

Logistic Organization Personnel - General Issues

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Abstract

The article contains a presentation of the results of analyses of studies relating to investing in the personnel of modern organizations. Conclusions from these analyses were related to the need to improve competences by the personnel of logistics companies. The conditions of their functioning and the resulting need to improve or acquire new knowledge and qualifications by employees were emphasized. The role of managers in the process of influencing personnel was highlighted, mainly in the context of creating work teams and striving for their high efficiency.

Keywords: manager, logistics, management, competencies, personnel.

1. INTRODUCTION

The article deals with the competencies of the personnel of logistics organizations. Its purpose is not only to emphasize the need, even the necessity to constantly improve the competences of the staff. Through the prism of the complexity of the organization's functioning conditions and the specificity of performing managerial functions, it has been shown that improving competences is one of the indispensable conditions for achieving logistic success. I am convinced that the published content may be a premise for drawing other observations or conducting further research, not only in relation to logistics companies.

The basic canon of impact on personnel is the statement that employees in the organization are the subject. It is a strategic starting point for all discussions related to people in modern logistics organizations. This fact allows us to draw a number of conclusions. In the context of the title of the article, it is reasonable to emphasize

the fact that human being is the most important element of any organization. This is a special resource characterized by the fact that it will never become the property of the employer, but it has certain competences that determine the „to be or not to be” of the company. It is a valuable source of all company’s successes. It is a capital in which you must constantly invest, if only because the conditions of the company’s operation and its material resources change. Therefore, everything should be done to ensure that this special resource of each logistics company develops, has satisfaction with what and where it does, so that through involvement in the development of its organization it can also achieve its own goals and fulfil its professional self-realization during its role¹. At this point, it is reasonable to add that the theses that emphasize human behaviour, its place and importance for the functioning of organized entities are being voiced more and more loudly².

It is not uncommon to come across an attitude that equates an organization with a person. This view is presented, among others, by R.W. Griffin, writing that: *an organization is a group of people who work together in an orderly and coordinated way to achieve a certain set of goals*³.

In every logistics company, not only people are important, but also their attitude while performing their duties. The tasks and responsibilities that have been assigned to the employee are an important factor stimulating his activity, which is influenced by the manager. In addition, by placing it in the hierarchy of work positions, it has an impact on the behaviour of employees, on relations horizontally and vertically, with co-workers, subordinates and superiors. These issues often have a purely formal dimension, and yet the most important are actual attitudes and behaviours resulting from specific relationships with other employees of the company, with members of the work team. Man is a social being. People need each other to perform various tasks.

A feature of the modern approach to management, especially personnel management, is building a strategy based on the skills of human potential. At this point, it is worth emphasizing that the full use of the knowledge and skills of the personnel of a logistics company, their shaping and creating conditions for them being seen, cannot be spontaneous and occasional, but requires a systemic approach and treatment as an appropriate process that calls for constant control and regulation. The knowledge of the company’s employees is a dynamic resource, it is constantly updated, and its

¹ Z. Ścibiorek, *Decydowanie podstawową funkcją zarządzania*, Toruń 2021, p. 7.

² J. Borkowski [and others], *Ludzie w organizacji*, Warszawa 1999, p. 10.

³ R. W. Griffin, *Podstawy zarządzania organizacjami*, Warszawa 1997, p. 35.

bearers - the company's employees - are constantly developing and improving. Man in his behaviour is not guided by a rule, but by the complex value of work and life, he perceives reality in a subjective way, and his behaviour often changes with the change of the situation or task. E. Tengström and B. Jungen emphasize that *he must adapt to the roles imposed on him by social structures. It must adapt to the natural, social and cultural environment and therefore must be malleable and easily mouldable. However, man also has the ability to change his environment and therefore is creative. Plasticity and creativity, the essential attributes of man, are the starting point for the analysis of man*⁴.

Man is a being who consciously assimilates reality, has a specific knowledge about himself and the world, professes a specific worldview, uses specific categories of assessment and evaluation, gives his own meaning to the created and experienced processes and phenomena. *He is – as L. von Bertalanffy states – (...) a system of an active personality; (...) he is not a passive recipient of stimuli coming from the external world, but in a completely specific sense he creates his own world*⁵.

An organization is a collection of related social behaviours of a number of people who are subjected to certain incentives which in return oblige them to make certain contributions to the logistics company. In turn, each employee of the logistics company remains in it as long as the incentives received from it are not less than the required contribution, while the contributions of individual participants being the source from which the organization draws incentives or which it „processes” into these means.

2. BASIC CONDITIONS OF OPERATION OF LOGISTIC COMPANIES

There is no need to convince anyone that the conditions of functioning of modern organizations affect many issues related to the management process. Qualified managers and employees at various levels are still needed. In order to achieve a high level of efficiency of logistics companies, professionals are indispensable, who, in addition to knowledge and qualifications, have certain personal predispositions. Today, an employee must have knowledge and skills in many areas. It is important to constantly improve the knowledge or skills once acquired⁶. This fully corresponds to the definition of M. Jabłoński, who states that ... *competencies are knowledge, skills*

⁴ E. Tangström, B. Jungen, *Ekologia człowieka – pole działania i metody*, „Problemy”, 7 (1987), p. 34.

⁵ L. von Bertalanffy, *Ogólna teoria systemów*, Warszawa 1984, p. 246, p. 231.

⁶ O. Lundy, A. Cowling, *Strategiczne zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi*, Oficyna Ekonomiczna, Kraków 2000, p. 78.

*and attitudes expressed in the form of behaviours that are a prerequisite for success in a given position*⁷. This is consistent with the position of P. Louart, who emphasizes that *...in personnel management, all elements interact with each other, and that is why a methodological and strategic approach is so important, a comprehensive vision of the necessary effort and goals to be achieved in a given time*⁸.

The need, even the necessity, to constantly update employee competencies is supported by the volatility of the environment and the constantly raised level of technological advancement, which is clearly visible through the prism of the industrial revolution (IR) 4.0. The fourth industrial revolution is something we have been witnessing for many years. Thanks to new technologies, the creation and development of the Internet, the transfer of many services to the network or the emergence of the broadly understood Internet of Things (IoT), the previously impossible conditions for the implementation of tasks have been created⁹. These facts necessitate the need to constantly resolve various matters, still in different conditions. It is not only managers who have to deal with the increasing complexity created by globalization, competition, formal and legal regulations and shareholder pressure, etc. The implementation of diverse tasks is further complicated by rapid changes, unexpected disruptions, as well as various types of crisis situations. Working in a logistics company brings numerous challenges, while creating great opportunities and chances to stand out. In order for people employed in the broadly understood logistics to be successful, they must have a large and extensive interdisciplinary knowledge¹⁰.

The requirements of the modern market, which has undergone a deep transformation from classical capitalism to a knowledge-based economy, pose completely new challenges to employees¹¹. In performing tasks, especially the managerial ones, it is

⁷ M. Jabłoński, *Koncepcje i modele kompetencji pracowniczych*, CeDeWu, Warszawa 2011, p.42.

⁸ P. Louart, *Kierowanie personelem w przedsiębiorstwie*, Wyd. Poltext, Warszawa 1995, 10.

⁹ *Przemysł 4.0, czyli czwarta rewolucja przemysłowa*, Radmot, https://radmot.com/pl/blog/przemysl-4-0?utm_term=&utm_campaign=%5BDYN+-+dicoverly+blog%5D&utm_source=adwords&utm_medium=ppc&hsa_acc=3663507192&hsa_cam=18875400872&hsa_grp=143573549019&hsa_ad=634205059901&hsa_src=g&hsa_tgt=dsa-39587879683&hsa_kw=&hsa_mt=&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_ver=3&gclid=CjwKCAiAleOeBhBdEiwAfgmXfwdN7BfbmYgwzTOtyOY__0DlzcqSypbgT_0WmgfQUSKBeqkr4AaAn9hoCQtkQAvD_BwE [access: 31.01.2023].

¹⁰ J. Rogers, K. Whittleworth, A. Gilbert, *Menedżer jako coach. Nowoczesny styl zarządzania*, Gdańsk 2015, p. 9.

¹¹ B. R. Kuc, M. Żemigala, *Menedżer nowych czasów. Najlepsze metody i narzędzia zarządzania*, Onepress, Gliwice 2016, p. 7.

essential to communicate so that thoughts, desires or knowledge become known and understandable to others¹². Communication also creates many opportunities for immediate interference in what is happening in the company¹³.

Already in *the Practice of Management*, Drucker recognized the importance of trained and competent employees¹⁴. This management coryphaeus emphasizes that if employees do it while being properly prepared, the decisions made will probably be beneficial for the organization, it will be easier for them to create a team where everyone will identify with the company¹⁵. An important role is played by the fact that achieving effectiveness by the organization largely depends on the efficiency of the manager's functioning in it and the ability to use the existing conditions by the entire staff of the logistics company.

The introduction of new methods of operation of a logistics company is associated with many problems of a technical, organizational and personnel nature. Therefore, the entire process should be preceded by a thorough analysis of the project's profitability¹⁶. Enterprises are systems composed of a series of units of various sizes and purposes, each of which is a subsystem of a certain level. These subsystems interact with each other, e.g. through linear and functional dependencies as well as interpersonal relations. To be successful, it is necessary to achieve the synergistic effect. This is a condition for achieving the set goal. Owing to the appropriate organization and use of available resources in a way that guarantees its success and maintains a dynamic balance in relation to the environment, it is possible to outperform the competition.

Managing a logistics company is associated with the possession of power (resulting from the ownership of the means of production or the power of attorney to use them) and the ability to set goals and achieve them (under certain conditions, using the means at hand, taking into account changes in the environment and people's behaviour). In order to be successful, a high level of competence is indispensable. This is confirmed by the results of research, e.g. by Professor B. R. Kuc¹⁷ or Professor

¹² M. Fielding, *Effective communication in organisations*, Juta & Co, Lansdowne 2006, p. 88.

¹³ J. Apker, *Communication in Health Organisations*, Polity, Cambridge 2012, p. 112; J. T. Wood, *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters*, Cengage Learning, Boston 2009, p. 132.

¹⁴ P. F. Drucker, *Praktyka zarządzania*, PWE, Warszawa 1998, p. 36.

¹⁵ R. Meredith Belbin, *Twoja rola w zespole*, Gdańsk 2008, p. 9; M. Alewson, *Understanding Organisational Culture*, Sage, London 2013, p. 108.

¹⁶ J. Bates, J. R. Parkinson, *Business Economics*, Basil Blackwell Publisher, Oxford 1982, p. 223.

¹⁷ B. R. Kuc, *Zarządzanie doskonałe*, Wyd. Oskar-Master of Biznes, Warszawa 2009, p. 482.

A. Sajkiewicz¹⁸. Their conclusions from the conducted scientific research unequivocally emphasize the need to improve competences, but they do not indicate the forms and methods of what is so important for modern organizations and the staff employed there. In the studies of the aforementioned representatives of the world of science, there is no answer to the fundamental question: how to do it? On the other hand, the need for continuous development of employees, especially people in managerial positions, is strongly emphasized¹⁹.

Conducting innovative activity requires such a way of managing the organization that will allow the use of emerging opportunities and avoiding threats²⁰. It is essential to anticipate the future, not just manage change, to actively shape the future and balance the company's short-term goals with long-term goals.

The already mentioned flexibility in operation is important because competitiveness forces activities to be concentrated and the intellectual potential of the staff to be used more and more effectively²¹. The volatility of the environment also forces the company to be able to react quickly to changes and adapt to the new requirements of a turbulent market. With new technologies comes the need for other, new skills and division of labour. Success is not conducive to such an attitude of staff who stubbornly stick to what they have done best so far. Employees staying in place make many mistakes. First of all, without investing in themselves, they will never be perceived as large-format professionals, bravely taking up various types of problems. Such a person will also be difficult to perceive as flexible, since their abilities are limited and they are not willing to learn new things. Subconsciously, they can only accept solutions that have already been proven. It should be assumed that this type of employee with clearly fossilized views will have a negative impact on the attitudes of the environment.

In the modern conditions of operation of logistics companies, one of the primary and strategic tasks is to create such conditions that the goals of employees and the goals of the company are consistent²². The results of a number of studies unequivocally confirm that this is the case when, as productivity increases and profitability

¹⁸ A. Sajkiewicz, *Kompetencje menedżerów w organizacji uczącej się*, Difin, Warszawa 2008, p. 16, pp. 81-87.

¹⁹ D. T. Thierry, Ch. Sauret, N. Monod, *Zatrudnienie i kompetencje w przedsiębiorstwie w procesach zmian*, Poltext, Warszawa 1994, pp. 21-28.

²⁰ P. F. Drucker, *Zarządzanie w czasach burzliwych*, Akademia Ekonomiczna w Krakowie, Kraków 1995, p. 15.

²¹ Z. Ścibiorek, *Kierownik w przedsiębiorstwie*, Wyd. Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2000, p. 32.

²² Ch. Evans, *Zarządzanie wiedzą*, PWE, Warszawa 2005, p. 88.

improves, there is an appropriate improvement in meeting the needs of staff, and the increase in work efficiency is accompanied by appropriate incentives of material interest. Then an employee identifies with the enterprise, enjoys its successes, and suffers painfully from its failures. This position corresponds to the fact that the success of any organization depends on the personnel: knowledge, qualifications and motivation of its employees, their striving for better work, change and progress²³.

3. THE NEED TO RAISE COMPETENCES – THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

Modern times pose many important tasks and challenges to logistics organizations and their staff. Logistics needs staff who are enthusiastic and believe in growth in the turbulent, competitive environment in which they operate²⁴. At the same time, the nature and pace of transformations are also changing, which is undoubtedly influenced by technological progress and the external environment of companies' operating conditions. New business models, reorganizations, takeovers and mergers put enormous pressure on managers and employees. They are faced with ever greater requirements related to the possession of new competencies, especially in relation to the management staff. Currently, a manager must be a professional in his/her profession, must be able to talk to people, respect them, develop employee talents, determine to work, motivate and learn together with the team²⁵. I fully identify with the statement that the professionalism of a manager is a determinant of organizational success, effective changes and innovation.

Nowadays, time determines the functioning of logistics companies more and more. Understanding time as capital allows you to understand its value and importance in managing people and managing this type of organization. This requires from a manager not only talent and skills, but also professionalism and up-to-date knowledge. Therefore, a manager should learn the methods and instruments used by reputable

²³ J. Penc, *Menedżerowie i organizacje jutra*, Wyd. WSPol, Szczytno 2014, p. 17; T. Gospodarek, *Zarządzanie dla racjonalnego menedżera*, Difin, Warszawa 2014, s. 160-161; Z. Ścibiorek, *Inwestowanie w personel*, Wyd. Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2006, p. 9.

²⁴ J. Winterton, *Competence across Europe: highest common factor or lowest common denominator?*, „Journal of European Industrial Training”, 33 (8/9) (2009), pp. 681-700; R. E. Boyatzis, *The competent manager. The model for effective performance*, John Wiley & Sons Inc., New York 1982.

²⁵ Y. Baruch, *Transforming careers: from linear to multidirectional careers path*, „Career Development International”, 9(1) (2004); D. P. Cushman, S. S. King, *Communication and high-speed management*, State University of New York Press, New York 1999.

companies that have already achieved success, are competitive, bring the best results and are treated as a priority in the business world. Only a systemic and rational use of what is at your disposal will allow you to achieve the goal of a logistics company. The staff must be effective in their actions, which can be best described, following P. Drucker, through the prism of efficiency. At the same time, more and more emphasis is placed on effectiveness as the key to the success of the enterprise, which is increasingly dependent on the harmonious cooperation of individual cells.

The thesis that managers must provide their own team with good conditions for the implementation of tasks is still valid. It is indispensable, but in this process an important role is played by employees whose competences must be constantly updated and even raised to a higher level. Then there will also be a real chance to maintain efficient operation, and not only while maintaining the status quo. Such a team will have a chance to initiate changes that will improve the team's performance. In practice, this sometimes means the need to question the existing operating procedures and fossilized organizational structures²⁶. A competent team cannot focus only on introducing top-down changes, it must also be their initiator, because only such an attitude can ensure group success. Probably then also personal interactions will develop, which will allow the team to be perceived as a certain community, as a very important element of the organizational structure of a logistics company.

Conclusions from the published research results of a number of authors, including Z. Ścibiorek and Z. Zamiar, indicate that being a good employee is a temporary state, because the world is changing, circumstances, people and the inside of a logistics company are changing. If you want to keep up and meet the requirements, it is essential to keep learning. Only understanding this fact and "becoming friends" with this process will allow for the most effective ways to improve competences. Currently, there is no other alternative if you want to be good and stay in the game.

The labour market is constantly changing and requires employees to constantly improve their competences. To ensure high efficiency of a logistics company, it is necessary to acquire new or consolidate previously acquired skills and professional qualifications, especially managerial competences. These expenditures bring measurable results in the future, mainly in the form of achieving higher work efficiency, resulting in superiority over the competition²⁷. Moreover, it should be borne in

²⁶ R. B. Kuc, M. Żemigala, *Menedżer nowych czasów. Najlepsze metody i narzędzia zarządzania*, Onepress, Gliwice 2016, p. 146.

²⁷ C. M. Christensen, *The Past and Future of Competitive Advantage*, „MIT Sloan Management Review”, 42(2) (2001), pp. 105-109.

mind that qualifications speak of the past, competences of the future, which is clearly noticed by F. Delamare le Deist and J. Winterton²⁸.

Not only in logistics companies, people in managerial positions play special roles. Among a number of manager qualities, leadership skills are of particular importance, which are necessary to lead a team²⁹. A manager who has the right charisma can effectively motivate his/her employees to work. This is an important feature also in contacts with the company's contractors. They can see that the company is managed effectively and professionally. Since a manager is responsible for managing the company or its part, it is also important to properly plan activities, which requires not only excellent knowledge of these issues, but also a sense of realism and self-discipline, as well as the ability to set goals (for yourself and others). In the modern world, assertiveness is becoming a basic feature of a manager. This clearly positive character trait, in the business environment consists mainly in the use of gentle firmness in defending one's own arguments in such a way as not to come into conflict with the arguments of other people. Everyone needs motivation, not only employees, but also the manager himself. Therefore, it's good for him to be able to find new challenges for the whole team. This is especially important after significant success, when burnout can set in³⁰. Creativity and empathy are also indispensable, as well as initiative in undertaking various activities and ways of doing them.

A manager is a person who manages, makes decisions, heads a specific human team and has the art of persuading people to achieve a common goal³¹. By performing his/her function, he/she significantly affects the work (action) of this team of employees and the results achieved by many, as well as the climate (atmosphere) of cooperation in the group.

The above corresponds to the fact that every organization should be perceived as a system³². This in turn means, among other things, that it is necessary to notice the connections between various fields of knowledge connected with human

²⁸ F. Delamare le Deist, J. Winterton, *What is competence?*, „Human Resource Development International”, 1 (2005), pp. 27-46.

²⁹ P. J. Kotter, *Zarządzanie to nie przywództwo*, Harvard Business Review, 2017.

³⁰ R. C. Pees, G. H. Shoop, J. T. Ziegenfuss, *Organisational consciousness*, „Journal of Health Organization and Management”, 23(5) (2009), pp. 505-521.

³¹ R. Morris, M. Seeman M., *The Problem of Leadership: An Inter-Disciplinary Approach*, „American Journal of Sociology”, 56(2) (1951), p. 19.

³² M. Church., *Organizing Simply for Complexity: Beyond Metaphor Towards Theory*, „Long Range Planning”, 32(4) (1999).

activity. This is done mainly to lead to the integration of this knowledge and its use for the logistics company. It is also essential to improve processes that will improve the business.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The need and the need to constantly care for a high level of knowledge and skills of employees of modern organizations is an indispensable condition for the functioning of logistics companies. This is clearly emphasized by globalization processes, internationalization of production processes and technological progress. On the other hand, the constantly changing tastes and expectations of customers place ever higher demands. New challenges can be met by an educated crew with high-level knowledge and qualifications adequate to the tasks performed. However, it is essential for logistics companies to create the right climate for increasing intellectual capital, so that this type of organization becomes a learning organization. This is a very important element of the personnel strategy of each company, and at the same time relatively sensitive. In order to develop the right climate for investing in personnel in a logistics company, it takes not only time and understanding of this need by employees. It is also indispensable for managers to behave rationally, aiming at creating competent employee teams, which will be one of the foundations for achieving logistic success.

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