

Tadeusz Listwan, Marzena Stor (Editors), (2008)

**Zarządzanie kadrą menedżerską w organizacjach międzynarodowych w Polsce [Managing the managerial staff at international organizations in Poland]**

Wrocław University of Economics Publishing House, Wrocław

Human resource management around the world has achieved a level of development that is best described by the phrase *strategic international human resource management*. This is also seen in Polish professional literature, albeit the state of research and publications is certainly insufficient and all the more unsatisfactory. In calling attention to this fact the authors of the reviewed work stress that this is caused by the relatively short duration of the functioning of international companies in Poland as well as the continued minimal expansion of Polish capital on foreign markets. However, it is these very processes that generate a need for study, analysis, and an evaluation of practices in the field of human resource management on international markets. It is in this context that it must be agreed that the reviewed book is making its appearance right on time to meet the expectations of the community involved in questions of the functioning of people in international companies. It is undoubtedly a significant input into the development of human resource management in both its theoretical and practical layers.

*Managing the Managerial Staff at International Organizations in Poland* is a book that emerged as a result of several years of research by the Chair of Staff Management of the Wrocław University of Economics under the leadership of Professor Tadeusz Listwan. The subject of analysis was a key part of the human resources of international companies—the managerial staff. The reviewed work understands that name as “persons filling managerial positions and/or holding formal powers to influence the employee teams or the functioning of the organization” (p. 15). Pushed by reviewer responsibility, it is necessary to stress the painstaking care taken in conducting the above research, which is important from the point of view of drawing conclusions on the basis of the received results. Although the sample of companies encompassed by the study was not great, the scope of the study as well as its level of detail, multiplicity of sources, and applied

methods have played a role in collecting much valuable empirical material. This is one of the positive features distinguishing this publication from others. My only problem is the use of the term *international organizations* in the title. This is not a fortunate choice as the area of research was the international company—a single form of the sundry international organizations in existence. The book consists of seven chapters preceded by an introduction and complete with a conclusion. The individual chapters differ in volume and level of detail of the discussed contents, which is the result of the importance applied by the authors to the discussed questions. The greatest amount of space was devoted to the question of managerial staff management strategy and communications in the process of managerial staff management. The subject matter of the remaining chapters consists of the following topics: selection for managerial positions, the development of the managerial staff, assessment of the managerial staff, its remuneration and supervision, and information technology support in the management process.

It would be a difficult task for a review to discuss or give a view on all matters touched upon by the authors of this book without being in danger of mere surface skimming or risking certain simplifications. For this reason I choose to restrict myself to several selected comments. The chapter devoted to the strategic aspects of managerial staff management is among the most important. This is true both because of the weight of the problems it delves into and its volume. As a start, it is necessary to stress that writing about strategy or strategic management is a major challenge in light of changing views on this topic as well as the multiplicity of approaches found in topical literature. In reading this chapter, it is the painstaking detail that is the most obvious. It is expressed in that first, it was matters linked with strategic management, strategic international human resource management, the typology of personnel strategies, ties between personnel strategy and other functional strategies, the classification of personnel strategies in international companies, and a proposal for personnel strategy systems in international companies that are discussed. The outcome of this is a solid compendium of knowledge on strategic human resource management in international companies. Of course, it is possible to discuss the accuracy of the terms used for individual strategies applied as a result of an analysis of literature, where types such as monocentric, polycentric, global-centric, and glocal-centric (p. 41), followed by an identification of corporate level strategies such as monolithic, pluralistic, global, and glocal as well as strategies on the level of the local company such as implementational, progressive, standardizing, and diffusion-capitalistic (p. 43) are looked at. It seems that this is the result of the application of criteria derived from various concepts in the ordering of strategies. There is no doubt that this is a creative approach, but it does complicate the rather unfocused picture in this field. The assumed system of international company personnel strategies served as a basis for empirical study. The results are found in a further section of this chapter. In

spite of the critical remarks on the ordering of personnel strategies and the assumption of rigid relations among them as made earlier, I rate the methods of conducting the analysis of personnel strategies applied in the sample group of companies very highly. It has a level of detail that provides much interesting information about this little known area of international human resource management. Ultimately, the whole is cohesive while the conclusions at the end are an accurate synthesis of the results received.

The remaining parts of the book have a similar layout. Their starting point is the defining of the objective and scope of the study of the given sub-area of the human resource function, followed by a presentation of research results, after which there is a summing up and conclusions. This makes the book seem like a set of fragmentary reports on research work, connected by the managerial staff thread. They provide significant valuable data on selected aspects of managing this professional group in international companies.

The chapter devoted to selection for managerial posts is interesting. It provides profiles for various managerial levels and methods of selecting managerial staff as applied in American, Asian, and European companies making up the study sample. It also calls attention to questions linked with the attracting of the appropriate candidates as well as the impact of cultural differences on methods of filling managerial posts.

A successive chapter is devoted to improvement and development of the managerial staff. Applied practices are presented in terms of processes—i.e. with respect to the preparation, implementation, and monitoring phases. The state of affairs found in the field of development of managerial staff of the examined companies inclined the authors to a rather critical assessment as based on the confirmed deficiencies in the area of professional development planning and formalization of conducted operations.

An interesting aspect of research in the area of evaluating managerial staff was its centralization, understood as the location of defined personnel decisions with respect to the international company head office and its Polish division.

Managerial remuneration in international companies is a successive matter that was the subject of study and discussion in the reviewed book. The presented research results will enrich the state of knowledge on practices in this undoubtedly key area of managerial staff management. Among the most important research results are the practice of using company objectives—as operating on the Polish market and independent of the level of remuneration at the head office—as a guide in establishing compensation level, absence of any significant differences in remuneration components applied on the basis of the international company's country of origin and size, a moderate level of centralization in the shaping of the remuneration system, and the relative autonomy of international company divisions on the Polish market with respect to the establishing of

the primary components of remuneration on an operating level, where strategic matters are left to the company head office.

Chapter seven looks into the question of the monitoring and supporting of the personnel function in the investigated international companies through information technology. In this sense, it does not directly refer to managing the managerial staff, but it is a valuable point of view on changes in approach to implementing the human resource function that is taking place in modern organizations.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of efficient communications in the process of managing human resources. For this reason, the encompassing of this question by research is fully justified. The results received are presented in chapter eight, which as was already mentioned is not only the largest in terms of volume, but primarily has significant substantive value. It contains discussions in the section devoted to theoretical aspects of communications in international organizations, where there is a successful synthetic collection of existing achievements found in topical literature as well as analyses of the results of empirical research. One interesting conclusion is the establishing that problems occurring in international communications are more often supra-cultural in nature than stemming from cultural differences. The authors were successful in demonstrating the influence of communication on individual areas of the personnel function, including as being dependent on the country of origin of the examined international company.

An important role in the reviewed book is played by the conclusion found in Chapter 9. It provides a synthetic look at the research results, described in detail in the preceding chapters of the book. Among the conclusions formulated by the authors is the closing statement that the weakness of managerial staff management in the investigated international companies operating in Poland is the lack of any comprehensive approach to the undertaken actions, as well as an insufficient taking into account of the Polish reality, and a failure to see cultural differences. It may be stated that this is a very critical assessment, albeit on the other hand, another conclusion formulated is that the level of implementation of the personnel function is greater than in the case of Polish companies with respect to the managers of international companies operating in Poland. Without taking up a discussion at this point, I would only like to limit myself to stating that it would be interesting to investigate the extent to which this advantage is the result of the policies of the head office of the examined international companies and how much of it is the result of the actions of Polish human resource managers working in the divisions of such companies on the Polish market.

Summing up, it should be stated that the reviewed book inspires discussion on the subject of study in the area of international human resource management, especially with respect to the managerial staff, while at the same time it provides valuable empirical

material on practices applied by the international companies operating in Poland. All this signifies that this is a book that is worth reading. I strongly recommend it for both those conducting research and specialists involved in these matters in practice.

*Aleksy Poczowski*

**Aleksy Poczowski (Editor) (2008)**

**Zarządzanie talentami w organizacji [Managing talent in the organization]**

**Wolters Kluwer Publishing House, Cracow**

Managing talent is a topic that is presently the focus of attention of not only practitioners, but also theoreticians. World literature does not leave the question of managing talent by the wayside. Bookstore shelves groan under the weight of publications that include commentaries [Lewis, 2004], case studies [Carr, 2001], manuals for practitioners [Lawler III, 2008], and college textbooks [Berger and Berger, 2004], all the way to dignified journals [Boudreau, 2005]. In as much as world literature does not pass by questions of talent management indifferently, a certain vacuum is sensed in Poland, which is tied with the relatively small amount of publications on managing talent. Apart from the Polish precursor, a group work edited by Stanisława Borkowska entitled *Zarządzanie talentami* [Managing talent], this gap is filled in both its practical and theoretical dimension by *Zarządzanie talentami* [Managing talent] edited by Aleksy Poczowski. This new work is the only publication on the market presenting the results of research in the field under Polish conditions.

The work is essentially made up of two integral parts, interwoven with a third. The first is a compendium of theory dedicated all those who want to commence or continue their studies on the question of talent management. The second part presents the practice of managing and research results. In the individual chapters, the authors join together the results of research into literature and the results of empirical studies conducted on thirty-six Polish organizations (performed using a proprietary questionnaire). They also add conclusions drawn from analyses of case studies. On the one hand, this form of discourse demonstrates the complexity of the discussed subject matter, while on the other, by showing practical implications derived from research, it facilitates a perception of the previously presented detailed problems. The multiplicity of problems culled from literature and their consistent placement into economic practice awakens and stimulates

active discussion on the problems and questions approached by the authors. Successive chapters provide inspiration, while the presented literature makes possible a falling back on sources in each and every case for those who want to deepen their knowledge on the discussed areas.

The two initial chapters introduce the reader to the subject matter. An effort is also made to define the essence of *talent*, *managing talent* (the authors themselves stress the ambiguity of the concept of *talent* and therefore the corresponding ambivalence of *managing talent*), and the presentation of a model for managing talent in the organization (p. 61). There is no doubt that this is one of the first efforts at a theoretical ordering of knowledge in the realm of managing talent in Polish literature. Successive chapters consistently describe aspects of the presented general model, serving as its development, deepening, and detailing. Strategic questions coupled with talent are depicted first. This section broadly describes the problem of various ways of looking at talent management strategies, the problem of aligning company strategy and talent management strategy, as well as taking up an exceptionally inspiring effort at grasping the process of strategic talent management. Chapters four, five, and six broadly present questions of attracting, holding, and developing talent. Such an approach to the specific areas linked with the practice of talent management has its natural reflection in human resource management and finds strong justification in world literature [Catlin, Matthews, 2002]. Worth stressing is the fact that each and every time, the authors show the differences and similarities found between managing talent and managing human resources (HRM). At the same time, they do not question the need for links. Each of the chapters contains many novelties (concepts, syntheses, and models). What is more, these are evaluated from the point of view of the study results received. The seventh chapter presents a method for measuring and assessing talent as well as managing talent, thus closing discussions in line with the classic managerial function.

Chapter eight should enlist the particular attention of researchers and practitioners. It presents the results of three case studies. Three talent management programs that were implemented in Polish organizations—British American Tobacco Polska, Delphi Polska S.A., and Leroy Merlin Polska—are analyzed.

Just looking at its pioneering character and comprehensive approach, this work should find a place on the shelf of not only talent management theoreticians and practitioners, but of everyone concerned with broadly conceived matters of human resource management. The exceptional character of the reviewed work is also seen in its skillful combining of theoretical content and the results of empirical tests. The challenge of creating a conceptual–empirical matrix allowing an understanding of the basics as taken up by the authors deserves stressing. This work not only equals similar English language efforts, but by its scientific character and strong reference to theory goes a step farther in

proposing a methodological platform for research into talent management in the future. It can also be a source of ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological management of exceptional workers in the organization. At the same time, matters of a philosophical nature, by being fitted into ultra-practical reality (the results of theoretical and empirical studies), are, on the one hand visible for those interested, and on the other they do not offend through sophistry or the hermetic. This book is undoubtedly important. It brings the reader closer to grasping the essence of talent management as well as an understanding of the mechanisms (methods) of managing exceptional workers in the organization.

## Literature

Berger L. A. and Berger D. R. (2004), *The Talent Management Handbook*, McGraw-Hill, New York.

Boudreau J. W. (2005), "Talentship and the New Paradigm for Human Resource Management: From Professional Practices to Strategic Talent Decision Science," *Human Resource Planning*, No. 28, pp. 17–25.

Carr N. G. (2001), *The Digital Enterprise: How to Reshape Your Business for a Connected World*, Harvard Business School Publishing, Harvard.

Catlin K. and Matthews J. (2002), *Building the Awesome Organization: Six Essential Components that Drive Entrepreneurial Growth*, Hungry Minds, Inc., Cleveland, Indianapolis, New York.

Lawler III E. A. (2008), *Talent: Making People Your Competitive Advantage*, John Wiley & Sons, San Francisco.

Lewis M. (2004). *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game*, W. W. Norton and Company Inc., New York.

*Tomasz Ingram*

**Maria Wanda Kopertyńska (2008)**

**Motywowanie pracowników. Teoria i praktyka [Motivating employees: Theory and practice]**

**Placet, Warsaw**

A central location in 21st century organizations, which function subject to the conditions of a knowledge-based economy and that hope to meet the challenges created by their surroundings, is occupied by human capital. This very significant determinant of company competitiveness—both the animator and creator of organizational development—is treated as its greatest value. Even more importantly, this valuable resource, if properly

managed, is decisive as to the success of the company and determines that success in the long term. Thus, it is the effective motivation of employees, encompassing the attracting and maintaining in the organization of talented, creative, and loyal workers who must be stirred to develop and improve their efficiency, that is a key element in the management process. The desire to maintain their internal strength ready for action forces the organization to shape an efficient system of stimuli satisfying the manifold needs of employees.

The answer to dilemmas born of the creation and perfecting of an efficient motivation system is the book by Maria Wanda Kopertyńska entitled *Motivating Employees: Theory and Practice*. In it, the author successfully searches for answers to basic questions befuddling both managers and researchers in the area of motivation. The book is actually a model example of matters of motivating workers that can be effectively applied in the practice of human resource management. Questions discussed in the work are supported by a broad gamut of practical examples reaped from economic practice, which are the outcome of many research and implementation efforts by the author.

For the sake of clarity, this publication is subdivided into five separate chapters that create a reader-friendly structure intended to provide know-how. The introduction provides a detailed characterization of all the chapters, where the author not only explains the primary objective of the publication—the comprehensive examination of questions of motivating employees in terms of both theory and practice—but also defines the profile of readers for whom the book is intended.

The first chapter introduces the reader into the arcana of psychological and sociological knowledge and then goes on to take into account the point of view of the science of organization and management. In considering the essence of motivation and motivating, the author provides a broad overview of the definitions of these concepts, stressing their dimensions in terms of attributes and operations. The demonstration of significant differences lying at the base of these two matters is what is of value from the point of view of the reader. However, apart from any detailed definitions, the question of motivating workers has served the author to explain human behavior in the organization. In discussing the basic assumptions behind motivation theory, the author proves that the application of these concepts in practice requires the identification of the needs and expectations of employees and also forces the establishing of the manner in which as well as the objectives through which individual persons are motivated. In order to make it easier for the reader to understand just what a system of motivation is and how it functions, the author uses the subsequent part of the chapter to define it and its component elements. At the same time, she discusses not only the various factors influencing the form of the system, but also calls attention to the wealth of motivating tools that are dependent on determinants coming from both the organization's external surroundings

and from within it. Among the more significant factors determining the shape of the motivation system, the author identifies the needs and expectations of employees, which simultaneously serve as a premise of appropriate selection of motivational instruments. The utility of the presented view is verified by numerous references to economic practice. Using her own research, the author proves the existence of significant differentiation in worker expectations in terms of detailed criteria, while simultaneously identifying the reasons for such differentiation.

The second chapter is entitled “Motivation through Wages.” Among other things, it is devoted to an analysis of the concept and function of wages. A proprietary understanding of the essence of wages, in line with modern conditions, has been developed on the basis of fundamental concepts as found in topical literature. The desire to guaranty the efficient implementation of all pay functions as well as the need to secure the performance of tasks currently standing before the motivation system is an introduction to the development of the basic assumptions forming the wage system in the organization. The author continues by concentrating her attention on the design aspects of the company’s wage system, which in her view necessitate: (1) wage components guarantying the execution of concrete tasks facing the motivation system, mainly through basic pay and bonuses, (2) principles of establishing / molding wage components, which is more broadly discussed in the subsequent, third chapter, (3) the forms of wages as applied to compensate workers and defining ways of linking wages with work outcomes (it is at this point that the reader has the opportunity to gain familiarity with the advantages and defects of forms applied in the practice of Polish companies), and finally (4) the principles of wage shifts, identified with an increase in compensation, encompassing the selection of criteria for providing raises.

The problem of shaping basic pay as well as bonuses for workers is developed in the third chapter. The importance of the process of evaluations aimed at establishing basic pay is shown through analyzing the essence and method for assigning value to work. The opportunity to guaranty the efficiency of this process is seen by the author in proper procedures, which she expresses by characterizing both the scope of actions and the challenges that can be met by successive phases of the process. In meeting the requirements of the contemporary assignment of value to work, the author maps the role of competencies in shaping basic pay and underscores the benefits and threats tied with remuneration for competency potential held. In order to better guaranty the effectiveness of implementing the cost, motivation, and income functions of pay, she puts stress on remuneration for concrete outcomes (effects) and behavior, taking on the form of a bonus—a popular wage component in economic practice. In the view of the author, it is the establishing of the basis for bonuses as well as criteria (measures) for evaluation that are prerequisite for effective bonuses. Here, as in the previous chapter, the author’s

practical experience does well in illustrating the basic premises. By calling up her own newest studies, she points to areas where work evaluation methods are subject to modification and she presents concrete practical solutions with respect to bonuses.

In response to an increase in interest in non-wage motivational elements, the fourth chapter, entitled “Non-Wage Motivation,” the author presents a detailed specification of non-wage motivators of material as well as intangible character as applied in the practice of Polish companies. She also stresses the importance of this group of motivators in implementing concrete tasks (e.g. keeping the employee with the company or developing a sense of loyalty). The need for selecting non-wage motivators so they secure the interests of the worker in various phases of his or her functioning in the company is univocally justified at this point. In light of the special importance of motivational training, development, and position advancement, these topics have a separate chapter that cites study results on the approach of employees and employers to such motivational tools. Moreover, the reader is placed before a need to consider ways of maintaining balance between a worker’s professional and private life. That is something that is absolutely essential for efficient operations and a sense of well-being of the person in an organization.

The final, fifth chapter of this publication refers to the problems of studying the level of satisfaction of workers—an element that supports the creation and modification of the motivation system. The author approaches questions such as satisfaction, contentment, and morale in the hope that they will allow an understanding of factors influencing the efficiency of the motivation system. Particularly worth stressing are the results of questionnaire-based studies from various companies that apply to an assessment of worker satisfaction. Being concentrated around elements providing motivation for work, they confirm the need for a regular conducting of worker satisfaction studies. In order to complete this overview of the contents of the individual sections of the publication, it is necessary to point to an ending where not only is there a summing up of the most important conclusions, but there are also pointers to directions of future study.

There is no doubt that the reviewed publication is deserving of universal attention and is a worthy suggestion for the reading list of a broad group of readers. The particular value of the reviewed work is its comprehensive approach to the subject and its specific character defined by the clearly practical grasping of motivation theory against a backdrop of literature accessible in Poland, which is the result of many years of research and implementation work on the part of the author. Moreover, the discussed book may serve as inspiration for theoretical and empirical studies in the case of employee motivation.

*Magdalena Majowska*