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Innovations in Human Resource Management through the Creation of Sustainable Staff Members

Summary

The article is of the conceptual nature. Irrational human behaviour deprives the chance of existence and development of future generations. In order to protect nature, humanity and future generations, the concepts of sustainability should be implemented in enterprises. An important role in this project has human resources which are the most important factor of any enterprise. Therefore, there is a need for innovation in the methods of human resource management. The introduction contains the objectives of the article and presents research methods that enabled the achievement of the aims. The first part of the article explains the essence and importance of sustainable development and covers the definitions and concepts of sustainable development by individual authors. The three stages of employing an employee are listed. The final part of the study presents the concept of creating sustainable staff members. It indicates, among other things, the role of managers in creating sustainable workforce. The ways and methods of transforming personnel in sustainable human resources are presented.

Key words: sustainable development, sustainable staff members, human resources.

JEL codes: M12

Introduction

Socio-economic development of the modern world forces adaptation of enterprise resources to the requirements and trends that occur in every area of economic life of the company. Among the major resources of an organization, which include, inter alia, financial, property, information technology and human resources, special attention should be given to the human capital. Emerging trends and economic phenomena require proper preparation and response of the staff members of the company. Sustainable development is one of the reasons for which innovations should be carried out in human resource management.

The concepts of sustainability are focused not only on achieving economic, but also ecological and social aims by the company. The concept of sustainable development is the result of progressive environmental degradation of the Earth. The main task of sustainable development is to reduce and, consequently, the complete elimination of negative factors harming the condition of the environment and the emergence of social problems. An important role in achieving the objectives have the staff members, engaged in manufacturing, trade and service companies. Innovations in the field of personnel management should include all personnel employed in the organisation, including the lowest level employees, e.g. produc-

tion workers, middle manager or leaders and executives. The awareness of all employed workers in the companies of the need to proceed in accordance with the guidelines of sustainable development will bring the expected benefits in financial, environmental and social terms. Focusing only on selected employee groups in order to implement the principles of sustainable development will not bring the expected results. The involvement of the whole staff as the company provides the basis to speak about managing human resources in the sustainable aspect.

The aim of the study is to draw attention to the need to adapt the human resources in companies to implement the principles of sustainable development in the face of increasing environmental degradation and growing social problems.

The applied testing method helpful in reaching the goal is the study of literature based inter alia on the use of secondary sources such as domestic and foreign compact scientific publications, scientific articles, journals, conference papers, internet news from the scope of the subject matter. The second research method helpful in achieving the target is natural hidden observation consisting in not informing staff members about their participation in the study. Observation occurred in natural conditions, i.e. during the execution of the tasks of workers in the workplace.

The theory of sustainable development

The fast pace of economic growth characterised by an increase in production and consumption, has a negative impact on the environment and society. The pressure to increase sales of products and services and thus expand the market share of enterprises creates a dangerous situation for ourselves and future generations. The constant pursuit of enterprises for financial gains is becoming a major destination for many business organisations. The short sightedness of high-level managers is becoming a serious threat to the ecosystem and social life.

As a result of the impact of businesses on consumers by implementing a variety of marketing and promotional programs, an increase in demand for products and services is observed. Society is becoming more consuming by buying large quantities of products that are not fully and to the end consumed. Companies in order to meet demand, increase production and this, in turn requires providing raw materials for manufacturing, energy, water and fuels derived from the earth. Production processes are accompanied by negative factors in the form of greenhouse gases, waste water, production waste and other harmful to the environment and human side effects of production.

Sustainable development also called eco-development has become a counteraction for the negative human behaviour, both in the consumption and production. The concept of sustainable development was defined in the Brundtland Report as “sustainable development is the development satisfying needs of the present without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations” (Pawlowski 2011, p. 333). Another definition of sustainable development presents H. Rogall, who claims that “sustainable development aims to ensure

that all people living today and future generations have sufficiently high environmental, economic and socio-cultural standards within the strength of the Earth's natural limits, applying the principle of intra-generational and intergenerational justice" (Rogall 2010, p. 44). Y. Dam and P. Apeldoorn define sustainable development as development that takes into account the needs of the present without crossing out the possibility of meeting them for future generations (Dam and Apeldoorn 2008). D. Pearce, E. Barbier and A. Markandya cite the concept of sustainable development defined by R. Repetto as a development strategy for managing human, natural, financial and property resources contributing to long-term prosperity and wealth (Pearce et al. 1997) F. Belz and K. Peattie say that there are many different approaches to the issue of sustainable development. The authors present a concept of *hard sustainability*, (which is focused on maintaining environmental quality through the protection of the environment as a result of a reasonable economic activity) and soft sustainability (focused on ensuring that economic growth can be maintained by reducing the impact on the environment and society) (Belz and Peattie 2010).

Sustainable development can be regarded as a new concept in management science. Implementation of the principles of sustainable development among societies and manufacturing and trading companies is a serious challenge that humanity is facing today. The progressive degradation of the Earth's ecosystem, along with rising social problems can lead to catastrophic consequences. B. Emery takes the view that if the population live in accordance with sustainable development, it will experience some kind of change, particularly as consumers. However, the adoption of the concept of sustainable development by businesses will be crucial for them in the next decade (Emery 2012).

The role of staff members in creating sustainable enterprise employing environmentally and socially responsible employees is significant. Thanks to decisions made by high-level managers, we can observe a transformation of the workers into sustainable staff employees. Creating an image of a company that considers and applies concepts of sustainability can become a source of competitive advantage in the market. W. Grudzewski, I. Hejduk, A. Sankowska, M. Wańtuchowicz argue that "doing business fairly, honestly and with utmost compliance of words and actions give you an advantage, which cannot be achieved by any other means, which underlines the importance of ethics in business. Ethical behaviour of companies is its assets, builds the trust of customers, investors and is a source of pride for employees" (Grudzewski et al. 2010, p. 303).

Modern elements of the human resources management process

Human resources are a very important part of modern enterprises, and very often it is the most precious element. Human resource management refers to the HR function of an organisation. In other words, human resource management includes the management of the characteristics and features of employees. It is important to shape an appropriate environment in organisation in order to encourage employees to work and achieve goals, and to be loyal to their employer (Pocztowski 2003). The fundamental element of human resource

management are the employees, which the organisation can influence. This is done as part of the HR strategy, using HR processes on which the organisation can choose the appropriate instruments. In the context of human resource management, there are three main, the most common phenomena (Pocztowski 2003):

- the entrance of an employee to the company,
- keeping an employee in the organisation,
- leaving employee from the company.

These processes are divided into sub processes for which appropriate measures, objectives and employees responsible for its implementation should be developed.

Effective management of the organisation would not be possible if there was no employment planning. In companies, this process takes place in three stages (Król and Ludwicyński 2006): first, the demand for human resources is determined, then the possibility of obtaining them is defined, and finally the plan of employment is established based on the demand and supply of human resources. The presented steps are necessary to take, as a basis for designing more detailed plans relating to other areas of human resource management. Workforce planning is often a difficult and complex task because it requires the presence of directors at various levels and the participation of top management. Information allowing development a plan that reflects the real needs of the organisation are gathered. It may happen that the complexity of the employment planning process exceeds the capabilities of the company, which entails the necessity to employ an outside consultant.

After developing an employment plan, companies start to acquire employees. Two sub element of this process are recruitment and selection. Although they are closely related they cannot be equated. Recruiting is the process of attracting potential employees to the organisation (Moczyłowska 2010). Selection is determined as the assessment of the suitability of candidates whose applications were gathered in the recruitment process. Its aim is to select candidates who meet the greatest extent possible the criteria of the company (Król and Ludwicyński 2006)

HR departments are responsible for acquisition of candidates as well as for preparing the recruitment offer. It should be prepared in such a way that candidates know whether they are suitable for the job or not. It is important for the applicant to know already at the stage of familiarization with the recruitment offer that the organisation needs their skills. Job offer should also be clear, not packed with too many information, as may it can be unreadable. The message should be brief, because an excessive information increases the costs of obtaining an employee (Król and Ludwicyński 2006).

The element of modern human resource management process is redeployment that gives employees an opportunity to develop. Redeployment can have horizontal or vertical direction. Horizontal shifts are taking place within one management level. Job rotations occurring in this regard are very important because they allow to increase the attractiveness of work. In addition, by changing workplace, an employee acquires new skills. Vertical movements are known as promotions or degradations. Degradation takes place when an employee is moved from a higher position to a lower, while promotion takes place in the opposite direction, low-

er level employee leaves and goes to the higher one (Golnau et al. 2010). The general shift of workers constitutes a career path, and every employee goes through a specific road, which this path represents. It is the culmination of all human resources management processes.

An important element of human resource management is the evaluation of employees, meaning expressing orally or in a written form an opinion about their work (Pocztowski 1998). A consequence of staff members appraisal is an opportunity to fully use their capabilities. The employer is mostly interested in the evaluation of the performance of employees and the quality of their work, thanks to what (Moczyłowska 2010):

- the verification of the strengths and weaknesses of human resources is verified,
- the employees are motivated,
- the company's value system is reinforced,
- it is possible to plan future development needs of the company,
- the necessary actions are undertaken in case of not satisfactory results of the evaluation process.

Evaluation of employees is a necessary element of human resource management process, because without it, the management is not able to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their subordinates, which would make the process of determining of the direction of the company impossible.

Creating sustainable staff members

Among the main elements of a company resources, which include financial, property, information and human resources, the potential of human resources deserves special attention. Staff is the most important resource of the company. On the knowledge and skills possessed by the people depend the fate of the entire enterprise. It is in the interest of the organisation, to properly select a personnel capable of ensuring the achievement of financial, environmental and social goals of an enterprise. Building a sustainable organization staff becomes the guarantor to achieve the objectives. A. Pabian relying on R. Lussier writes: "the process of human resource management, consisting in attracting, developing and retaining employees, is aimed at creation proper staff, and so fill all positions in the company with responsible and highly qualified people" (Pabian 2011, p. 13). The presented conditions are a guide in creating sustainable enterprise personnel. It is important in creating sustainable labour resources have actions aimed at raising awareness of all employees in the company about the need to act in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. The process of education of employees in the area of ecology and social policy of the company should include high-level managers and their deputies, managers and executive employees. In the process of recruiting new employees one should pay attention to the candidate's attitude to environmental and social issues during the interview by asking questions directed at those areas.

Properly functioning company operates on the basis of predetermined strategic, tactical and operational plans. The management sets goals for the organisation and supervises their implementation. Already in the planning stages of purposes, sustainable management staff

develops pro-social environmental and production processes, and selects the appropriate machinery and equipment so that manufacturing activity was environmentally friendly and do not harm the society. Purchasing energy-efficient machinery and equipment, selection of suppliers of raw materials for production, choice of pro ecology and pro-social contractors, water reuse, minimization of waste production, reducing emissions of harmful substances and compounds in to the atmosphere, are just some of the examples of sustainable decision-making by the management (Pabian 2011).

Sustainable management team is characterised by creativity and economy in the use of waste or processed materials for further use. An example of these qualities manager is Steve Esterbrook, who in 2006 became the head of the British branch of McDonald's corporation. On the initiative of Steve Esterbrook the company began to process used cooking oil into bio fuel supplying company's cars in the UK. President Esterbrook has also made changes to the British McDonald's menu by introducing more chicken dishes as white meat is considered healthier than red (Trojanowski 2013).

The manager, who cares about the environment takes an active part in solving problems related to the protection of natural surrounding and ecology. If the manager is interested in competition, it may be more concerned about competing with other organisations, or about his personal career (Stoner and Freeman 2011). Management should manifest its eco-friendly and pro-social attitude towards other employees in the company. Employees of production or service processes, seeing the involvement of his superiors in matters of environmental and social aspects will take their example and act in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. The role of managers in organisations is significant and provides a starting point for creating sustainable staff members.

Sustainable management manifests its activity also in social terms. It sees social problems and draws attention to the social situation of the country in which the company conducts business. Participation of the business management in charity and social actions supports worthy cause, but from the side of public relations it also builds positive relationships with the environment of the company. The executive staff functioning in accordance with the essence of sustainable development recognises the social problems of the world, country and region and wishes to contribute to their solution (Pabian 2011).

Innovations in the field of human resource management consisting in transformation of human potential into sustainable staff also apply to regular employees involved in lower-level positions. Despite the leading role of top management in creating a sustainable staff members, it is the executive employees that determine the success of this project. The problem may be rooted in the mentality of workers, particularly the older ones with long seniority, habits of wasting energy, water, fuel and raw materials for production. Acquired habits from the times in which sustainable development was not a well-known phenomenon can be difficult to eradicate. Regardless of the difficulties in the processes of innovation of human resource management in the enterprise, one need to consistently implement the model and system solutions that transform the workforce in a sustainable staff. A useful activity can be conducting environmentally friendly and pro-social crew trainings on the proper use

of available production resources. The knowledge and awareness of proceedings under the principles of sustainable development will enable faster and easier transformation of production staff into sustainable staff. The training topics should include, among other things, briefing on the rational use of machinery and equipment so that they could be used properly and for a long time. At such trainings the rules of economical use of electricity, water and fuel should be discussed. Not without significance is the rational management of raw materials for the production of goods. Environmentally friendly production implies maximum use of raw materials necessary for production with minimal production of waste products, which as far as possible should be reused within the company. You can argue that sustainable behaviour patterns acquired by the employee in the workplace can be used in their own household, for example, by exchanging light bulbs for energy-saving ones, saving water during washing or disabling not used energy receivers.

Creating sustainable human resources of an organisation should cover all people working in the enterprise. You can not require environmentally friendly and pro-social standards only from one group of employees. Selective treatment of specified groups of employees will not bring the expected results in the creation of sustainable staff members.

Conclusions

Changing economic environment of a company forces the organisation to adapt to the emerging trends and habits. The deteriorating state of the environment and increasing social problems pose a serious challenge for businesses and the humanity. Implementing innovations in methods of human resource management comes up against problems. In the first place the changes should be made among staff members. From the attitudes and behaviours of people depends the transformation of workforce in sustainable human resources.

High-level management who is required to achieve the economic objectives of enterprise should demonstrate the ability to reconcile these goals with environmental and social aspects. Focusing business operations exclusively on making a profit is a short-sighted procedure and is doomed to failure. Slowly increasing consumer awareness about the need to protect our planet will force organisations to change the behaviour of companies to undertake measures in line with the principles of sustainable development. An example of companies which already function within the standards of sustainability are global organisations such as McDonald's, Ikea, or Ferrero. You can argue that the sooner the company evolve into a sustainable economic organisation, the faster their market position will be stronger and gain social acceptance. An invaluable role in these transformations is of course sustainable staff members, which should consist of management and executive employees.

Introducing innovations in the ways of managing not only human resources but also the entire structure of the company is inevitable. Following the path of sustainable development becomes a necessity resulting from the rapidly deteriorating environment and growing social problems. Global degradation of the Earth's ecosystem and society is progressing at a rapid pace, which in turn can lead to the destruction of mankind. L. Pawlowski indicates that there

are more and more reviews that talk about the fact that humanity is approaching, or even exceeding the Earth's ability to regenerate ecosystems. The author, referring to the Global Footprint Network, writes that the state of Earth's capacity to non-hazardous existence of human civilization has been exceeded in 1986. (Pawlowski 2011)

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Innowacje w zarządzaniu zasobami ludzkimi poprzez tworzenie zrównoważonego personelu pracowniczego

Streszczenie

Artykuł o charakterze koncepcyjnym. Nieracjonalne zachowanie człowieka odbiera szansę na istnienie i rozwój przyszłych pokoleń. Żeby chronić przyrodę, ludzkość i przyszłe pokolenia, w przedsiębiorstwach należy wdrażać koncepcje zrównoważonego rozwoju. Istotną rolę w tym projekcie odgrywają zasoby ludzkie, które są najważniejszym czynnikiem dowolnego przedsiębiorstwa. Istnieje za-

tem potrzeba innowacji w metodach zarządzania zasobami pracy. Wprowadzenie zawiera cele artykułu i przedstawia metody, które umożliwiły osiągnięcie celów. Pierwsza część artykułu wyjaśnia istotę i znaczenie zrównoważonego rozwoju oraz przedstawia definicje i koncepcje zrównoważonego rozwoju podawane przez poszczególnych autorów. Wymienia się trzy etapy zatrudniania pracownika. Końcowa część opracowania przedstawia koncepcję tworzenia zrównoważonego personelu pracowniczego. Wskazuje ona, między innymi, na rolę menadżerów w tworzeniu zrównoważonej siły roboczej. Prezentowane są sposoby i metody przekształcania personelu w zrównoważone zasoby ludzkie.

Słowa kluczowe: zrównoważony rozwój, zrównoważony personel pracowniczy, zasoby ludzkie.

Kody JEL: M12

Иновации в управлении человеческими ресурсами посредством создания устойчивого персонала

Резюме

Статья имеет концептуальный характер. Нерациональное поведение человека отнимает шанс на существование и развитие будущих поколений. Для защиты природы, человечества и будущих поколений на предприятиях должны осуществляться концепции устойчивости окружающей среды. Важную роль в этом проекте призваны сыграть человеческие ресурсы, которые являются самым существенным фактором любого предприятия. Следовательно, существует потребность в инновационных методах управления человеческими ресурсами. Во введении указаны цели статьи и представлены исследовательские методы, которые дали возможность достичь целей. Первая часть статьи объясняет суть и значение устойчивого развития, представленные отдельными авторами. Перечислены три стадии трудоустройства работника. Последняя часть разработки представляет концепцию создания устойчивого персонала. Она указывает, в частности, роль менеджеров в формировании устойчивой рабочей силы. Представляются способы и методы преобразования персонала в устойчивые человеческие ресурсы.

Ключевые слова: устойчивое развитие, устойчивый персонал, человеческие ресурсы.

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