

RESEARCH REPORTS



Contemporary Challenges for Human Resource Management (Lithuanian Case)

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The article discusses peculiarities of human resource management in the context of contemporary challenges, investigates relations between the elements of the internal environment and challenges for human resource management. The author of the article believes that scientific publications on human resource management still do not pay enough attention to certain elements of management process, i.e. proper systematization of organizational goals, perception of organizational management structures in the new environment, etc. Management practice of staff selection is characterized by the tendency of the organization to dominate, meanwhile the expectations of the candidate are very often sacrificed, and little interest is shown in the development of the sense of loyalty in new employees. The author acknowledges that due to ever-increasing competition organizations cannot ignore the changes that are happening, and on the basis of his researches he identifies the obstacles which hinder many Lithuanian organizations from participating in the contemporary process of changes. The article provides the author's suggestions for the improvement of human resources management in the environment of Lithuanian organizations.

Keywords: organization, challenge, human resources management, organization's environment, loyalty.

1. Introduction

When discussing management challenges for the XXI century management guru P. Drucker notes that 'management *started* as care of the internal environment'¹. Almost none would have doubts that the development of

¹ P. F. Drucker, *Valdymo iššūkiai XXI amžiuje*, D. Radkevičiaus PĮ, 2004, p. 27.

theoretical approaches to human resource management goes hand in hand with the development stages of the theoretical background of organizations. Taking this fact into consideration the purpose of human resources management is to help the organization to 'serve' or, in other words, to adapt the external ever-emerging challenges. In the first part of the XIX century employees were still viewed as labor force. This approach was not casual because at those times employers believed that when they hired a new employee, they acquired some goods, i.e. labor force with certain qualifications². A more advanced perception of organization was provided by the founding father of management science F. W. Taylor. He believed that the concept of organization should be based on the aspect of 'mechanistic organization', where prosperity of the organization is matched up with prosperity of the hired employee³. Under this perspective, F. W. Taylor, in the process of improving the perception of organization management, followed and systematized the kind of work completed thanks to the XIX century achievements.

In 1938 C. I. Barnard was the first in management theory to coherently define the concept of organization as a social system⁴, where the efficiency of activity is related to the employees' wish to work and the exhibited activeness, the quality of their work and other interrelated factors. Ever since organization has been viewed as a system, where an important part has been given to people, or groups of people, who strive to achieve common goals on the consciously coordinated basis. In 1942 P. Drucker contemplating on the future of industrial man contested the social role of the organization⁵ and later on claimed that 'companies are established not to provide the managers and employees with jobs, or to pay dividends to shareholders, but to provide goods and services to the market; hospitals are established not for doctors and nurses, but for patients, whose only desire is to leave the hospital in sound condition and never come back to it'⁶. The author believes that from the psychological, geographical, cultural and social perspective organizations have always been and will always be a part of the society. P. Drucker's attitude was absolutely supported by A. Maslow, who noted that 'any organization which is interested only in

² V. Gražulis, A. Valickas, R. Dačiulytė, T. Sudnickas, *Darbuotojas organizacijos koordinacinių sistemoje: žmogiškojo potencialo vystymo perspektyvos*, Mokslo studija, Mykolo Romerio universitetas, Vilnius, 2012, p. 12.

³ F. W. Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, 1919, pp. 139–140.

⁴ C. I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1938.

⁵ P. F. Drucker, *Principles of Management*, Harper&Row, New York 1954.

⁶ П. Ф. Друкер, *Энциклопедия менеджмента*, Москва, Изд. Вильямс, 2008, pp. 35–36.

its profits, production and sales, in a sense lives at my and other taxpayers' expense', thus organizations 'have to give something to the society, but at the same time to take something from it as well'⁷.

The specialist on team work organization M. A. West believes that 'changes expand like a pandemic, thus for people to be effective and capable of surviving, a flexible personality, flexible team and flexible organization are required'⁸.

Summarizing the evaluations of the concept of organization provided by the notorious specialists it is possible to claim that management science should consider organization first of all from the perspective of the human resources working in it.

The aim of the research: to discuss the impact of the contemporary challenges on human resources management in an organization (Lithuanian case).

The object of the research: challenges for human resource management system in an organization.

Research methods: a critical analysis of literature on approaches to human resources management in the context of contemporary challenges, qualitative research of respondents' opinions.

2. Topicalities of human resources management in the context of contemporary challenges

2.1. Environmental pressure on organizational change (the aspect of human factor)

Forty or fifty years ago the predominant perception of the external environment was that it is quite stable and unchangeable and few thought about the impact of the natural environment on the activities of an organization due to the belief that earth resources are inexhaustible. The modern world differs drastically from the one we lived in not long ago.

External challenges constantly penetrating into organizations have become a headache for modern managers, and thus the need for continuous evaluation of the impact of various elements of the internal environment on the organizations. So let us discuss the ties of the elements of the internal environment with topicalities of human resources management:

⁷ А. Маслоу, *Маслоу о менеджменте*, Санкт-Петербург, Питер, 2003, p. 123.

⁸ М. А. West, *Efektyvus komandinis darbas*, Poligrafija ir informatika, 2011, p. 7.

1. Results of the activities are reflected in the goals of the organization, the purpose thereof being to determine the wish of the organization to expand or just to survive, to provide services or to produce goods, to stay small or to become big, to be economical and get profit or to seek acknowledgement without getting any profit, and the like. Professor P. Drucker constantly notes that goals have to be oriented towards organization's participation in the present global processes⁹. There is no doubt that it is possible to implement the goals only through the efforts of the employees. Unfortunately the analysis of scientific papers¹⁰. Allows to claim that not enough attention has been paid to the classification of organizational goals, which would help to respond to the environment challenges promptly and to create a competitive human resources management system. E.g., socially-oriented goals are rarely linked to the development of management processes and staff motivation system, acquisition of new competences, development of team work, development of the welfare system, and the like. At the theoretical level the question of how to make the goals of the organization, its structural departments and the employees' personal goals compatible is still problematic. Due to these reasons managers often have to face incompatibilities in the goals to be achieved, even contradictions, which in turn can cause serious human resources management problems. It is believed that making goals compatible would be possible by designing 'a tree' of goals¹¹, involving the employees into the process. Compatibility of goals is one of the most important objectives in the managers' activity when they organize the staff to implement a mission.

2. Work relationships regulated by the organizational management structures have significant importance for employees' attitudes and their behavior, as they can decrease or increase ambiguity of mutual relations. The objective set for the organizational management structures is to implement all strategic projects of the organization, whereas in case of the changes thereof these structures have to be improved and modified. These particular reasons set high requirements for the manager's organizational activity. Unfortunately our researches reveal that up to now line and functional subordination relations

⁹ P. F. Drucker, *Valdymo iššūkiai XXI amžiuje*, D. Radkevičiaus PĮ, 2004.

¹⁰ J. A. Stoner, R. E. Freeman, D. R. Gilbert, *Vadyba, Poligrafija ir informatika*, Kaunas 2001, pp. 259–260, 293; P. Zakarevičius, *Pokyčiai organizacijose: priežastys, valdymas, pasektės. Monografija*, VDU, Kaunas 2003, pp. 25, 108–109; А. И. Пригожин, *Современная социология организаций*, Интерпракс, Москва 1995.

¹¹ V. Gražulis, A. Valickas, R. Dačiulytė, T. Sudnickas, *Darbuotojas organizacijos koordinacinių sistemoje: žmogiškojo potencialo vystymo perspektyvos*, Mokslo studija, Mykolo Romerio Universitetas, Vilnius, 2012, pp. 28–31.

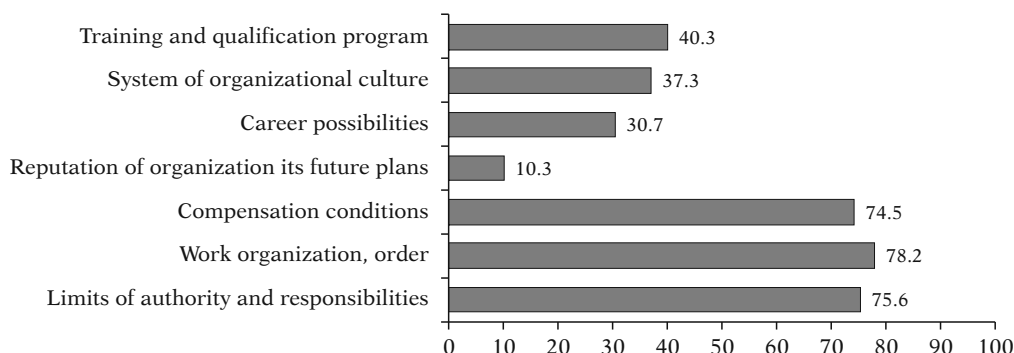
have not been well-founded enough in Lithuanian organizations, due to which even in modern times the principle formulated by E. Deming, which states that it is necessary to constantly 'break the barriers which separate the staff from different functional areas'¹² is still valid. Altogether it is important to admit that organizational management structure, which functions effectively in one organization, can be destructive in another, thus great danger lies in the fact that some 'ideal' organizational management structures are attempted to be created. It is notable that this aspect has not yet become an object of intense discussions in scientific literature.

3. Experience of numerous organizations reveals that if a person wants to be hired, he or she must meet certain formal requirements for candidates: to have appropriate education, work experience, to demonstrate abilities to achieve organization's goals, to be sociable, to speak languages and the like. It should be stressed that none of the requirements mentioned above can completely make sure that a person will join the team, work efficiently and make a personal career. E.g., a diploma does not always reveal the true level of knowledge; experience does not always reflect person's abilities to respond promptly to contemporary environment changes; finally, personal goals can outweigh organizational goals, even be opposing to them. That is why it is necessary to consider long-term employee's personal and organizational priorities and goals at the very stage of candidate selection, especially when employees are potentially able to add high value (social, intellectual or economic) to the organization are involved¹³. In 2008–2012 515 employees from eight public sector organizations in Lithuania were surveyed to establish their evaluation of the selection process and their intention to stay with the organization. Unfortunately during the selection process most Lithuanian organizations are mainly concerned with the evaluation of professional competences of the potential candidate and other issues related to the job; meanwhile it is not a rare case when the candidate and organization's expectations and moral values are not thoroughly discussed, the prospective performance results are not forecasted, and the procedures of joining the team are discussed very little (Figure 1). Features characterizing the person as such are left beyond the selection interview and frequent consequences of which are insufficient managers' attention to new employees, who in their attempt to orient themselves in the unfamiliar environment rely primarily on their co-workers' advice, whereas one third have to sort everything out themselves.

¹² W. E. Deming, *Improvement of Quality and Productivity through Action by Management*, "National Productivity Review" 1981–1982 winter, No. 1, pp. 12–22.

¹³ S. Snell, G. Bohlander, *Human resource management*, Thomson, Canada 2007.

Figure 1. Questions considered during the discussion (from 100 points, N= 515)



Source: own study.

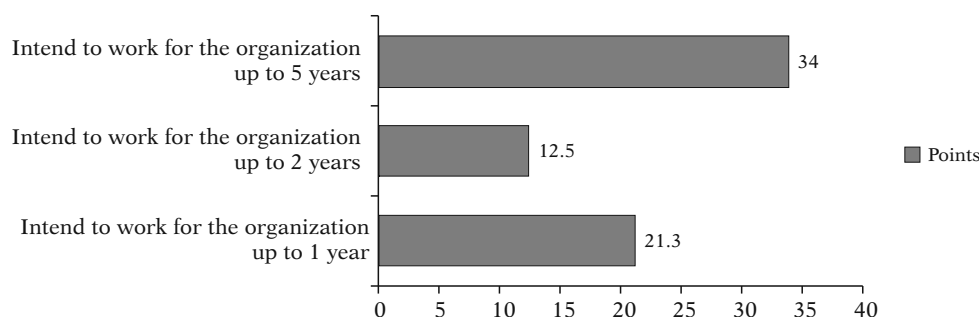
Formation of the organizational culture, which first of all reflects the spiritual health of the team, is particularly emphasized in the management process. 'Healthy' culture ensures awareness of organizational goals, enables expression of initiative, improves communication, encourages education and self-education, defines common moral values, and enhances the sense of commitment and loyalty to the organization¹⁴. And vice versa, poor 'health' of the organizational culture is characterized by low quality of work, employees feel little obligation, and turnover is frequent¹⁵. Our research shows that only a half of employees adopt the dominating culture, whereas other employees upon failure to become part of the team are typically isolated, rebellious and conformist. These employees stay with the organization only for the reasons of formal commitment to the organization or because they feel an obligation to behave in such a way. As researches reveal, after a couple of years a usual new employee often considers resignation issues¹⁶, whereas one third of employees in the organization intend to work for it not more than for two years and the same number of employees intend to stay with the organization for another year or two (Figure 2).

¹⁴ О. Г. Тихомирова, *Организационная культура: формирование, развитие и оценка*, Учебное пособие / ИНФРА-М., Москва 2011.

¹⁵ On the other hand an attempt to create an ideal organizational culture, as well as an ideal organisation, is senseless and leads to additional and unmanageable organisational problems.

¹⁶ I. Urbonavičiūtė, *Adaptavimo projektai*, 2007, <http://www.vaiciulis.lt/index.php?id=4>; V. Gražulis, *Successful Socialization of Employees – Assumption of Loyalty to Organization*, International Journal „HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND ERGANOMICS (NRM&E)”, Volume V, 2/2011 pp. 33–46. <http://frcatel.fri.uniza.sk/hrme/>.

Figure 2. Distribution of intentions of Lithuanian employees to stay with the organization (from 100 %, N= 515)



Source: own study.

4. Employee's career is another very important factor, which reflects not only personal success. A well-designed career system helps employees, who are able to implement new ideas, to pursue a career, and enables the organization to adapt to the fast changing environment¹⁷.

Unfortunately, some scholars' researches¹⁸ reveal that e.g. a servant working for the Lithuanian civil service is promoted on average in eleven years' time, and transfer to other positions related to the development of competences is even rarer. Besides it is notable that only 4–5 per cent of employees in Lithuania consciously pursue a career and nearly for every second or third person a career is not an important goal in life¹⁹. Our researches reveal that the reason for this situation is frequently poor people's perceptions of their goals in life.

2.2. Can changes be ignored?

Internationalization of organizational activity 'tightens' the space of time, location and social relations. Withal, this process, which has gained momentum during the past forty years, is an integral part of the globalization of the human resource management process. It has been noted that companies with up to

¹⁷ S. Bagdadli, *Designing career systems. Are we ready for it?*, Handbook of career studies, Ed. Gunz H., Peiperl M. Sage Publications, Los Angeles 2007.

¹⁸ A. Valickas, *Career Development System in the Lithuanian Civil Service: Integration of Individual and Organizational Levels*, Doctoral Dissertation, Mykolas Romeris University, 2011, p. 101.

¹⁹ M. Blaškova, V. Gražulis, *Motivation of Human Potential: theory and practice*, Monograph. Vilnius, Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), Zilina University (Slovakia), Publishing Centre of Mykolas Romeris University, 2009, pp. 154–155.

twenty employees have already a tendency to join actively in the globalization process, and the impact thereof on the economic and social development of the country constantly grows²⁰. In practice there is no doubt that the organizational activity is sensible if its results are acknowledged in the external environment and are competitive in the market. Response to competition can be diverse, for instance, the European Commission believes that in the process of evaluation of the impact of competition on Lithuania the policy of the Lithuanian government has to encourage innovative organizational activity, allocating more resources to intangible assets, and human resources are among the most important ones. Analyzing from this perspective we see that an organization can achieve competitive ability in the market only if it has motivated employees. Unfortunately, researches in Lithuania show that satisfaction of primary needs is still relevant. Our data accumulated during 2003–2011 helps to evaluate the situation in terms of changes in the social economic situation in the country. Figure 3 presents the intensity of needs of 2738 people surveyed in different periods of time. As we can see the most significant change during the past three years is noticeable in the safety needs, which alongside the physiological needs became most prevalent. The significance of the needs from this group increased by nearly 13 per cent (2003–2007 – 61.5%, 2009–2011 – 69.2%). The results of the research clearly show that with the declining economic situation the first reaction of most people was expressed though justifiable anxiety related to their possibilities to remain in the labor market.

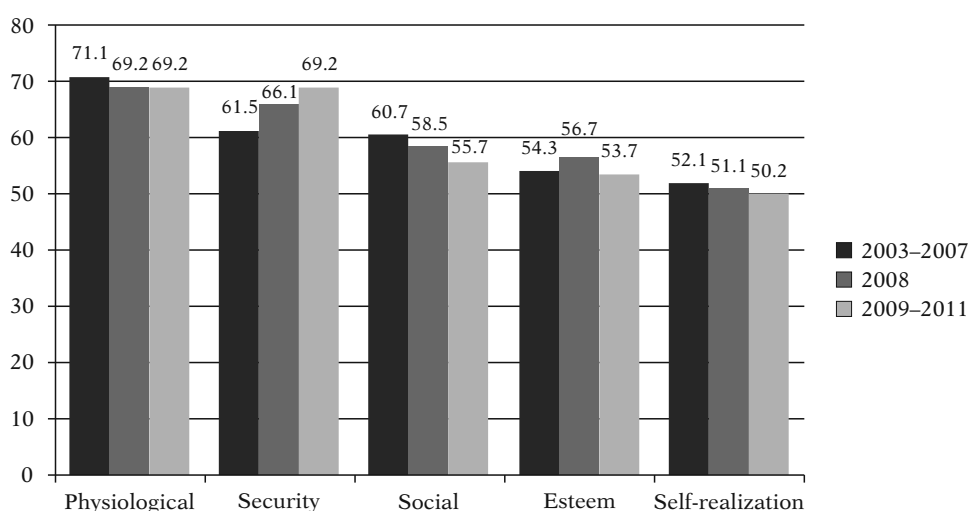
Nowadays it is extremely hard to foresee what latest topicalities of the organizational development can come into foreground in the near future. Globalization of organizational activity which started in the 1970s does not mean reaching the final point which would stop the further development of the process. The current stage of globalization rather sends signals of what qualitatively new organization development trends could be. Whatever environment challenges are, in comparison with the current situation, they mean changes in organizational activity. The US management specialists J. M. Kouzes and B. Z. Posner²¹ believe that no one can attain the desired results

²⁰ A. Grenčikova, D. Petrušova, *Vzdelanie-vyznamny faktor pri uplatneni sa na trhu prace*, Zbornik referatov z medzinarodnej konferencie „Personalny manažment v podmienkach formovania noveho europskeho trhu prace”, Trenčín; Trenčianska univerzita A. Dubčeka, 2004, p. 67; C. Handy, *Dramblys ir blusa: Žvilgsnis atgal į ateitį* (The Elephant and the Flea: Reflections of a Reluctant Capitalist), Hansabankas, Vilnius 2002; S. Hronova, R. Hindlis, *Vstup do EU pohledem manažeru malých a středních podniku*, Sbornik z mezinárodního vědeckého semináře „Připravenost českých podnikatelských subjektůna členství v Evropské unii”, Vysoká škola ekonomická v Praze, Praha 2004; Linderholm C. *Vientisa verslumo ugdymo grandinė*, Tarptautinės konferencijos medžiaga, Kauno kolegija, Kaunas 2004.

²¹ J. M. Kouzes J. M., Posner B. Z. *Iššūkis vadybai*, Kaunas, Smaltija, 2003, pp. 103–122.

by maintaining *status quo*, thus in the circumstances of the globalization of management processes and the environment of the ever-growing competition the main task for organizations to survive is not the decision whether to adopt the changes or not, but the decision of how to participate in the process of changes, to foresee when and how to implement reforms in the organization.

Figure 3. Change in the intensity of needs among Lithuanian respondents in the period of 2003–2011 (max. 100 points, N=2738)



Source: own study.

2.3. Obstacles hindering participation of organizations in the process of changes

Our researches give us ground to claim that in Lithuania frequently manager, instead of seeking changes and focusing on the issues of organizational development, chooses not quite well-founded decisions and links them only to work intensification and investments necessary for such purposes. It was observed that this is to a large extent conditioned by the managers' weak point in the form of gaps in the theoretical management knowledge, as managers who pay most of their attention to the business development, still very poorly take care of employees' competence and its development²².

²² V. Gražulis, A. Valickas, R. Dačiulytė, T. Sudnickas, *Darbuotojas organizacijos koordinacinių sistemoje: žmogiškojo potencialo vystymo perspektyvos*, Mokslo studija, Mykolo Romerio universitetas, Vilnius, 2012, pp. 58–60.

Since 2001 our researches (during which more than 1,700 respondents working in different economic sectors were surveyed) have apparently indicated that almost 70 per cent of managers of Lithuanian organizations can barely imagine their organization participating in the modern changes. The major factors defining this situation are²³:

- *poor perception of external environment*, thus the impact of threats to the company increases, whereas the possibilities to use that environment decrease;
- *failure to take notice of the importance of new decisions in due time and to make the appropriate decision*, thus the organizational activity is dominated by the 'starting from scratch' process, special attention is paid to deal with the increased results of the organizational 'erosion', but not to eliminate the causes, etc.;
- *insufficient involvement of staff in changes*, thus the organization fails to engage either supporters or employees, who are afraid of and opposed to innovations, to participate in the change process;
- *poor skills of being ready for contingencies*, thus the organization fails to prepare in advance for new challenges and unexpected impact thereof.

Inadequate managers' preparedness to involve the organization in the changes process very often has a negative impact on employees' attitude towards the process. In this case, in their judgment of the results of the changes the employees tend to oppose them because of poor understanding, lack of relevant information and low threshold of tolerance to any kind of changes. We have to state that due to the constant development of the society and new challenge about two-thirds of the Lithuanian organizations still are developing slower than the pace of change requires. According to the data of our and other specialists' researches the adequate preparedness of organizations to participate in the change process in Lithuania is still more often an exception rather than a rule. Employees in organizations with evident features of modern management are encouraged to improve; while the organization bears the costs of training and cultural models characteristic of contemporary organization are created. Still, this is a privilege reserved to exclusive 'players', usually of foreign capital and operating in the services market (commercial banks, investment funds, etc.).

²³ M. Blaškova, V. Gražulis, *Motivation of Human Potential: theory and practice, Monograph*, Vilnius, Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), Zilina University (Slovakia), Publishing Centre of Mykolas Romeris University, 2009, p. 42; V. Gražulis, A. Valickas, R. Dačiulytė, T. Sudnickas, *Darbuotojas organizacijos koordinacinių sistemoje: žmogiškojo potencialo vystymo perspektyvos*, Mokslo studija, Mykolo Romerio Universitetas, Vilnius, 2012, p. 58.

Conclusion

The internal environment of an organization is composed of a system of coordinates which constantly alter its concept. In their attempt to achieve positive results of the organizational activity managers should follow the innovations, which very often enhance the risk level of the activity. The internal risk factors of an organization include the following: sometimes unclear organizational goals, problems of management and work arrangements, insufficient motivation of employees to work better, etc. Managers of modern organizations have to 'face' the people working there more daringly, as observance thereof helps to analyze the situation which involves human resources in each organization from different perspectives and to create efficient management systems.

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Резюме

Современные вызовы управлению человеческими ресурсами (случай Литвы)

В статье анализируются современные вызовы, стоящие перед управлением человеческими ресурсами. В ней обсуждены связи внутренних элементов окружения с вызовами управления человеческими ресурсами. По мнению автора в научных исследованиях слишком мало внимания уделяется отдельным аспектам управления, напр. соответствующей систематизации организационных целей, восприятию организационных структур в области управления в новом окружении и т. д.. Как показывает практика управления, при выборе сотрудника преобладающую роль играют организация и ее цели. Ожидания новых кандидатов неоднократно

забываются и слишком мало интереса проявляется к обучению их лояльности. Автор подчеркивает, что ввиду растущей конкуренции, организации не могут игнорировать происходящих изменений. На основе своих исследований выделяет он также главные помехи, которые препятствуют участию литовских организаций в процессе перемен. Автор формулирует в своей статье основные предложения, как можно усовершенствовать процесс управления человеческими ресурсами в литовских организациях.

Ключевые слова: организация, вызовы, управление человеческими ресурсами, организационная среда, лояльность.

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