

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OF THE CITY OF VINKOVCI CONTINUOUS EDUCATION AND MOTIVATION OF EMPLOYEES AS A BASIS OF SUCCESS

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Abstract

The importance and the purpose of local governments is to satisfy and fulfill the general social needs of their citizens.

In order to complete this 'mission' any local government is supposed to employ capable and competent professionals who would do their jobs efficiently and conscientiously.

Another very important point that any local government should be based on is *trust* between public services and the citizens. The trust is *Conditio sine qua non* when we talk about communication. It can be noticed that there is a great communication gap between citizens and local government as well as higher levels of government, which is filled with distrust and lack of comprehension.

In such a distrustful climate there is no way efficient way of dealing with the problems. Therefore, one of the primary tasks of any local government is to *regain the trust of its citizens!* The first contacts citizens have with the local government are its employees. They are very important part of the system.

Although it's been fifteen years since local governments were established, not much has been done in the sphere of human resources, which also reflects the quality of work of public sector. Therefore it is necessary to analyze current state of human resources of local government, start to motivate employees and ensure their continuous education. Such kind of actions in the local government units should be a reflection of their sense of obligation towards the sources of their financing: citizens, voters, clients and taxpayers.

JEL clasiffication: J33, O15

Key words: human resources, motivation, local government, employees, education, skills, City of Vinkovci

1. INTRODUCTION

For many years people, their needs and wishes have been neglected in organizations. By realizing that people are the initiators of each organization, big companies followed by other organizations started working on systematic education, specializations and motivation of the employees. The purpose of that was to provide well-trained and well-motivated employees in order to make and develop a company of great quality which would remain competitive with other companies.

In the time of constant changes in technology as well as the increase of the complexity of jobs and need for further education and acquiring skills it becomes an imperative to create *the learning organization*. Human resources management is a complex system which enables the company to follow, shape and fully use the present human resources with minimal expense. Continuous education and the creative application of the newly acquired knowledge in solving the present and the future problems as well as the motivation of the employees, is the philosophy hardly known and applied within a local government. This very situation is one of the main causes of the indolent, inefficient organization resulting in irrational spending of the budget which then disables the accomplishments of its main goal: to create strong, financially independent local governments which successfully meet the public needs of their citizens. Having in mind that the City of Vinkovci is not an exception, I conducted a research to get an insight into the present situation and possibly suggest some measures for the improvement.

2. MOTIVATION

In the last decade, apart from economic and demographic changes, which influenced the cities as local government units, there are also changes in the way economy operates. Competition among cities, regions and local governments that cover certain areas is getting bigger and bigger. The cities are becoming more important in the political, economical and social sense. They are engaged in the foreign as well as domestic politics, they form alliances; compete with other cities in Croatia as well as in the EU. The cities are trying to increase their role of managing, guiding, and controlling of economic and territorial processes in the scope of their activities in order to strengthen their economic basis and decrease the government budget dependence. The city budget should be concentrated on at-

tracting new investments, business organizations and entrepreneurs and it should rely on employed people who would find some kind of interest to stay in town instead of going elsewhere. In order to successfully carry out all of these tasks a local government unit should improve human resource utilization. It should be oriented towards making of such an administration that would qualitatively and quantitatively meet the needs of its citizens and have long-term objectives of insuring better life in the local community. To achieve better efficiency of the employees they need to be motivated.

Motivation is the activation of goal-oriented behavior. Motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. The term is generally used for humans but, theoretically, it can also be used to describe the causes for animal behavior as well. This article refers to human motivation. According to various theories, motivation may be rooted in the basic need to minimize physical pain and maximize pleasure, or it may include specific needs such as eating and resting, or a desired object, hobby, goal, state of being, ideal, or it may be attributed to less-apparent reasons such as altruism, selfishness, morality, or avoiding mortality. Conceptually, motivation should not be confused with either volition or optimism. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motivation> Seligman, Martin E.P. (1990). *Learned Optimism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.. p. 101. ISBN 0-394-57915-1)

Motivating is one of the basic function of management. Moreover manager function refers to the management, control or business management of people employed in the company. It is about encouraging people to pay interest primary to company objective i.e. users, staff satisfaction and general life satisfaction, although the last one typically leads to higher image and company quality. System of motivation is extremely complicate process and it should performed by all leaders. In this process everything must be followed, and always available for advice and auditing. (Marušić; 1995, p 36)

The indicator of how big an issue motivation is there are many research papers and theories that deal with motivation: Maslowljev's, Aderfer's, Herzberger's, McClelland's, Atkinson's, Miner's and many others. (Certo; 2008, p 382-388)

This great interest in the problem of motivation basically has three reasons: improvement of labor productivity, efficiency and creativity, improvement of quality of working hours spent in the organizations, strengthening of competitive ability and business efficiency of the organization. (Bahtjarević Šiber; 1999, p 555)

Different authors mention different factors of motivation: a challenging job, a possibility of success, responsibility, professional growth, promotion, recognition,

salary, working conditions, job security, interpersonal relations, possibility of education, stimulation for the job good done, awards.

The same factors do not apply to each and every employee. Each employee has his/her own individual expectations and perception of the situation. Different people have different needs, wishes and desires and therefore act differently in the same situation. In order to secure the implementation of the right motivation model and approach one has to know the individual characteristics and expectations of the employee.

Numerous research done lately show that the organizational climate within the business system influences the working motivation of the employees and their contentment. Indirectly it also affects the labor productivity and business performance.

3. THE OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION IN A LOCAL GOVERNMENT – City of Vinkovci

Every day we are more aware that the companies that realized that human resources they dispose of are one of the major factors of their existence and activity are more successful than the companies which management deny or underestimate the value of the people, their knowledge and motivation to work. We all know that the last decade had been marked by severe changes within the local government in the Republic of Croatia. The law regulated economic, social and political changes, the decentralization of the financing of the local governments in attempt to awaken their economy and stimulate financial independence as well as provide the optimal realization and rational spending of the budget, whereas the needs of its citizens would be met. We come to a completely new way of thinking and clear demand: city must start acting like an entrepreneur. Clearly, that is not always possible. The purpose of local government is meeting public needs of their citizens and these often are not compatible to the entrepreneur's way of thinking. Nevertheless, the local government should rationally dispose of their assets, should have clearly defined investment programs into communal, housing, social and other sectors of public needs, as well as control over their property like a good owner. (Vitezić et al; 2004, p 140). The accomplishments of these goals are not possible without people, their specific skills, knowledge and their creativity.

3.1. Some Issue Of Human Resources In The City Of Vinkovci

Analysis of situation in the City of Vinkovci opened the some issues.

3.1.1. Politics Into Human Resources Management

One of the basic issues is: How to avoid intrusion of politics into human resources management? The politics itself or the elected political leadership is very often the cause of the significant problems in organization. Choosing some of the staff according to their political line, with no concern to their competence and expertness to accomplish certain kind of work seems to be a very serious problem. The question is how to reconcile the political demands and the need for absolutely independent and expert administration.

The only solutions seems to be the severe separation of the political functions from the expert service and professional employees, as well as maturation of the political structures and their conscience that political management demands expert staff, systematic education and following of their work. All above said imposes the need for human resource planning process (Noe et al; 2000, p 146).

3.1.2. Individual Motivation

The next question is individual motivation. The most important task of management is to motivate other people. (Denny; 2000, p 7). The climate of the organization within the business system has great impact on motivation of the employees and therefore their success in work. Follows the overview of employees by years of service in City of Vinkovci.

Table 1: The overview of employees by years of service in City of Vinkovci

Years of service	Number of employees
< 5 years	11
5-10 years	5
10-15 years	5
15-20 years	18
20-25 years	9
> 25 years	33
TOTAL	81

Source: Autor

From the table is evident that 51.85% of employees are more than 20 years of service. Most of them hardly catch up with the changes. Beside that they need encouragement and support. Young employees refresh are working environment, and trying be support older employees.

The next question that arises is how to motivate people to work, how to, with limited financial resources, convince them to work the best way they can to show their creativity, to coexist with their company but also how to convince their chiefs that people are not expendable goods. It should be emphasized that the needs and wishes of each and everyone are real and important, that employees have their personal lives outside the company which should be respected and that they have problems which one needs to be considerate about.

It is true that everyone disposes of certain potentials; they just have to notice them and keep developing them. It is necessary to make a thorough analysis of the disposable staff in order to ascertain knowledge, abilities and skills we already dispose of and also to create programs for qualifications and further education which certain working place demands. Therefore, the expense of the systematic qualification and education will seem to be irrelevant in comparison to the achieved results.

The communication between the management and the employees is here of great importance. The goals are the initiators of all the actions, so it is important to notice the significance of the motivation as the initiator of these actions and the self development.

3.1.3. Structure Of Human Resource Of The City Of Vinkovci

To achieve the maximum in human resource management the experts believe that each organization should have a special department or organizing unit which would, according the certain methodology, supply, analyze and keep information about employees.

This can be achieved by suggesting the managers certain solutions to the employee's problems and measures to improve the work of the organization. As most of the local governments in the Republic of Croatia neither the City of Vinkovci has any special organizing unit or department for human resource management. The necessary office work, or collecting and managing legally prescribed evidence is done by the service inside the Mayor's office.

The City of Vinovci is the local government with 81 employees within 7 organization units-departments and 12 local committees and city districts.

The City of Vinkovci provides for following public needs: its provides conditions for development of economy, social services, municipal and other services of significance for the city; urbanism, architecture and protection of environment; living quality care, municipal services in the city area; children care, education, public health, social welfare, culture, sports.

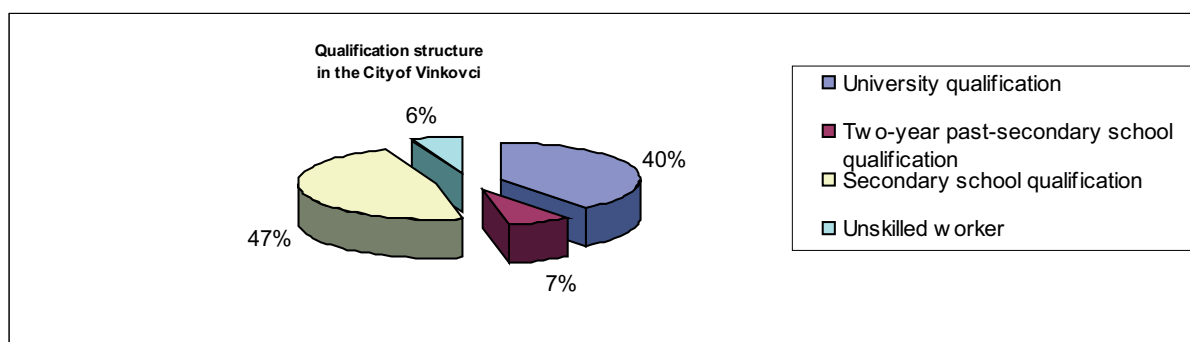
Follows the qualification structure employees in City of Vinkovci:

Table 2: Qualification structure of employees of the City of Vinkovci

Qualification	Number of employees	Women	Man
University qualification	32	15	17
Two-year past-secondary school qualification	6	3	3
Secondary school qualification	38	26	12
Unskilled worker	5	2	3
TOTAL	81	46	35

Source: Autor

Graph 1: Qualification structure of employees of the City of Vinkovci



Source: Autor

It is evident from the given information that in systematization of the city work force prevail the employees with secondary school qualification prevail. The number of employees with university qualification is not dissatisfying but it should be taken into consideration that here are also the electoral or political functions implied, to be more precise, the mayor's deputies. The overview of the existing

condition in the City of Vinkovci has brought further problems to the surface: mild dissatisfaction of the employees with the financial compensation for their work; poor communication within and between certain departments; insufficient team work; insufficient sense of responsibility of the individuals for their work; lack of trust between the manager and the employees. The rights and the obligations of the City of Vinkovci as an employer to the employees of the local government are regulated not only by legal regulations, but also by Wage and salary rulebook for employees of the City of Vinkovci.

Currently there are no regulations in the City of Vinkovci which ensures conditions for applying material and non-material motivational compensation. As I have already mentioned, systematic education of the employees and evaluation of their work have not been conducted yet, but we can notice some progress in the period from 2006 to 2009 in investing in people, their knowledge and skills. Here are a few examples of that. The city of Vinkovci was completely computerized during 2005 and 2009 and in that period it was necessary to further educate the employees. But first step is here. City of Vinkovci has defined the rules for evaluating employees, on the 3rd of March 2010 (is valid from the 31st March 2010).

Furthermore, by involving the City of Vinkovci into the project managed by The Urban Institute the WCA (The Web Connected Application) Intranet-Internet system for the local government were implemented. WCA system was created with the purpose of quicker and more functional internal communication, information exchange and to accomplish saving in time and office materials. By introducing this kind of communication it became necessary to further educate the employees in using computer applications. All employees were adequately educated to communicate through WCA system. This system is still not accepted within office communication of the City of Vinkovci nevertheless it is to be expected in future.

The employees of the City of Vinkovci who expressed desire for further education within postgraduate college are given financial aid. This is important because this education is connected to development of the local government, financial management and protection of environment. Except the above mentioned, the employees can attend seminars and use business journals.

4. FURTHER STEPS

As it was mentioned, it is clear there is a tendency in the City of Vinkovci to follow and develop knowledge and skills of the employees. This process is still at

the beginning. It has already been stated that there is not any special organizational unit to provide for all human resources of the City of Vinkovci. Because of that, chiefs of departments or managers are important. The insight in every department has shown a very different approach in manager's work. While some managers follow situation within department to the full scale, the other behave indifferently showing lack of creativity, managing skills and desire to communicate and learn. It is important to emphasize that only a motivated manager can motivate the employees. He can create a good working atmosphere not only by financial compensation but also by his behavior and communication with employees. Unfortunately, even then some staff will fail to complete their tasks with quality, to work in a team or to continue their education. (Robbins; 1992, p 60)

Tax payers money is under constant public supervision and one should be very careful while estimating the feedback between its spending and expected results. Working in local government firstly stresses the factors of motivation like security, respect, accomplishment, but can hardly satisfy human need for high financial compensation for the work. Respecting above mentioned and having in mind legal and economic limitations of local government, I believe that it is possible to improve the motivation of the employees of the City of Vinkovci by leading in or applying following: having insight in personnel situations within every single department; submitting manager's reports to the City Government with insight of work within the department and proposal to stimulate or "punish" employees; continuous education through professional courses, seminars and literature, paid tuitions, ensuring free days for preparing exams; stimulating creativity, job satisfaction and self-actualization; equal division of work; developing trust between managers and employees; agreeable working environment and team building. The cities (local government units) can hire professionals and consultants to implement their objectives but for a long-term solution the spirit of administration and its inner system should be changed. Therefore, an introduction of management and human resources management into local government units is essential. It is important to say that in order to succeed in implementing of this objective each individual has to change his/her way of thinking and acting. The bosses and the employees are in this case equal. The bosses have to set an example decisively and firmly and the employees should follow. Otherwise, there would be no long-term results and the trust of the citizens would be gambled away.

5. CONCLUSION

The research has shown that the word motivation is one of the six most common words used in company's records. Unfortunately, many people use it but not always understand it. I present only a small part of the human resource management research. Systematic education and application of motivation techniques in local government are at the beginning. The City of Vinkovci is not an exception.

The fact is that the City of Vinkovci disposes of significant human potential, with great ability to successfully perform their tasks. At the same time, it needs to continually invest in personnel's knowledge and skills, developing creativity, responsibility and belonging to the organization. The knowledge of motivation techniques is here invaluable. The situation of human resource in City of Vinkovci is not alarming but there is many possibilities to progress it. In my opinion the City of Vinkovci has made significant progress. In the future we must continue working on the developing employee's knowledge and skills in order to develop the organization itself. Such kind of actions in the local government units should be a reflection of their sense of obligation towards the sources of their financing: citizens, voters, clients and taxpayers.

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