience too.

Passage #3. Society upgrading

One. The good local leadership propaganda. To make our political reality better we should tell about local election more and more. We ought to tell about advanced leaders who make life in their land as better as possible. The best way to reach nation-wide political education is to make special newspapers, web sites and reviews. Our publishing helps people make a choice between past and future. This is the best way to distribute positive information and experience.

Two. Rising prestige of local power. The main problem of the local power is shortage of municipality budget. There are no lots of money sources. The biggest taxes set off for the federal power but not for local one. To develop local power we need to find new sources of local budget. The more domestic taxes come to local budget, the more authority local power gets. Now, the only tax incoming to the local budget is small business tax. The biggest taxes such as personal property tax, profits and company income tax, commodity (value-added) tax and royalty come to federal budget in general. Municipality should get a legitimate share of those taxes to develop social organizations and programs. This is the only way to raise a prestige of local power.

Three. State support. Federal power should develop the local one. I think about political support not only money one. Federal leaders ought to promote local power values by TV, broadcasting and papers. Day by day they should help people make a choice and elect intelligent local leaders but not corruption men and criminals.

That's all what I want to talk about. I wish state support would result effective local power, being able to upgrade aboriginals' policy in the XXI century. My hoping in the best future of RLE ground on the true needs of citizens living in the Russian North.

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Special thanks to:

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Gala Semenova,

trying to keep up my English



*Alex Vert (on the right) was talking to Priscilla Post Wohl,
executive director of the Northern Forum.
St. Petersburg, April, 2003*

About the author

Alex Vert (Alexander Vertyachikh) has worked in the Russian political promotion since 1994. He has a wide experience in promoting local political leaders from Yakutia, Archangel and St. Petersburg to be elected to parliaments.

The most successful political campaigns were: the Yakutian President Election (2001), the Yakutian Parliament Election (2002) and the Archangel City Parliament Election (1996, 1998). He is author of many articles about Russian electoral in the domestic professional magazines.

Since 2001 Alex Vert has been working for the “Polar Circle International Newspaper” (business partner of the Northern Forum). He has also written several books on economic history of the Russian northern regions. He is 30.

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