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HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN CHAIN HOTELS ON THE EXAMPLE OF RADISSON BLU HOTEL IN SZCZECIN

Abstract

Chain hotels differ from independent hotels in very many features. One of them is human resource management, what stems from the fact that personnel policy of a chain hotel is thoroughly devised. All aspects related to it have to be precisely described and rather universal since they concern employees working all around the world, that is personnel representing various nations, cultures, outlook on life, etc. The article consists of three substantive parts, an introduction and a conclusion. The first part of the article, which is theoretical, concerns human resource management and its significance in the hotel industry. The next two parts are analytical and empirical (in the form of case study) and they describe basic organizational areas of functioning of the Radisson Blu hotel in Szczecin and particular human resource management tools in the analysed hotel.

Keywords: hotel industry, human resources, management

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Introduction

One of the essential success factors of modern hotel enterprises functioning in a highly competitive environment is their employees. Their contribution to work and engagement have a significant influence on carrying out a strategy determined by an enterprise.

In order to achieve objectives arising from a policy that an enterprise adopts, human resources have to be properly managed. In other words, it means that a given organization conducts activities associated with managing human resources in such a way that particular strategic objectives are achieved.

The research scope the article is human resource management in chain hotels. These hotels differ from independent hotels in very many features. One of them is human resource management, what stems from the fact that personnel policy of a chain hotel is thoroughly devised. All aspects related to it have to be precisely described and rather universal since they concern employees working all around the world, that is personnel representing various nations, cultures, outlook on life, etc.

The aim of the article is to present the analysis of human resource management tools in a chain hotel on the example of the *Radisson Blu* hotel in Szczecin.

The theoretical content of the study results from using primarily the desk research in the form of an analysis of literature on the subject and reports, whereas the empirical one is based on the secondary material provided by the analysed hotel (case study). Furthermore, the logical operations such as e.g. deduction and induction and an observation method (especially in terms of practical aspects) have also been applied.

1. Human resource management and its significance in the chain hotel industry

Human resource management is a set of decisions and activities identified with people and aimed both at achieving objectives of an organization and satisfying needs of its employees. The fundamental objective of such a kind of management is to achieve success owing to employed people and by achieving and maintaining high work effectiveness and increasing the value of human capital according to the overarching objectives of an organization.

This kind of management is functional, institutional and instrumental.¹ The functional aspect in human resource management is defined by organizing particular tasks, activities and undertakings carried out during processes of creating value. The institutional aspect refers to presenting particular roles and competence of entities qualified for making decisions on personnel as well as mutual relations between them. It is a structural solution that regulates performing a human resource function. The instrumental aspect of human resource management involves the selection of relevant instruments, techniques and methods for solving personnel system problems used in managing human resources. Human resource management is of great significance for functioning of a particular organization, hence literature on the subject also emphasises its operational and strategic aspect. It enables the effective conduct of current activities related to planning employment, recruitment and redundancy of personnel, managing work of teams, assessing, remunerating, training of employees as well as, in the long-term, controlling productivity and work costs.²

Human resource management instruments include³:

- planning employment (determining the appropriate number of personnel, defining required qualifications and personal qualities of an employee necessary for a given position),
- recruitment and selection,
- training and development of employees,
- incentive schemes and benefits,
- objective systems of employee assessment.

Terms related to the hotel industry are very rarely defined unambiguously. The terms such as “hotel chain”, “hotel system”, “chain hotels”, or even “brand hotel industry” are treated as synonyms both in the colloquial language and often in academic literature, and they are juxtaposed with “independent hotels,” a notion which does not have a commonly accepted definition, either. The above understanding of the hotel industry **stems from a relatively diverse structure of management as well as the ownership of particular chain**

¹ C. Zając, *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi*, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Bankowej, Poznań 2007, p. 13.

² Ibidem.

³ A. Panasiuk, D. Szostak (eds.), *Hotelarstwo. Usługi – eksploatacja – zarządzanie*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2008, p. 224.

hotels. For the purposes of this article, the definition describing a hotel chain as a complex of at least two hotels functioning under the same name and logo has been adopted.⁴

The following features of this kind of facilities are provided by the literature on the subject⁵:

- uniform organizational system in all subsidiaries (a uniform organizational structure);
- unified operation documentation;
- uniform range of services and a customer service system;
- their own booking system which includes all organizational units of a system and is easily available for all repeat and potential customers;
- uniform computer system in all subsidiaries;
- uniformity of location conditions;
- uniform standards of a facility and its accommodation and catering equipment;
- their own organized licensing system;
- uniform hotel logotype.

Continuing the discussion on the aspect of the hotel industry, it needs to be emphasized that a hotel offer has both material (e.g. furniture, equipment, food) and nonmaterial features including, among others, the atmosphere in a hotel and the customer service. Therefore, in order to take care of guests in a hotel appropriately, all personnel should be involved. Apart from the modern equipment and interior design of a hotel, guests also expect courtesy and a warm and special atmosphere to feel good and special. A person staying in a hotel must feel that s/he is welcome and warmly received. Then, satisfying guest needs is a result of understanding a service function of one's position at work, showing due respect, creating a friendly atmosphere, enabling a hotel guest to present their arguments and offering considerable help. The hotel industry is based on mutual trust as well as on individual care of a guest and its fundamental

⁴ M. Sidorkiewicz, A. Pawlicz, *Propedeutyka hotelarstwa. Ujęcie ekonomiczne*, Difin, Warszawa 2015, p. 73.

⁵ T. Tulibacki, *Międzynarodowe systemy hotelowe*, Wyższa Szkoła Hotelarstwa, Gastronomii i Turystyki, Warszawa 2000, p. 6.

function is offering hospitality, that is welcoming guests warmly.⁶ Therefore, speaking of the hotel industry, so many things depend on the hotel personnel with whom a guest has a direct contact, for this influences the hotel atmosphere.

Thus, human resource management is one of the most important elements making up the process of management in a hotel. Nowadays, human capital becomes the main factor of gaining and maintaining a competitive advantage of enterprises and it is particularly important in the hotel industry where personnel plays a special part. It is the hotel personnel who determines guests safety, a level and culture of service as well as the atmosphere and impression that a guest gets. When employees are not reliable and do not identify themselves with a tourism enterprise, all organizational and financial efforts as well as public relations activities may turn out to be ineffective.⁷

In order to achieve the economic goals of a hotel, an employee has to be appropriately developed. The management of human skills, qualities and manner is very complicated. Complexity and significance of employees' skills make all hotel enterprises aware of the necessity of developing these skills. Adequate methods of influencing employee's behaviour should be constantly used. Good human resource management results in employees who are committed and engaged, feel responsible for their own activities, eagerly participate in all processes in a company and contribute to their constant improvement.⁸

2. Description of basic organizational aspects concerning functioning of the Radisson Blu hotel in Szczecin

The *Radisson Blu* hotel is part of the *Rezidor* hotel group. The group consists of 422 hotels in 58 countries all over the world.⁹ The four-star hotel in Szczecin was opened on 9 November 1992. In 2009, there was a change of name from Radisson SAS to the current name, *Radisson Blu*. The analysed hotel is part of an office complex, PAZIM, where the wellness and spa centre, and a cafe are

⁶ J. Adamowicz, G. Wolak, *Jak być hotelarzem*, Krakowska Szkoła Hotelarska, Kraków 2004, p. 78.

⁷ A. Panasiuk, D. Szostak (eds.), *Hotelarstwo...*, p. 224.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ www.rezidor.com.

located. The hotel is situated in the centre of Szczecin, 40 km from the Goleniów airport, 2 km from a railway station and in the vicinity of the most important touristic attractions of the city.

In the Radisson Blu hotel in Szczecin there are 369 rooms and apartments with either twin beds, or one double bed, a TV, a radio, paid video channels, a telephone with an answering machine, an individually adjusted air-conditioning, a mini-bar and a possibility of using the Internet via modem or wirelessly.¹⁰ The hotel offers rooms differing, among others, in terms of size, or equipment.

The hotel offers various restaurant services: the restaurants *Europa Restaurant & Cafe* and *Renaissance*, *Lobby Bar* and *Copernicus Bar*. The restaurants offer international cuisine and seasonal specialities prepared from products from local producers.

The hotel has a modern conference and reception centre for both small and bigger meetings (up to 550 people). In the conference centre, there are rooms equipped with audiovisual equipment, wireless Internet and a possibility of using *DigiChart* technology enabling digitalizing notes from a flipchart with a single click. The centre provides services in planning and organizing conferences, seminars, training and occasional meetings.

The hotel also offers recreational services as part of *Fitness World Club* in which one can find an indoor swimming pool, a sauna, a gym, a relaxation room, massages and aerobics classes. The hotel is directly connected with the city SPA, *Baltica Wellness & Spa* in which there are, among others, the wellness zone with aroma, steam and Ottoman baths, a dry sauna, a tepidarium, caldarium, a stream shower, a snow grotto and jacuzzis. The meetings for even several dozen of people are organized in the wellness zone, e.g. as part of the training and conference offer.¹¹

The main element of hotel's functioning is providing services by its employees, therefore effectiveness and a particular quality of a service process will mainly depend on an organizational structure. A linear organizational structure of the *Radisson Blu* hotel in Szczecin is based on hierarchical dependencies. It is essential that each employee has one superior; a fact which enables taking quick decisions and enforcing the execution of decisions. This structure supports clarity of company hierarchy and responsibilities of all employees.

¹⁰ www.radissonblu.com.

¹¹ www.radissonblu.pl/hotel-szczecin.

The hotel is managed by a managing director whose subordinates are as follows¹²:

- financial director whose subordinates are: an accounting department (a chief accountant, accountants, a chief cashier, a payroll specialist), a procurement department (a procurement manager, a logistics specialist, a warehouse management specialist, a cost controller), an HR department (an HR manager, an HR and training specialist),
- sales and marketing director in charge of the sales and marketing department (sales managers, the sales and marketing coordinator),
- conference and reception manager in charge of the conference and reception department (the conference and reception consultant) and receptions (reception shift managers, waiters),
- restaurant manager, a head chef in charge of the restaurants and bars (restaurant and bar shift managers, waiters, barmen), the kitchen (sous chefs, chefs), pastry (a head pastry chef, pastry chefs), the kitchen help department (the kitchen help manager, kitchen help shift managers, kitchen help employees),
- reception desk manager under whom there are a reception and bell service personnel (reception duty managers, receptionists, receptionists – night audit, a porter, a switchboard operator), a reservation department (a reservation manager, a reservation employee), a fitness club (a fitness club manager, fitness instructors, receptionists),
- maintenance manager in charge of the maintenance department (office managers, chambermaids, cleaning employees responsible for public surfaces, uniform employees, the tailor, the gardener), mini-bars (service employees),
- technical director in charge of the technical department (the mechanic, the automatics employee, the electrician, the carpenter, the painter, the locksmith, the handyman), the IT department (the IT manager, IT specialists),
- security director in charge of the security department (security shift managers, security officers).

¹² Own work on the basis of: internal material of the *Radisson Blu* hotel in Szczecin.

Additionally, the managing director is a superior of an occupational health and safety specialist. The hotel hires 208 people working on the basis of an employment contract and 120–150 people on the basis of a mandate contract (monthly, as of 30.04.2015). In addition, teenage students (14 people) as well as trainees and apprentices (over 100 people annually) work in the hotel.

The structure of the employed (on the basis of employment contract) is made up of 46% of women and 54% of men. The personnel age structure of the *Radisson Blu* hotel in Szczecin is presented in Figure 1. The data demonstrates that the average age of the employed is 35. Figure 2 shows the structure of the employed according to seniority.

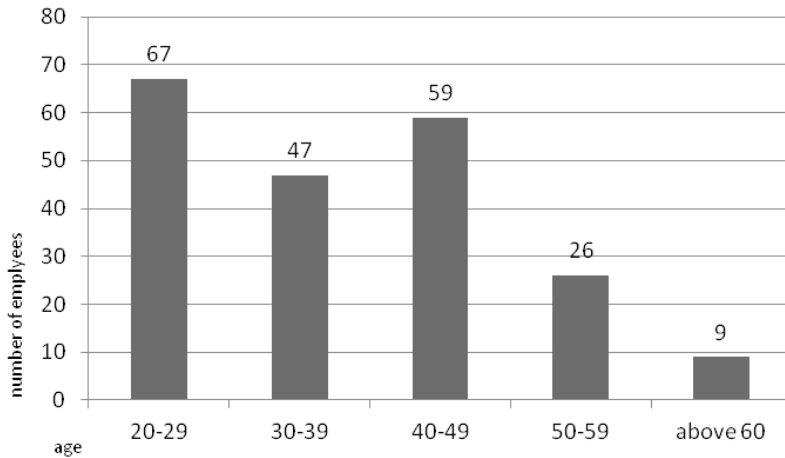


Fig. 1. Age structure of the employed in the *Radisson Blu* hotel in Szczecin (as of 30.04.2015)

Source: own work on the basis of: internal material of the *Radisson Blu* hotel in Szczecin.

As in Figure 1, a dominant age group of the employed is made up of people aged 20–29. They constitute 32% of the employed. Definitely, employees over 60 years old constitute the smallest group (only 4% of the employed).

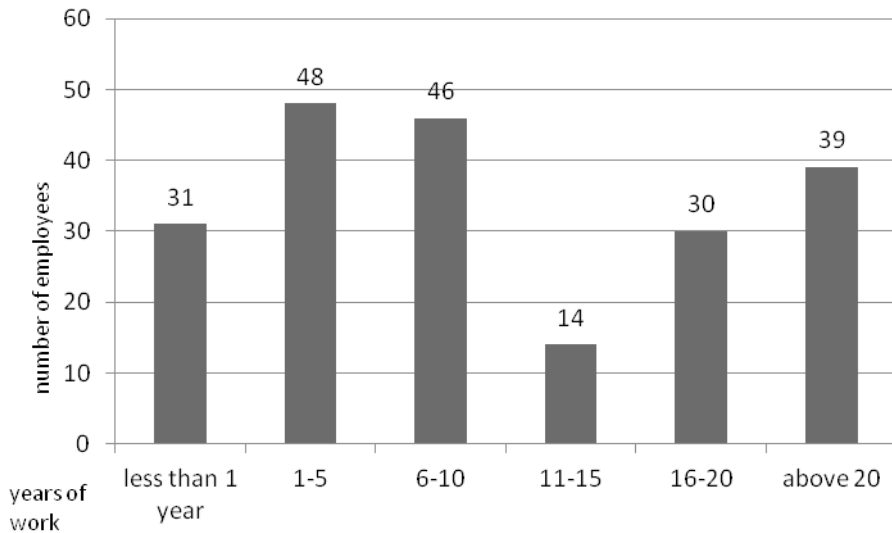


Fig. 2. Seniority structure of the employed in the *Radisson Blu* hotel in Szczecin (as of 30.04.2015)

Source: own work on the basis of: internal material of the *Radisson Blu* hotel in Szczecin.

The data presented in Figure 2 indicates that the biggest work experience of the employed is around 1–5 working years (48 people) and 6–10 working years (46 people). It is important to emphasize that the employed having more than 20–year work experience constitute a group of 39 people (19% of the employed on the basis of the employment contract).

In the *Radisson Blu* hotel in Szczecin, human resources is a very important element of its functioning, and that is a basis for appropriate human resource management and solutions in terms of the methods for motivating the hotel's personnel.

3. Human resource management instruments in the *Radisson Blu* hotel¹³

This part of the article concerns a description of the selected human resource management instruments in the chain hotel, *Radisson Blu* located in Szczecin. In it, a recruitment process, training and development of employees, incentive schemes and benefits as well as employee evaluation systems are presented.

¹³ Own work on the basis of: internal material of the *Radisson Blu* hotel in Szczecin.

In terms of recruitment, there are two variants of recruitment for vacancies in the *Radisson Blu* hotel. The first one is the internal recruitment, or else, reaching a potential employee via a noticeboard, electronic mail or an intranet. The second is external recruitment which, in order to find potential employees, involves using such portals as: pracuj.pl, olx, infoludek, the local press and the so-called “grapevine.” In the *Radisson Blu* hotel, it is emphasized that, when it comes to issues of skills, the following motto is observed: “we hire for attitude and train for skills...” Moreover, in the hotel of *Rezidor Hotel Group*, there is a philosophy which states “Yes I Can!”

Since modern organizations function in a dynamic environment with changes much more difficult to foresee, it is required from the employed people to be more creative, flexible and innovative in their activities. The hotel services are quite specific and their appropriate execution is a great challenge to hotel personnel. A guest being away from home for a long time expects that, among others, the following needs are satisfied¹⁴:

- basic human needs (sleep, food, hygiene, silence, comfort),
- additional needs (entertainment, recreation, visiting historical buildings),
- untypical needs (new drinks, unusual dishes, meeting new people),
- urgent needs (medical help, changing staying plans).

Such a number of guests’ expectations causes that hotel personnel to be constantly available at their best and demonstrate diverse professional attitude as well as special skills. Therefore, the essential element of human resource management is training. In the analysed hotel, employees can participate in internal and external trainings.

The following internal training courses are conducted in the hotel:

- *Orientation* – training for new employees aiming is to inform them about the *Rezidor Hotel Group*, the hotel itself, working rules, privileges, etc.;
- *Yes I Can ! Delivering the Promise* – training for all employees aimed at teaching them the “Yes I Can!” attitudes and behaviours towards guests and co-workers;
- *Leading Yes I Can!* - training for the management;

¹⁴ B. Puczkowski, *Determinanty zarządzania kadrami w usługach hotelarskich*, Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski, Olsztyn 2005, p. 108.

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- *Living Responsible Business* – training for all employees which aim is to build ecological awareness and responsibility and to familiarize them with the rules of business corporate responsibility, charity activities, etc.;
 - *Leading Responsible Business* – training for the management;
 - *STAR (Supervisory Training and Resource Program)* – training for the lower management which aims at familiarizing them with the rules of human resource management;
 - *On the Job Skills Training* – training in the hotel standards of particular positions;
 - *TRICS (Threat, Risk, Incident, Crisis, Safe – Secure Hotel)* – training in the rules of occupational health and safety as well as in guest safety.

During the hotel training courses in customer service, employees are expected to understand positions of other people, prepare and present diverse arguments in order to support their positions and negotiate skilfully convincing others to verify their own judgements or to change their opinions. They have to develop new solutions, facilitate problem-solving, stimulate open discussions on the sources of conflicts as well as to recognize the best of the presented suggestions.

The external training, or the so-called *Business School*, involves training courses conducted at the *Rezidor Hotel Group* level or a regional level. These are as follows:

- *Sales Management Success* – training for sales managers;
 - *Sales Success, Negotiations Skills* – training for sales employees;
 - *Finance for Non-Financial Managers, Mastering Business Presentations* – training for the management in finance and budgeting;
 - *Manage-Lead-Succeed, Performance Management & Competency Based Interviewing Skills* – training for the management in human resource management;
 - *Train the Trainer Essentials* – training for trainers;
 - *The 7 habits of highly effective leaders* – training for the management and candidates for managers;
 - *General Manager Certification Programme* – training for candidates for the *General Managers*;
 - *LOTS (Logical Thinking System)* – training for the management.
- Employees of the *Radisson Blu* hotel can also develop their knowledge and skills through an e-learning platform.

The important element of human resource management is also developing right motivation in employees based on the incentive scheme and benefits. Motivation influences the effectiveness of activities and business decisions taken by a hotel enterprise.

In terms of the incentive scheme, a remuneration system in the *Radisson Blu* hotel in Szczecin includes a basic pay which is determined according to the categories of positions established on the basis of employees' qualifications: education, experience and additional skills identified with a held position (foreign language knowledge, use of office appliances, knowledge of computer software, courses, etc.). This incentive scheme also includes a seniority bonus (for employees with at least 3-year work experience in the hotel), jubilee awards (the first is paid after 20-year work experience, the next ones after 25, 30, 40 and 45 years of work experience) as well as funds granted as part of the Company Social Benefits Fund (it partially funds summer and winter holidays, grants home loans and aids in difficult financial situations and random incidents, partially funds events for employees and their families, funds holiday vouchers and Christmas presents for employees and their children, partially funds nurseries and kindergartens and partially funds cultural events such as cinema, theatre or concerts outings).

In terms of benefits, employees get discounts on the hotels of the chain and hotel laundry. Additionally, the employed can dine in the staff canteen paying only for the cost of the tax, deducted from their remuneration, on the value of dinners in a given month. Benefits in the chain hotel also include additional health insurance, the organization of the Christmas party for employees and their children as well as the execution of the programme, "An Employee of the Month and Year" eventuating in the best employees getting a certificate, a monetary prize, a voucher to the "Muffinek" pastry and a voucher for a stay in a selected hotel of the chain all over the world. Additional privileges of the people employed in the hotel are as follows:

- birthday cards from the Managing Director with a voucher for a birthday cake from the "Muffinek" pastry,
- special birthday cards from the Managing Director of the hotel with birthday presents for an employee;
- congratulation cards from the Managing Director and gifts on the birth of an employee's baby,
- wishes cards from the Managing Director on the wedding with a present as well as a farewell party and a retirement gift.

The last element of human resource management is employees' evaluation. This part of management is very important as it updates employees on the results of their work, so they can see the relationship between work and a remuneration and, consequently, they work better. When there is no feedback or it is delayed, the motivational effect of a remuneration decreases, even if it relates to work results.

There are three variants of employees' evaluation in the *Radisson Blu* hotel in Szczecin: after a probationary period, after the termination of a fixed term contract and the so-called "halogen" – the annual and semi-annual evaluation of managers and the annual evaluation of front-line employees.

Conclusion

Effective human resource management, not only in a chain hotel, should result in personnel dealing with tasks they are entrusted with fast, efficiently and effectively and in a way that brings great work results. All working responsibilities in a hotel should be performed honestly and should not arouse any suspicions of partiality and self-interest. Employees should pay attention to their own unblemished reputation and of a hotel behaving in accordance with work ethic. When managing human resources, managers should skilfully and fairly treat all subordinates and should not favour any of them.

There are several ways to manage the employed people effectively. One should:¹⁵

- create a sense of security for employees,
- harmonize employees' goals with company goals,
- adequately distribute motivational factors,
- give employees of lower positions an opportunity to feel successful, too,
- arouse in employees the willingness to cooperate: more trust, less control,
- create a pleasant atmosphere in a company and develop a team of loyal employees,
- show interest in individual employees,

¹⁵ G. Boguta, *Motywowanie pracowników. 9 sposobów na sukces bez kosztów*, Wydawnictwo Wiedza i Praktyka, Warszawa 2006, pp. 3–14.

- intervene immediately in emergency cases,
- provide employees with favourable, competitive work conditions and social benefits.

To sum up, the appropriate selection of recruitment and training tools, much better use of incentives (both financial and non-financial ones) as well as an adequate system of employees' evaluation should be a given organization as only this way can enterprises, especially hotels, succeed on the market.

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ZARZĄDZANIE ZASOBAMI LUDZKIMI W HOTELOWYCH SIACIOWYCH NA PRZYKŁADZIE HOTELU RADISSON BLU W SZCZECINIE

Streszczenie

Hotele sieciowe od hoteli niezależnych różni bardzo wiele cech. Jedną z nich jest aspekt zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi, co wynika z faktu rzetelnie opracowanej polityki kadrowej w hotelu sieciowym. Wszelkie aspekty z nią związane muszą być dokładnie określone i stosunkowo uniwersalne, gdyż dotyczą pracowników zatrudnionych na całym świecie, a więc kadr reprezentujących różne nacje, kultury, światopoglądy itp.

Artykuł składa się z trzech części merytorycznych, wstępu i zakończenia. Pierwsza część pracy ma charakter teoretyczny, w której omówiono istotę zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi i jego znaczenie w hotelarstwie. Dwie kolejne części opracowania mają

charakter analityczno-empiryczny (w formie studium przypadku), w których scharakteryzowano podstawowe obszary organizacyjne funkcjonowania hotelu *Radisson Blu* w Szczecinie oraz konkretne narzędzia zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi w analizowanym obiekcie.

Słowa kluczowe: hotelarstwo, zasoby ludzkie, zarządzanie

