

# **COACHING AND MENTORING AS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENTS MOTIVATING EMPLOYEES TO DEVELOP THEIR PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES - ILLUSTRATED BY A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACADEMY OF CORPORATE MENTORING'S WORK**

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**INTRODUCTION - EDUCATION AS AN INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE.** The expansion of new technologies is said to be a challenge for the contemporary people also in the area of professional development. In this world, where the computers play a huge role in our daily works, the scientific and technological development happens in a surprising pace, it is not enough to possess only those skills that we learnt at school. Everyone has to invest in his self - development and professional development, which last during the whole life indeed. Acquisition of the knowledge is becoming a necessity nowadays. This phenomenon is especially visible within the professional domain, where higher qualifications are required more and more. That is why every human has to build up constantly his intellectual asset.

The knowledge and competences are becoming the basic categories in effective business management nowadays, that is why human self-development that last through the whole life seems to be so important. Entrepreneurs who want to have well - qualified employees have to deal with a very important task. They should support the employees in their self - development and equip them with possibly the most wide access to the knowledge by the lifelong learning. As S.M. Kwiatkowski underlines:

*“Investing in human capital by the effective education can be a guarantee of economic growth and progress of civilization”<sup>1</sup>.*

In contemporary world, education became a necessity, whereby society can evolve also within the economy sphere. Therefore lifelong learning is a challenge that would provide him self- development not only within the spiritual, social and cultural sphere, but also within the professional competences. Each clever investment of a company that

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<sup>1</sup> S. M. Kwiatkowski, Edukacja ustawiczna, wymiar teoretyczny i praktyczny, Warszawa-Radom 2008, s. 23.

aims to increase the knowledge of the worker brings positive results after some time. What is worth noticing, those effects contribute to the company's success.

Getting well-qualified staff that would contribute to the company's expansion and effectiveness can become a real dilemma. Training of the workers is one of the most important elements of the human resources management. That is why professional development issue is becoming more and more popular topic. Work becomes a basic form of functioning for the human, it is one of the spheres that determine sense and value of the human.

Realizing that nowadays we can observe significant increase in unemployment in many countries, work has become one of the "luxury goods". Without good education, our chances to get a good job are minimal. From the perspective of the employers, the interest in human development and improvement of professional competences is quite visible. That is why the education of the employees plays a huge role in achieving prestige and success, and as a consequence - the possibility of getting an advance. Every professional employer realizes that the most important capital, apart from tangible assets, is intellectual potential of his company. To sum up, the education of employees can become a foundation of a well-functioning business.

**MOTIVATING EMPLOYEES IN COACHING AND MENTORING ORGANIZATION.** Every company, in order to exist or remain in the best condition for the economic market should have a well-developed strategy. Nowadays, the best investment for gaining success are simply the people. Intellectual capital becomes more and more important for organizations, and effective management of these resources can guarantee success<sup>1</sup>.

Achieving the profits that I was writing about depends on the proper management of the organization. A very important and essential element in the management of staff is to adequately motivate its employees. Unmotivated employee contributes to a lower efficiency and, consequently, he starts looking for another, more satisfactory solution. Therefore, motivation is the process of action on both sides, where the employer gives employees the right conditions to stimulate them to positive action in favor of the company.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Penc, *Kreatywne kierowanie*, Warszawa 2000, s. 18-19.

One of the functions which constitutes a very important position if it comes to the the staff management is to motivate employees. Most organizations feel the need to motivate its employees properly to work, and therefore the purpose of this function is to stimulate the creative force of employees using appropriately matched stimuli. Motivation for work should give an impulse to make the worker willing to do a specific efforts in accordance with the interests of the organization and vice versa: the employer is called for doing the actions that are consistent with the will and interests of the employee. The manager should know and be able to influence the behavior of the employee. However, he needs to know what causes the different behavior of a subordinate<sup>1</sup>.

The proper intention of motivating is to influence the others, to control them and to lead them to a particular purpose. Motivating should satisfy the desires of employees through appropriate methods that would help the worker to fulfill his thirst. These functions are:

- stimulating - the purpose of these functions is to achieve benefits by an employee due to hard work,
- integrating - the purpose of these functions is to create a climate of work that will eliminate all forms of injustice, rivalry, mutual accusations and slander, envy or critique the company,
- informative - the aim of these functions is to inform employees about behaviors, attitudes and expectations of both sides, and to estimate the size of their fulfillment,
- evaluative - the aim of these functions is to take into account the factors that can affect the motivation to work, its effectiveness and proper satisfaction of employees.

These features are designed to provide relevant information that works within both sides, because it concerns about the workers' satisfaction that is fulfilled by the incentives offered by the employer, and because it also checks whether the employee's actions, after gaining that satisfaction, aim to achieve the objectives of the employer<sup>2</sup>.

Coaching and mentoring are the conceptions directly connected with the employees development, that occur as a modern model for the education for the adults nowadays.

Coaching is characterized by a specific, individual supporting and advising in a way to improve the effectiveness of the educational process in the company. It relies on partner cooperation between the

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<sup>1</sup> Z. Sekula, *Motywowanie do pracy, teorie i instrumenty*, Warszawa 2008, s. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Z. Sekula, *op. cit.*, s. 13.

employee and a trainer who is well- prepared to help him during his professional development. The methods of coaching are observation and assistance, also providing concrete ideas and showing how to perform a certain action.

The benefits of coaching are stressed very often, they are the results of supporting the effectiveness of staff development, but under certain conditions:

- there must be regularity and the continuity of coaching work, as well as supporting the development of a particular employee,
- there must be very individual approach to the employee during the training<sup>1</sup>
- there should be complete trust between trainees and trainer-coach.

Mentoring is another method used during the staff development, used particularly by those who have higher competence and position. But it requires a long- time process to reach effects. The mentor becomes a kind of guardian for his student helping him to understand the operating rules and encouraging him to make appropriate strategic decisions for the company. It is the support and assistance, that rely on giving possible hints, guiding the trainee in order to solve a particular problem, as well as to motivate him to self-development. There is no certain rigid rules here, because every problem must be approached in an individual way.

Well-trained people laid the foundation for the proper functioning of the organization. They become the foundation of the company by appropriate management leadership, that is why contemporary teaching methods are implemented in the business development strategy. Coaching and mentoring belong to such tools, which indicate an effective way in the development of the organization. Of course you have to realize the fact that you must employ well- qualified staff involved in coaching and mentoring. Otherwise, implementing this system improperly, the training may be more harmful than helpful.

Coaching consists of systematic, and specifically planned series of meetings with the employee in order to find his strengths and weaknesses and to specify his individual path that he should choose to improve specific aspects of his work.

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<sup>1</sup> W. Chojnacki, A. Balasiewicz, Człowiek w nowoczesnej organizacji, wybrane problemy doradztwa zawodowego i personalnego, Torun 2005, s. 134-135.

The idea of coaching is a unique way to motivate and to persuade the employee to improvement and professional development. Trainer is a superior, supporting the employee's learning process. Coaching is also suited to the individual needs of subordinates. Properly organized coaching is a good way of motivating employees, because it:

- focuses only on the situation of an employee, situation is understood comprehensively,
- makes employee focusing on aspects of the work that are very important in order to achieve the best results and further development,
- stimulates to create individual solutions of the problems,
- improves and affects the personal self-awareness and perfect understanding of personal behavior.

The organization should create the proper conditions whereby the possibility to learn would be able, even with the prospect of the inclusion of coaching. During coaching the activity of both parties is very important, that is the trainer and the student. Managers share their knowledge with workers and thereby give them more freedom in actions, supporting their development, which is directly linked with the effects that would come truth in the future.

In coaching there is a need of mutual understanding and trust between the coach and the student in the process of knowledge transfer. The trainer should have the competence adapted to the needs of the learner, he should be forgiving when the student does not make appropriate progress and he should give him support, and when it goes well the student should be properly rewarded. Appropriate behavior is significant to motivate, and it is important in the further continuation of the learning process.

Coaching should be a way to achieve the goal of training, which is to get professional success, and thus to get the success of the company, where they are well-trained workers . Coaching, which plays the role and function of motivation in the organization, must meet the following conditions:

- 1) the positive aspects of coaching are opportunities given to subordinates and authoritative assessment of their qualifications ,
- 2) diagnose the problem belongs to the employee - it is employee who should try first to resolve the problem,
- 3) discussion about the effects of the coach should be held immediately after the end of the session,

4) as a result of motivating the employee to explain the problem, the independence of the employee is increased, and thus it is possible to avoid such problems in the future,

5) the trainer should discuss with the student his strengths frequently,

6) the coach should properly shape the work and learning environment to motivate employees to continuous development during their everyday tasks and help them build the right conditions for effective learning<sup>1</sup>.

Mentoring differs from coaching. The mentor acts as a teacher caring for the employee in forms of counseling at various stages of his career. It is a system which provides the support especially for young and inexperienced employees by more experienced trainers with a lot of professional experiences. It is a very long process in which the mentor offers support by providing the knowledge to worker, so that he could use it effectively. And at the same time the management can get to know the problems that afflicts inexperienced workers. It gives them the opportunity of getting the knowledge of the actual conditions that exist in the company. In turn, a junior employee occupying a lower position is motivated by the fact that an experienced senior management wants to speak with him. It is an attempt to provide the employees a message informing them that the success of a business depends on them, their competence and high commitment.

Mentoring is very important in the management and proper functioning of the company. Mentors have a huge impact shaping the attitudes and professional development of employees, increasing their motivation to act and giving rise to their self-development<sup>2</sup>.

Therefore, in the professional development of employees, using such tools as mentoring and coaching should be frequently used by employers. It is a very good way to achieve the planned target of both the employees, as they gain new knowledge, as well as by the employers who can have experienced, thus also qualified employees, who in turn will provide a lot of success for the company.

The power of a modern enterprise is the ability to adjust to the new situation and at the same time keeping up with European trends, anticipating and creating the position of market leadership.

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<sup>1</sup> D. Lewicka, *Motywacyjna siła procedur personalnych*, (red.) L. Zbien- Maciag, Nowe tendencje i wyzwania w zarządzaniu personelem, Krakow 2006.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, s. 145-147.

The mission of the company should be to create values in those segments of market in which the company is powerful and where it achieves a strong, sustainable and competitive position. Those advantages are based on the sum of employees' competences, which have to be adequate to the strategic objectives and tasks. The efforts of creating the links between the assumed business objectives and pursuing them employees are also very important.

Nowadays, we can see many disturbing processes that entrepreneurs have to be faced with such as: loss of skilled personnel on the one hand and the difficulty in obtaining skilled workers on the other hand, which means the risk of getting an insufficiently competent staff. Those risks are serious for the strategy of the company in the area of operational business objectives, which ultimately influence on the reduction in efficiency.

The reasons for the loss of qualified personnel and the risk of inadequacy of the staff are:

- inadequate age structure of the company referred to as "the aging process of human resources", and at the same time the high uniqueness of staff competence,
- long periods of adaptation of new employees,
- lack of system for the knowledge transfer,
- poor brand recognition as an attractive employer,
- difficulties in recruiting young professionals.

Considering the risk of losing qualified staff there should be a necessity to develop some new solutions supporting the process of retention the knowledge within the organization staff.

It is worth describing the proposal of actions which aim to minimize such risk. There is a program of *The Academy of Corporate Mentoring's Work*, which is focused on the key staff of the company. Chemical Group Company "*Ciech* " was the originator of this project.

The purpose of this program is to shape the attitudes towards the knowledge and learning techniques which are supposed to support the process. The intention is not only to invest in young workers with high potential, but also to learn how to use the existing potential of well-experienced employees that have been working in a company for a very long time and to equip them with necessary skills.

This project involves the use of learning by experience, focusing both on the development of competence, self-awareness and to broaden participants. The students are encouraged to develop their own

personality. Thus, an increase of satisfaction is possible and the motivation of employees is strengthened.

Realizing the fact that the company needs experienced people with extensive knowledge and competence, the program assumes that it is possible to create a *bridge* between competent and less experienced employees.

The organization of "*The Academy of Corporate Mentoring*" provides a training cycle which aims to educate a group of *Corporate Mentors*. As a result, the company is able to get well - qualified mentors prepared to share to others their strategically important knowledge and to get well - prepared management staff able to organize the age management strategies in the company.

The purpose of this program is to create a group of corporate mentors in the enterprise, through the acquisition by trainees the specific knowledge and skills in the field of the methods, techniques and tools connected with mentoring, sharing knowledge and experience as well as getting the knowledge of the theory and practice of the learning organization, both team and individual .

The project assumes that after obtaining the certificate of *Mentor*, some group of employees will be created, able to support the process of knowledge transfer. Another assumption is that education of managers connected with the age management will accelerate the implementation of such a policy at the level of the whole enterprise.

The project has also developed the scheme of the training needs. The scheme is based on the identification of training needs through the operationalization of strategic objectives to the level of competency gaps of employees. Managers have identified the importance, urgency and significance of development of the individual competencies needed to achieve the strategic objectives. The following competencies seem to be important to the development of the company:

- leadership skills,
- sharing of knowledge and skills,
- commitment and proactivity,
- adaptability and versatility,
- supporting the development of employees.

The main objective of the project was to create a group of trained corporate mentors. It was assumed that they would promote and develop unique skills to maintain a strong and competitive position of the



company. Their task is also to develop age management policies and to support the integration processes in the company by:

- Developing employee's' attitudes connected with supporting the development of the other employees and building a culture of multifaceted cooperation,

- Maintaining the company's structure within some unique competencies such as specified knowledge and skills, which are possessed by their key employees,

- Developing the corporate culture, which is based on the philosophy of sharing knowledge and experiences.

Some specific objectives have also been established:

- Motivating key employees to the activity within the processes of knowledge management in the enterprise.

- Preparations of key employees who work within the non-managerial positions to act as mentors for both the people that already have been employed and for the future personnel.

- Equipping the workers aged 45 + with the latest psychological knowledge and with the personal skills adapted to the business requirements of integration processes in the company and the requirements of the modern labor market.

- Breaking the bad habits of inflexible thinking and bad action habits that are incompatible to the contemporary challenges that face the company.

- Developing entrepreneurship and innovation attitudes<sup>1</sup>.

The risk of losing skilled staff contributed to the development of criteria for the specific selection of key employees:

- employee has a predisposition for learning the others( teaching talent);

- he is charged with a large, personal responsibility for the correctness of the course process / processes

- he manages strategically important sector,

- he has an extensive professional experience,

- despite his young age, he has a reputation and authority in his team,

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<sup>1</sup> Materiały szkoleniowe - Mind Partners - Europejska Grupa Mentorów i Coachów Certyfikowanych, Warszawa 2009.

➤ he is equipped with necessary skills that help to motivate the staff, he is considered in the company as a "great boss", he is regarded to be an important authority (he is regarded as one of the most respected and well-qualified employee )

➤ there is a high probability of the loss of that employee, for example because of the attractiveness of a competitive offer in the region.

For the purpose of this process a definition of a key worker has been established: a key worker is an employee who has specific knowledge and experience which are unique to the company.

**THE CONCLUSION.** Putting into the practice the mentoring as a tool for motivating employees to development is an important and legitimate in a positive sense decision. *The Academy of Corporate Mentoring* program that has been presented in the article can really bring the significant profits within the employee's competencies development as well as within age management's organization. The advantages of this program turned to have positive effects for the both sides. An easy access to the information about the activities of the organization led to greater identification with the company. Through the appropriate exercises and listening to advice, staff could endeavor to develop the best skills in order to achieve their aims. Moreover, as a result of the training the students could get to know their values and they become more confident, which resulted in a greater decisiveness within the selection of his future training path.

The benefits of the program are also a very important element in achieving the success of the company. First of all, the company creates its image. Mentoring is an instrument used by the organization in order to achieve demanded competences by its employees through the transfer of knowledge between the older and new generation, which makes that the costs of this investment are not so tremendous. Enabling the workers' development through the training makes the employee feel more connected with the company, he becomes more loyal and motivated.

The profit resulting from the program is primarily the satisfaction because the mentors have got the opportunity to observe and participate in the development of a person which he cared of. Sometimes new challenges can occur during the mentor's work, challenges that can be very difficult, but the possibility of their realization causes a new experience towards mentors' own development, as well as to improve their own actions, or even to achieve better results.

To sum up, *The Academy of Corporate Mentoring* program should be implemented in many enterprises, as it increases the level of the workers competence in various areas of recruited people by providing the adequate knowledge which is transferred by the well-experienced employees to those who are less practiced.

*The Academy of Corporate Mentoring* program, first introduced in *Ciech Group* is an innovative project that can be successfully adapted for the other companies. After the training, mentors have changed completely their expectations connected with the company and employees, their values have been significantly modified. They claim that their relationships with employees are based on partner relations and on the respect for the other person. The principle of lifelong learning and continuous improvement are also their main aims. They are willing to lead the partner relations and they offer their help in a variety of problematic issues, basing their work on trust, dignity, honesty and integrity as well as respect and independence.

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