

WORK MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION IN THE CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC CRISIS

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Abstract: *Especially in the time of worldwide economic crisis it is necessary for companies to realize the importance of human capital and particularly the significance of work motivation and satisfaction of employees in relation to the performance and competitiveness of a company. The economic slump in 2009 was for examined subjects connected with the for companies positive effects in the form of an increased level of employees' motivation. Of course, these changes can not be ascribed only to successful work with the human resources, it is at the same time a trend specific for the crisis period. People have started to appreciate more their employers, became more loyal, work willingness and engagement have increased, contrariwise the importance of motivation factors just like financial rewards, bonuses and benefits has decreased. Considering a direct link between work motivation and work performance it is possible to designate the human capital as an important factor on a successful way of companies out of economic crisis.*

Keywords: *Work Motivation, Job Satisfaction, Human Capital.*

JEL Classification: *J280, M100.*

Introduction

The turbulent time or also the time of discontinuity – that is how we call the current situation of the world which requires the entirely specific approach of the company management. Characteristic are constant changes, turbulences, chaos or also breaking dynamics of the development [3; 4; 5] which make in fact impossible to make the long-term predictions. The company management including the human resources management becomes significantly complicated. The ability to adapt to continually changing conditions decides about the success of a company. To the key factors range human capital, usage of company's vision, cultivation of corporate culture, team cooperation, knowledge and skills development and ability of continuous learning [10].

Nowadays, the human resources are becoming the most valuable asset of an organization. They have to be nurtured and managed right to achieve the sustainable competitive advantage. Human beings carry knowledge and knowledge is the most important form of the company's capital. Other its' forms – money, land, technologies – critically depend on human capital, they are subordinated to it and they follow the knowledge capital [11]. Without constant deepening of knowledge and broadening of skills is impossible for the company to reach the stable development and to maintaining its' competitiveness. Saving on education in the time of worldwide economic crisis can be considered as a basic strategic mistake. People are the most important resource of the enterprise and the funds invested in their development are very significant and quickly returnable investment. The assignment of human

resources management goes through the rapid development and the same is valid for the forms of treatment of these resources. Only appropriate motivation leads to maximum performance of the employees.

The condition of successfulness of an organization is the awareness of value and importance of human resource, the awareness that people represent the greatest wealth of an organization and that their management decides whether the organization succeeds or not [7]. Organizations caring for the human resources and realizing their significance in relation with the prosperity and competitiveness strive to gain information about their own employees. Especially the knowledge of people gives managers a good opportunity to affect adequately their employees and optimize their work performance.

Synek [9] mentions that according to the 85% of top managers from the sample of almost 500 different companies worldwide is the topic of employees essential for the company's performance and targets fulfilling (research of companies Deloitte and Economist Intelligence Unit, published in the middle of 2007). Preserving of the key employees is right at the second place and is in compliance with 71% of members of top management critically important for success of a company. Moreover, 88% of addressed managers think that human resources will become even more important topic in next three to five years.

Work Motivation

The topic of motivation is of a great value in all fields related to the performance. According to Bedrnová and Nový et al. [1] motivation represents the fact that the human mind is affected by specific, not always conscious or recognized inner driving forces – incentives, motives. They activate in a certain direction the activity of a person (i.e. his behaviour or rather his cognition, action and immersing) and they retain aroused activity. Apparently these forces emerge in the form of motivated activity, motivated action.

As a work motivation the above mentioned authors understand that aspect of motivation of the human behaviour which is connected with the performance of work activity, with holding a specific position and with performing corresponding work role, i.e. with carrying out work duties. Work motivation expresses a particular form of work willingness. Motivation and qualification potential (abilities, knowledge, skills) range among two basic subjective, personality factors determining the efficiency and productivity of an employee.

For the employer the relationship between motivation and long-term work performance is crucial. For the work process it is ideal to reach in the long-term optimal work performance during the whole work process, not only in the short-term. Therefore the stimulation of work motivation as well as increasing qualification and improving work environment belong to the most important areas of the human resources management. In most cases the target is to increase the motivation of employees because it lies under its' optimum or it decreases in time and it is necessary to bring it closer to the optimum frontier. The level of the work motivation is positively influenced by aspiration degree of employees which should be adequate or

rather higher because it leads then to the self-development, higher profit of an organization and higher life quality.

Job Satisfaction

Good familiarity with employees' satisfaction in an organization and especially good knowledge of people give managers an opportunity to influence their motivation. Bedrnová and Nový et al. [1] state, that the job satisfaction can be viewed from three different angles. On one hand the employees' satisfaction can serve as a criterion of the evaluation of the personnel policy of a company and then applies: the higher the satisfaction the better the company cares for the employees. On the other hand the satisfaction is mentioned as a condition of the effective usage of employees' potential. Satisfaction then represents the satisfaction from the meaningful job, feeling of fulfillment, joy from own assertion. But there might occur also a satisfaction based on reaching low targets. Each of the above mentioned interpretations of the notion satisfaction reflects differently in the quality of performance. Whereas in the first case the satisfaction serves as a description of the status, in the second case can be understood as a driving force and in the third case can be even an obstacle to the desired work performance.

In the Herzberg two-factor theory of work motivation the outer factors of satisfaction (so called hygienic factors) and the inner factors of satisfaction (so called motivators) are distinguished. According to Herzberg only the motivators are related directly to the motivation whereas the hygienic factors influence only the level of satisfaction of employees. In relation between job satisfaction and motivation applies that good work conditions (e.g. the possibility of promotion, salary, quality and activity of managers, characters and actions of colleagues, style of work organization and management, actual conditions of work, care for employees) in most cases at least indirectly stimulate the work motivation.

1 Aim and Methodology

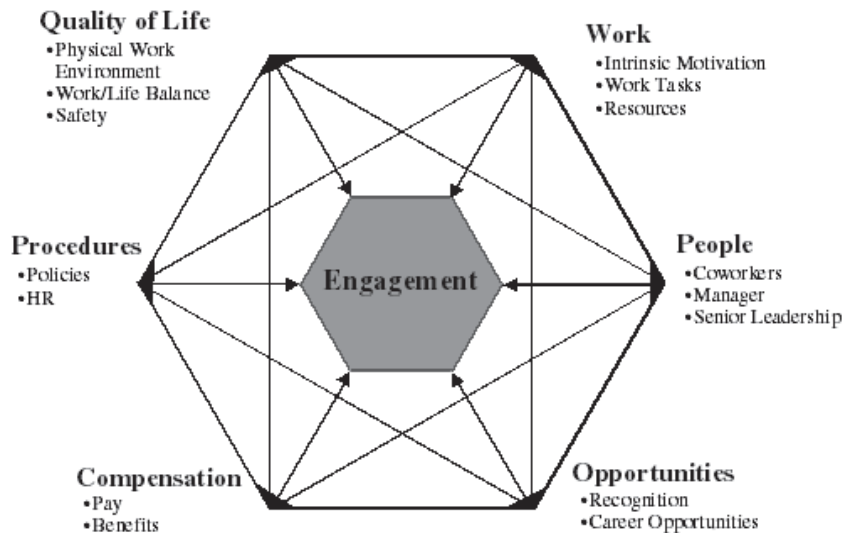
The target of the article is to emphasize the importance of employees' satisfaction and motivation which seem to be one of the key factors to emerge from recession and assure prosperous future. Also the development of satisfaction and motivation during crisis will be examined. For this objective was applied the employees' motivation survey - Best Employers of the Czech Republic - which was conducted across the wide spectrum of sectors by the human resources consulting and outsourcing company Hewitt Associates [6] during the worldwide economic crisis. The survey took place via questionnaires in 2009, the results were published in April 2010. Out of total 58 registered companies only 50 satisfied conditions to be assigned to the ranking. The results of the study represent the opinions of 8042 employees and 197 top managers on their employers. The employers were assessed based on three aspects – opinions of their own employees, personnel policy and view of the top management. The key factor for the ranking is the employees' engagement.

In the surveys of company Hewitt Associates motivation is defined as a state of emotional and intellectual engagement in events within the company which is characterized by three models of behaviour:

- Employees have strong desire to work for the company also in the future.
- Employees express themselves positively about the company in front of their colleagues, friends, potential employees and clients.
- Employees put an extraordinary effort and engagement into work which contributes to the better results of the company.

Factors of motivation are classified into 6 basic groups that are described in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1: Employee engagement



Source of data: [6]

Eventually, a valuable insight into the company Robert Bosch, Ltd. České Budějovice will be intermediated. The survey mentioned above will be enriched by the results of the survey of employees' satisfaction and motivation at company Robert Bosch conducted in the same time period. It will be discussed whether the employees played the meaningful role in overcoming the crisis and contributed to the competitive advantage and higher performance. Both surveys will be compared and will be examined whether their conclusions correspond.

2 Trends in the Czech Republic during the crisis

The survey [6] revealed that the best employers have 25% more motivated employees compared to other companies in the market. 75% of their employees give good references, are proactive and come up with new ideas. Of course, this type of behaviour is related with better business results. The best employers prove 24 % higher return for shareholders against average and they generate higher revenues per employee than average employers.

The study confirmed trends specific for the crisis time. During economic crisis the percentage of motivated employees the Czech companies increased. The average number of motivated people is 52%. Motivation is mainly based on the raised loyalty of employees towards employers. Whilst before crisis 62% of employees had a feeling

they would have found a new job easily, in 2009 this was maintained only by 36 %. People fear for their jobs and they appreciate their employers more than before crisis.

Also other trends have been affirmed. Whereas the employees' satisfaction with financial rewards and other benefits stagnated over the past three years (despite the average wages grew) during the crisis these factors lost their importance and people accept even lower income.

Červinková [2] states that the economic slump makes the need for motivated employees even more significant the limited financial resources, market environment and uncertainty make the securing of motivation more complicated. Practice shows that non-financial tools for motivation encouragement are always cheaper than the financial ones and are also more efficient. The relation between performance assessment and height of the bonuses plays a major role as well. Firms pay attention to pay bonuses truly for the contribution of employees which had the positive impact on firm's results. It is necessary to understand the complexity or the rewarding, particularly its' financial forms and especially intangible forms, e.g. opportunities to professional growth, education and work climate including the management style, corporate culture, work environment, recognition and respect to family commitments.

In 2009 the budget cuts appeared in the larger scale in the area of education and development. The satisfaction with trainings and career opportunities slightly decreases in the long term, on the other hand there is an obvious effort of companies to substitute expensive external trainings for other possibilities of development within the company, e.g. on the job training, mentoring and coaching.

According to Němečková [8] the education of employees belongs to the most costs-demanding items which cancellations bring immediately visible savings. But from the long-run perspective this could be very dangerous approach with the negative impact of professional lag or increased staff turnover because the possibilities of professional growth, further education and raising qualification are the most frequently mentioned motivation factors.

The winning companies also show noticeably higher motivation of managers compared to other participants of the survey. Furthermore, the best employers differ in the aspect of positive assessment of top management by the employees, valued is especially their approach to people, ability to run the company effectively and communicate frankly. In addition to that employees designate their company as a good place to work and believe in its' prosperous future. Their higher satisfaction is clear from all answers to questions regarding the work life.

The motivation of the top management remained 10% higher than in the pre-crisis period. Regardless managers were forced to make more unpopular decisions, reorganize, change processes and so on. They try to inform about the future steps and prepared changes. Similar to other employees even top managers decreased their expectations. They mind less the stress level and despite the higher occupation they are more satisfied with the job content and remuneration for it.

3 Case Study – Robert Bosch, Ltd.

Company Robert Bosch, Ltd. České Budějovice was founded in 1992 as a joint venture of German concern Bosch, Ltd. and Motor Jikov, Inc. In 1995 Bosch became the only owner of the company in České Budějovice. The plant was newly built with state-of-the-art equipment and infrastructure on the concern level with its' own research and development departments including the testing facility. The company operates in the automotive industry. Nowadays, over 2,500 employees participate in production and development of the passenger cars components. Customers are almost all significant European, Asian and American car manufacturers¹¹.

Several times (2005-2010) Robert Bosch, Ltd. České Budějovice won the competition Employer of the year of the South Bohemian region. The company also usually places highly in the competition Employer of the year of the Czech Republic. Committee assesses the personnel policy including the level of trainings, awarding, perception of company's values and trust in management.

The survey of employees' motivation and satisfaction is conducted worldwide in the whole Bosch Group every two years to notice the development in particular areas. The survey takes place via questionnaires, the appraising scale range from 1 to 5 where value 1 means completely agree and 5 completely disagree. The lower the value the better (more positive) the evaluation of the particular aspect. The questionnaire comprises 65 questions regarding work conditions, tasks and responsibilities, professional development, information and communication, cooperation, improvement and engagement.

In 2007 the survey of employees' satisfaction and motivation at Robert Bosch, Ltd. České Budějovice was conducted in the time of prosperity. It is possible to proclaim that year 2007 was the last successful year. Already in the second half of 2008 the company operating in automotive industry registered the first symptoms of incoming worldwide economic crisis. Year 2009 ran fully under the sign of substantial downturn precipitated by the instability of automotive market. This branch was affected the most. The turnover decreased to the level of 2003. To cushion the crisis impacts management of the company was forced to approach to many cost saving measures in the area of costs, investments, the production of problematic unprofitable products was stopped, the work loads were decreased in a blanket manner, the system of uneven distribution of working hours was introduced, the wage rates stagnated. In this difficult situation of the year 2009 the planned survey of employees' satisfaction and motivation was conducted. The participation in the survey in 2009 in the company Robert Bosch, Ltd. České Budějovice was above-average - 1596 employees out of total number 1776 - which is 90%. Results were published in 2010. The selection of questions including scoring in 2007 and 2009 documents Tab. 1.

¹¹ More information about company at websites <http://www.bosch.cz/content/language1/html/2977.htm>

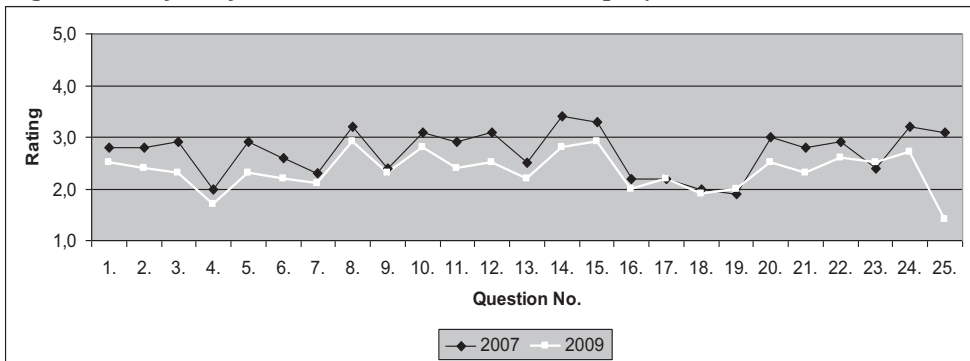
Tab. 1: Satisfaction and motivation in R. Bosch, Ltd. (2007, 2009)

No.	Question	2007	2009
1.	In my team/dept. the work processes are very well organized.	2,8	2,5
2.	I can easily obtain information which I need to fulfill my tasks well.	2,8	2,4
3.	In general I am satisfied with my work conditions.	2,9	2,3
4.	I am aware of the targets of my team/dept.	2,0	1,7
5.	I have sufficient decision-making powers needed to fulfill my tasks.	2,9	2,3
6.	At work I can fully use my knowledge and skills.	2,6	2,2
7.	I enjoy my job.	2,3	2,1
8.	I am very satisfied with the offer of further education.	3,2	2,9
9.	I am trained enough and trained enough with a new job.	2,4	2,3
10.	On the whole I am satisfied with the possibilities of my further development at Bosch Group.	3,1	2,8
11.	In my team/dept. runs a good exchange of information, knowledge and experience	2,9	2,4
12.	I am up-to-date informed about the reasons of important decisions.	3,1	2,5
13.	In my team/dept. rules a very good team spirit.	2,5	2,2
14.	In my branch cooperation between departments works without problems.	3,4	2,8
15.	Cooperation with other branches works without problems.	3,3	2,9
16.	My superior agrees with me clear targets.	2,2	2,0
17.	My superior gives me a useful feedback about my performance.	2,2	2,2
18.	My colleagues try to perform high-quality work.	2,0	1,9
19.	In my team/dept. the utility for customer is in the centre of attention.	1,9	2,0
20.	The environment in my team/dept. supports the creation of new ideas.	3,0	2,5
21.	In my team/dept. the good ideas are considered and applied.	2,8	2,3
22.	In my team/dept. in case of mistakes we do not seek for culprits but also for good solutions.	2,9	2,6
23.	I am proud to work for Bosch Group.	2,4	2,5
24.	After the last survey we have stated particular measures leading to improvements in my team/dept.	3,2	2,7
25.	Activities after last survey (interviews,workshops,...) lead to improvement.	3,1	1,4

Source of data: author

Data from surveys in 2007 and 2009 were compared to describe the development of satisfaction and motivation. It was proven that despite the unfavourable economic situation the employees were more satisfied on the whole in 2009 than in 2007. Tab. 1 is followed by the Fig. 2 which in general illustrates the higher level of satisfaction and motivation in 2009. In case of this survey it is expressed by the lower rating of particular aspects.

Fig. 2: Level of satisfaction and motivation in the company R. Bosch, Ltd. (2007, 2009)



Source of data: author

In comparison with 2007 employees evaluate better the work conditions (availability of work devices, conditions at workplace such as cleanness, lighting, noise,...). Also, they are more satisfied in the question of sufficient decision-making powers needed to fulfill the work tasks. As well, the knowledgeable ness improved in the event of transmission of information, knowledge and experience in the team and from the side of management. The better assessment was reached in the field of smooth cooperation between departments of the surveyed branch. At the same time rules friendly atmosphere which supports the creation of new ideas. These are subsequently evaluated and possibly implemented. The approach of employees to the survey itself shifted essentially, they appreciate more its' contribution – stating and implementing of concrete measures leading to the improvement of the problematic areas.

Despite numerous improvements and positive evaluations there are still fields showing very low satisfaction, actually dissatisfaction (rating >2,5). The following areas are concerned: offer of further education, possibilities of further development at Bosch Group, cooperation with other branches of the Bosch Group, seeking for culprits instead of good solutions in case of mistakes, stating particular measures leading to improvements it the team/department based on the previous survey.

Based on the data stated above it is possible to declare that the conclusions of the survey Best Employers significantly correspond with the results of satisfaction and motivation survey of employees of the company Robert Bosch, Ltd. Generally in both cases the surveys show increased satisfaction and motivation in the time of economic downturn.

Conclusion

Nowadays, when the worldwide economic crisis has been overcome it is possible to evaluate that the worsened economic situation of otherwise very successful companies contributed to the growth of work motivation and job satisfaction of employees. Restricted incomes and benefits did not happen to be the reason for employees to change jobs. On the contrary, they started to appreciate their employers more, the loyalty increased and via the raised willingness to work and above standard

engagement human capital became the principal factor on a successful way of companies out of the economic crisis.

Significant influence on the success of the company has every employee but especially managers play the key role. The personality of manager has essential share on the atmosphere in his team and in the whole company. Manager's targets have to correspond with company's targets and to be able to motivate subordinates he must be motivated himself above all.

Company Robert Bosch, Ltd. České Budějovice can be considered as an example of a company which tries to obtain information about their own employees. The level of employees' satisfaction and motivations is regularly tracked and stimulated. The company is obviously aware of the relation between motivation and performance and can serve as a good model of human resources management.

During economic downturn the important task for human resources management is to retain and motivate qualified key employees who can help overcome the crisis and will represent the competitive advantage in the time of prosperity.

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