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ETHICAL CONDITIONS OF INTRODUCING INNOVATIONS INTO AN ORGANIZATION

Summary. The article contains an analysis of the results of a research concerning the opinion of management staff on the conditions of effective introducing innovation into an organization, taking in to account the ethical aspects of the process.

Keywords: innovations, main sources of innovations, trainings, communication, workers' participation.

ETYCZNE UWARUNKOWANIA WPROWADZANIA INNOWACJI DO ORGANIZACJI

Streszczenie. Artykuł zawiera analizę wyników badań, związanych z opinią kadry zarządzającej odnośnie do uwarunkowań skutecznego wprowadzania innowacji do organizacji, z uwzględnieniem aspektów etycznych.

Słowa kluczowe: innowacje, źródła innowacji, szkolenia, komunikacja, party-cypacja pracownicza.

1. Introduction

Innovations, understood as "introducing new things, ideas or ways of action"[1] or, in their vernacular meaning, identified as technical changes and "research-developmental activities of economic entities so that inventions are made and then introduced into the market,"[2], constitute an essential element of the functioning of contemporary businesses. According to

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[1] Kalinowski B.: Innowacyjność przedsiębiorstw a systemy zarządzania jakością. Oficyna a Wolters Kluwer Business, Warszawa 2010, p.13.
[2] Ibid., p.13.

A. Pomykalski, it should be emphasized that "the ability to create and absorb innovation is the greatest challenge of the 21st century"[3].

Four subcategories of innovation can be distinguished[4]:

1. product innovation, which is based on introducing a brand new product or service, or a significantly improved one in terms of its distinctive features,

2. process innovation, which consists in introducing a new or a considerably improved method of production or delivery,

3. marketing innovation, which bases upon the introduction of a new marketing method, which requires significant changes in product construction,

4. organization innovation, which introduces a new method of business activity organization of a company.

At that point, it is worth emphasizing the main sources of innovations. According to reference literature, these are[5]:

1. the so called shock to the system (an event that changes the world),

2. coincidences, unexpected and surprising events,

3. the changing legal regulations,

4. advertising, which releases and widens the already existing needs,

5. the possibilities offered by science,

6. market impulse,

7. observation of others,

8. explorations, the analysis of the projections of future alternatives and opening new possibilities.

It should be taken into account, however, that a company which aims to introduce innovations into the market, or accomplish significant, innovational changes in the key areas of its activities, has to meet particular criteria. Apart from incessant process of learning and procuring knowledge (e.g. technological, key coordinative or auxiliary one)[6], it is important to bear in mind the fact of creating "new standards of conduct, both inside the company and in relations with other market participants. What should be included in the standard category is reliability, honesty, punctuality and, above all, the awareness that what has a huge influence on a company's success is the cooperation with research, scientific and scholar units, as well as all the organizations that may constitute a source of new ideas"[7].

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[3] Pomykalski A.: Zarządzanie innowacjami. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Łódź 2001, p. 1.
[4] Kłos Z.: Innowacyjność i przedsiębiorczość innowacyjna. Wydawnictwo Politechniki Poznańskiej, Poznań 2012, p. 55-56.
[5] Bessant J., Tidd J.: Zarządzanie innowacjami. Integracja zmian technologicznych, rynkowych, organizacyjnych. Oficyna a Wolter Kluwer Business, Warszawa 2013, p. 314.
[6] Białoń L. (red):Zarządzanie działalnością innowacyjną. Wydawnictwo Placet, Warszawa 2010, p. 172-173.
[7] Ibid., p. 173.

Moreover, the management staff should focus on making use of right and ethical methods, which will allow to deal with employees' reluctance concerning changes, while respecting their rights and concerns at the same time.

Such methods include training courses, participation or the right way of communication[8]. The last element is particularly important and it should based on the following principles[9]:

1. accounting for employees' informational needs,
2. establishing key areas, as well as the aim and form of the transmission of information,
3. setting apart a group of employees in terms of the scope of informational needs,
4. preparing a detailed scheme of using communication means concerning particular groups of employees,
5. setting rules of verifying the effectiveness of the communication processes through the use of appropriate standards.

2. Purpose of the research

One of the main goals of the research carried out among management personnel was to establish the ethical principles of introducing innovation into an organization. The research was carried out in the Water Supply and Sewerage Company Ltd. in Rybnik in July 2013, with the use of a survey questionnaire.

22 respondents took part in the research (including 7 women and 15 men). Most of them (as many as 48%) were between 35-44 years of age, whereas people between 45-54 (24%) came in second. The respondents between 25-34 and those over 55 years of age constituted respectively 19% and 10% of the examined population. While analyzing the respondents in terms of their job seniority it can be noted that the biggest group constituted those who have worked for more than 15 years (37%). Then, there were people who have worked for 6-10 years (32%), 11-15 years (21%) and finally those who have worked for up to five years (10%).

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[8] About main methods (respecting the employees' rights) which are used in order to deal with the workers' reluctance towards introducing changes/innovations mentions for example S. Robbins in book: Zachowania w organizacji

[9] The opinion K. Czop (in): Potocki A., Winkler R., Żbikowska A.: Komunikowanie w organizacjach gospodarczych. Wydawnictwo Difin, Warszawa 2011, p. 152.

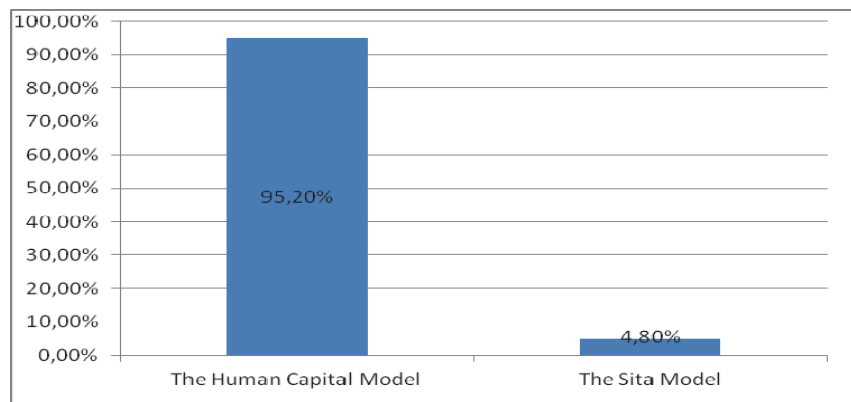## 3. Analysis of the research results

Fig. 1. The main aspects during the process of selection
Rys. 1. Kluczowe aspekty podczas procesu selekcji

One of the first questions referred to the most significant aspects taken into account during the selection process. Nearly all of the respondents (as many as 95.2%) agreed, that while employing workers in a company, the future employees' self-development potential and the desire to raise their qualifications are mostly paid attention to, which means that the Human Capital Model is being favored. 4.8% of the respondents, however, indicated the Sita Model, which is based on procuring high-class specialists, placing emphasis on professionalism in performing the job. The results may prove that the company prefers those employees, who are not yet fully developed, and who will actively participate in the process of raising their qualifications and will be therefore more open to introducing changes and innovations.
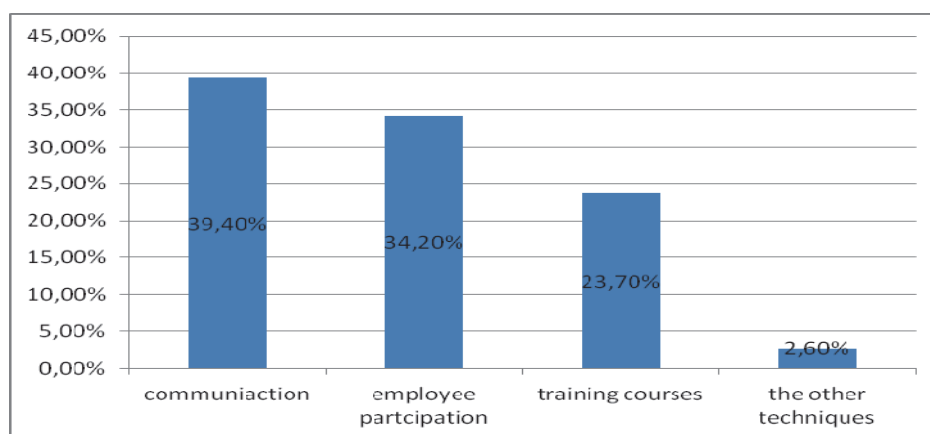

Fig. 2. The main ethical methods which are used in the enterprise in order to deal with the workers' reluctance towards introducing changes/innovations
Rys. 2. Główne metody etyczne wykorzystywane w przedsiębiorstwie w celu przełamywania oporu pracowników wobec wprowadzania zmian/innowacji

As it is depicted in the above diagram, 39.4% of the respondents indicate communication as one of the main methods (respecting the employees' rights) which is used in order to deal with the workers' reluctance towards introducing changes. Employee participation comes in second (34.2% responses), and training courses come in third (23.7%). Thus, more emphasis could be put on carrying out such training courses, which will reach the following standards:

-they would be conducted by specialists in a given field,

-they would be available for everybody,

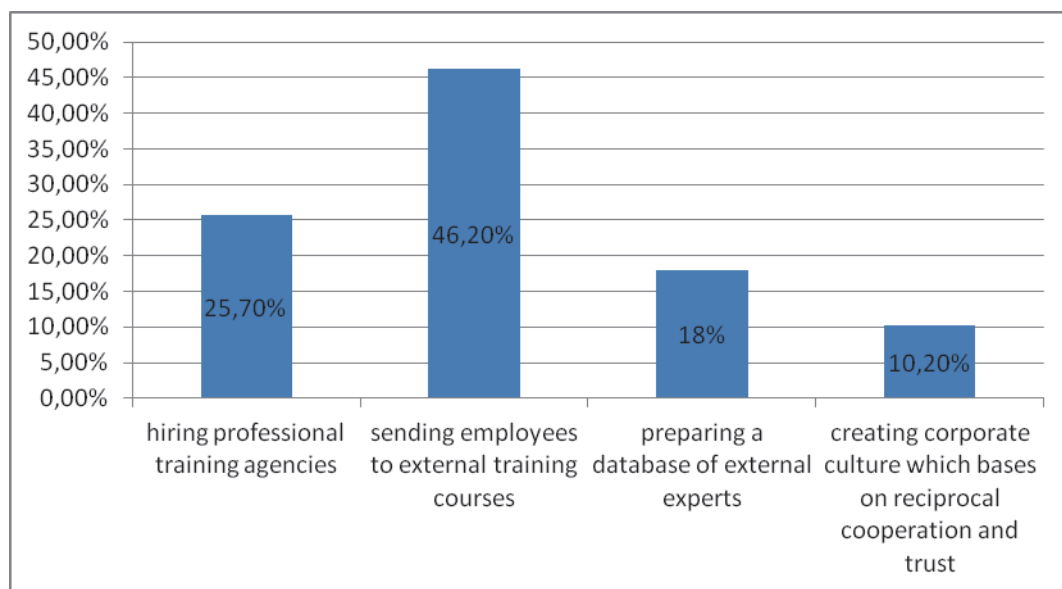-they would define the nature of change in an easy and accessible way.

Fig. 3. The activities carried out in the enterprise in order to implement the innovations into trainings
Rys. 3. Działania podejmowane w przedsiębiorstwie, aby wprowadzać innowacje w zakresie szkoleń

As it w as mentioned above, a greater emphasis given to innovational training courses would constitute a basis for dealing with the employees' reluctance concerning changes, while developing pro-organizational attitudes at the same time. Following such a model, a company proves that managing according to the ethical principles is important in their policy, and the employees constitute an extremely valuable asset, which should be incessantly taken care of and invested in.

The diagram above presents the operations taken in the organization in order to improve the training policy, introducing the innovational elements. What came in first was sending employees to external training courses (almost 47% of responses), the consecutive responses were respectively: hiring professional training agencies, (25.7%), preparing a database of external experts (18%) and creating corporate culture which bases on reciprocal cooperation and trust (10.2%). Probably, it would be a good idea to reinforce the atmosphere within the company, as it is undoubtedly conductive to an increase in effectiveness in all of its areas.
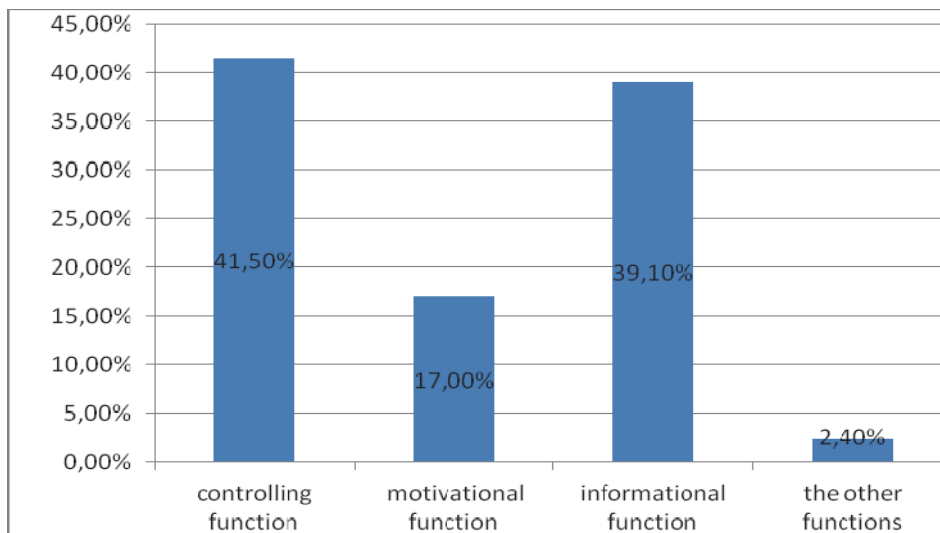
Fig. 4. The functions of communication which are used to manage of employees
Rys. 4. Funkcje komunikacji wykorzystywane do zarządzania pracownikami

   With refference to the previous considerations concerning the ethical methods of dealing
with employees' reluctance towards changes, it should be emphasized again that
communication came in the first place. The respondents were also asked about the functions
of communication that are used in staff management. As it is presented in the above diagram,
two functions received almost equal status, these are: the controlling function (e.g. analyzing
reports) and the informational function (being based on passing on messages in a clear and
very concrete way). It may seem somewhat alarming that the motivational function (related to
praise and approval for a well-done job, and in the present context referring to the support that
the employees receive during the process of introducing changes and innovations) obtained
only 17% of responses. Therefore, what sholud be done in the situation is a scheme of
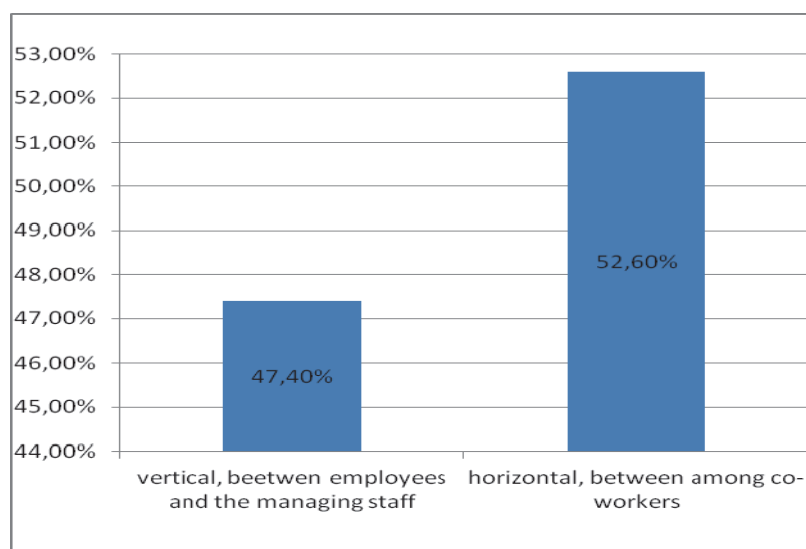imroving the motivational system in this field.

Fig. 5. Lines of communication which are easier to interfere
Rys. 5. Kierunki komunikacji podatne na zakłócenia

The respondents were also asked about which direction of communication is, according to them, more prone to disturbance – the vertical one (between employees and the managing staff), or the horizontal one (among co-workers). As communication plays a key role in the process of dealing with the reluctance towards change, it is worth working on the effectivenes of information flow in these two dimensions. As it is shown in the above diagram, according to the respondents' observations, it is the horizontal direction that is more susceptible to disruptions (so claimed 52.6% of the respondents). Thus, it can be stated that, although superiors attempt to present the nature of change or innovation in a precise way to their subordinates, the distortion of information still occurs within particular working groups. So as to avoid such situations, meetings with eployees should be held more frequently, and the contentious issues should be cleared in the normal course and on a regular basis.

4. Summary

The process of introducing innovations into a company is exceedingly hard and difficult as it is extremely complex; therefore, it requires management staff's great effort to succeed. In order to achieve success and reimbursement, employees with high development potential are necessary, as such people are open to changes and, above all, they are not afraid of taking new challenges. Thus, it is worth bearing in mind that such attitudes can be reinforced thanks to methods, which prove an ethical approach of the superiors towards their subordinates (i.e. training courses, communication or employees' participation in establishing changes. The effect of these methods is also a higher level of employees' loyalty towards the company and their identifying themselves with the organization.

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Omówienie

Skuteczna implementacja innowacji do organizacji jest zależna od bardzo wielu czynników, takich jak odpowiednie zaplecze finansowe, wykwalifikowana kadra czy też właściwa postawa kadry zarządzającej, która jeżeli jest świadoma odpowiedzialności za skuteczne przeprowadzenie całego procesu, powinna zastosować wiele zróżnicowanych metod, aby przekonać pracowników do ich zaakceptowania. Zaoferowane wsparcie pracownikom przyniesie firmie ogromne korzyści w postaci ich zaangażowania, lojalności, a także podejmowania aktywnych działań w kierunku kreowania nowych pomysłów.