

CONTEMPORARY DIALOGUE WITH THE EMPLOYER. SELECTED TRENDS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Monika Christoph

ORCID: 0000-0003-4176-6099

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

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Summary. The author of the article shows the emerging need to build an authentic dialogue and bilateral relationship between a modern employer and their employees. The basis and justified context for formulating such a statement is the analysis of dynamic changes in the sphere of human work and their professional biographies, the new dimension of which is clearly marked in the area of the modern environment of the organization. To confirm her considerations, the author of the article gives the results of the research presented in the Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends 2019 Report (N = 10,000, 2019), referring to changes and challenges organizations will face in the future, especially in relation to the staff. In summary, the topics of educational and professional aspirations of young people, academic counselling and the importance of education in preparing young people to occupy modern roles in the contract with the employer are also taken up.

DIALOG ZE WSPÓŁCZESNYM PRACODAWCĄ. WYBRANE TRENDY RYNKU PRACY

Słowa kluczowe: współczesny pracodawca, rynek pracy, kariera przez całe życie, zmiany w sferze pracy, przyszłość pracy człowieka, nowoczesna organizacja

Streszczenie. Autorka artykułu ukazuje zarysowującą się potrzebę budowania autentycznego dialogu i dwustronnej relacji między współczesnym pracodawcą a jego pracownikami. Podstawą i uzasadnionym kontekstem do formułowania takiego stwierdzenia jest analiza dynamicznych zmian w sferze pracy człowieka i jego biografii zawodowych, których nowy wymiar wyraźnie zaznacza

się w obszarze nowoczesnego środowiska organizacji. Na potwierdzenie swoich rozważań autorka artykułu przytacza wyniki badań zaprezentowane w Raporcie 2019 *Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends (N=10 tys., 2019)*, odnoszące się do zmian i wyzwań stojących przed organizacjami w przyszłości, szczególnie w relacji do kadry pracowniczej. Podejmowana jest także tematyka aspiracji edukacyjno-zawodowych młodzieży, doradztwa akademickiego oraz znaczenia edukacji w przygotowaniu młodych ludzi do zajęcia nowoczesnych ról w kontrakcie z pracodawcą.

Introduction

The emerging contours of the new world of work¹ in the Fourth Industrial Revolution² are rapidly becoming a lived reality for millions of workers and companies around the world. The inherent opportunities for economic prosperity, societal progress and individual flourishing in this new world of work are enormous, yet depend crucially on the ability of all the concerned stakeholders to instigate reform in education³ and training systems, labour market policies, business approaches to developing skills, employment arrangements and existing social contracts. Catalysing positive outcomes and the future of good work for all will require bold leadership and an entrepreneurial spirit from businesses and governments, as well as an agile mindset of lifelong learning⁴ from employees. As the Fourth Industrial Revolution unfolds, companies are seeking to harness new and emerging technologies to reach higher levels of efficiency of production and consumption, expand into new markets, and compete on new products for a global consumer base composed increasingly of digital natives. More and more, employers are therefore also seeking workers with new skills from further afield to retain a competitive edge for their enterprises and expand their workforce productivity. Some workers are experiencing rapidly expanding opportunities in a variety of new and emerging job roles, while others are

¹ *The future of Jobs Report 2018*. World Economic Forum, www.weforum.org (10.09.2019).

² W. Furmanek, *Najważniejsze idee czwartej rewolucji przemysłowej (industrie 4.0)*, „Dydaktyka informatyki” 2018, nr 13, s. 55–63.

³ K. Facer, *Education, technology and social change*, Routledge, London 2011, pp. 18–26.

⁴ J. Field, *Social capital and lifelong learning*, Bristol University Press, Policy Press, Bristol 2005, pp. 9–34. See also: E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, *Uczenie się przez całe życie jako rzeczywistość edukacyjna. Dyskurs całościowego uczenia się w tle zmian społeczno-ekonomicznych*, [w:] E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik (red.), *Całościowe uczenie się jako wyzwanie dla teorii i praktyki edukacyjnej*, UAM, Poznań 2013, s. 11–35.

experiencing a rapidly declining outlook in a range of job roles traditionally considered to be 'safe bets' and gateways to a lifetime career⁵.

Creation of the sphere of authentic, humanistic dialogue between an employee and an employer today should be based on the relationship of the double-sided exchange of needs, actions and activities based on them. On the one hand, the employer offers an attractive package of working conditions, development opportunities, participation in interesting projects, participation in decision making, work in a team of good specialists, the prospect of promotion and work-life balance⁶. On the other hand, the employee shows initiative, commitment, generates ideas, creates values for the client, multiplies profits of the company, identifies with the employer and demonstrates the desired ability of the future, which is comprehensive problem solving. This is how it should look like. The key to building an effective, qualitative dialogue between an employer and an employee is to prepare both parties well for such activity; the educational meaning is of a particular importance.

Changes in the sphere of work

We are already observing, and in the future it will become a rule, that traditional and online work are and will be interrelated in every field. We are dealing with a decrease or complete lack of need for certain professions and qualifications. There are fast and dynamic changes in employment structures, which is related to the flattening of organizational structures, job reductions and positions for an indefinite period, protected by security and stability on the part of employers. This clearly determines the change in human mentality to move away from outdated and ossified thinking – I have a full-time job and I am waiting for retirement – and in return, develop the ability to actively and dynamically create their educational and vocational path; especially in a situation where the development of technologies, especially the digital ones, affects the progressive complexity of work, which results in reducing the number of jobs requiring medium qualifications. In the face of rapid aging of knowledge and competences, an innovative and flexible approach to the sphere of education and work, with elements

⁵ M. Rutkowska, „Nowa kariera” i jej egzemplifikacje w postaci kariery proteuszowej i kariery bez granic, https://www.ipiss.com.pl/wpcontent/uploads/downloads/2013/02/m_rutkowska_zzl_1_2010.pdf (15.04.2019).

⁶ R. Tomaszewska-Lipiec, *Introduction*, [in:] R. Tomaszewska-Lipiec (ed.), *Work-personal life. Between harmony and disintegration*, Impuls, Kraków 2015, pp. 13–17.

of creative thinking and a high level of adaptation to changes in the environment conditions, becomes extremely important. At this point, it should be emphasized that the above aspects should be developed in the true development of a new approach and professional identity, and not only the declarative demonstration of the above features, often freely and intensely placed in application documents or forms regarding employee appraisals. Already in 1995, Augustyn Bańka noticed and pointed to the need to submit to the „tyranny of development”⁷. Today in 2019, such a necessity is reflected in the idea of lifelong learning⁸ in which the chances and possibilities for development are perceived, achieving subsequent stages of improvement in every sphere of human life: personal, social, educational, professional, technological and economic, local and global. Real openness and readiness to constantly learn allow the individual to shape an important ability, contemporary from the point of view of labour pedagogy and employers’ requirements; the ability to be employed throughout life (employability), which certainly increases their attractiveness in the professional sphere and not only⁹. The issue of employability is understood as building a bridge between employees and the employer, in terms of requirements, offer and possibilities, and is based on dialogue and negotiations about what is most valuable for each party. On the employee’s part, planning and implementing a career understood as the subjective property of the individual¹⁰, at the basis of which are the fundamental life values of the individual and their path of self-fulfilment¹¹. From the employer’s perspective in turn, acquiring the most talented and valuable employees, retaining them in the organization and shaping high intellectual capital, giving the possibility of development in a broader than individual dimension; it means the development of a learning organization¹². Referring to the workplace, changes

⁷ A. Bańka, *Zawodoznawstwo. Doradztwo zawodowe. Pośrednictwo pracy. Psychologiczne metody i strategie pomocy bezrobotnym*, Print B, Poznań 1995, s. 14.

⁸ G. Claxton, *Wise up. The Challenge of Lifelong Learning*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London 1999, pp. 1–19.

⁹ E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik, *Zmiany we wzorach przebiegu kariery a całościowe uczenie się*, [w:] E. Solarczyk-Ambrozik (red.), *Doradztwo zawodowe w perspektywie całościowego uczenia się*, UAM, Poznań 2016, s. 31–47.

¹⁰ A. Cybal-Michalska, *Młodzież akademicka a kariera zawodowa*, Impuls, Kraków 2013, s.125 i 135.

¹¹ D. Phillips, *Quality of life*, [in:] J. Katz, S. Peace, S. Spurr (ed.), *Adult lives. A life course perspective*, Bristol University Press, Bristol 2012, s. 27–36.

¹² M. Bartkowiak, *Kompetencje menedżera a relacje międzypracownicze w organizacji uczącej się*, UAM, Poznań 2011, s.42; see also A. Sitko-Lutek, E. Skrzypczak, *Organizacyjne uczenie się w rozwoju kompetencji przedsiębiorstw*, C.H. Beck, Warszawa 2009, s. 72–82.

in education are also observed, which we can define with the statement: faster, more intensively, practically and on the subject. High fluctuation in staff has changed the approach to learning, professional development and employee training. The response to the situation that brings the best results, both for the individual and for the company, is preparing the employee with an intensive practical course and immediately adapting them to the culture of the organization along with systematic supervision and correction of the work. In addition, it is emphasized that the employee's effectiveness increases if they receive constructive feedback, understand what to do and know what the expectations are. In turn, employers, for their part, look for tailored to their needs, flexible forms of education for employees, preferably in English, with learning to use specialized software and yet a block regarding corporate culture¹³.

Based on the above considerations, the following conclusions arise in the field of training systems and forms of professional development of employees in the organization¹⁴. It seems important to diversify the offer of professional development, built not only on the basis of the most frequent training of employees, but also to support their education, supplementing education and increase the pressure on self-education processes, based on the use of modern technologies, for example e-learning and long distance studies. Due to the increasing liquidity (fluency) of employment in companies, there should be continuous dynamics of development processes and motivating employees. This may be related to the correlation of forms of professional development and elements of motivation with the organization's development offer that are desired by employees, but with regard to the company's goals and interests. Professional development, raising employees' involvement, should not take the shape of a „concert of wishes”; the accomplishment to use the budget. However, it should be based on a reliable diagnosis and analysis of training needs and putting them into practice. Employees of modern organizations, as part of flexible adaptation to the environment, should actively participate in determining the most desirable and effective forms of professional development and motivating elements, which can allow for a better use of human potential and improve the work of personnel departments. An extremely important aspect of a learning organization is the effective transfer and use of knowledge acquired during the professional development

¹³ J. Staniszevska, *Szybciej, intensywniej, praktycznie i na temat. O zmianach w edukacji*, Kompendium HR, Warszawa 2017, s. 172–173.

¹⁴ M. Bartkowiak, *Kompetencje menedżera...*, s. 226–228.

of employees in the processes of task implementation at a given workplace. The analysis of research results showed¹⁵ that managers rate themselves better in terms of giving employees the opportunity to practically use the knowledge acquired during training or other forms of professional development. It may be dictated by the fact that managers do not formulate a clear message or do not confirm such possibilities in the practice of operation. Such a situation may also result from the fact that managers declare their employees the possibility of introducing new solutions, and informally such behaviours are criticized, which certainly does not increase involvement in development and learning. This approach to education and lifelong learning at work is the reflection of the extremely high dynamics in the entry of modern technologies and the need for continuous improvement of specialist knowledge. It also has an impact on the human labour situation in a broader socio-economic dimension.

The new world of work in the digital economy is characterized by the fact that as a result of computerization and robotization, some jobs and professions disappear, but at the same time new places are created in various sectors offering new products and services¹⁶. The nature of work is changing; new forms of employment and new forms of interaction between the machine and the worker appear. The new nature of work is manifested, among others, by sharing an employee by several employers, acting as an expert for the duration of the project, sharing work by employees, mobile work using ICT (information and communication technologies), portfolio work – i.e. self-employment with work performed for many clients, voucher work – that is, a package of work bought from an intermediary organization, work on call – that is, only when the employer needs, and crowdworking via a platform, i.e. tasks are shared among various employees¹⁷.

There is a clear need to shape the skills of flexible work among employees, which are definitely discontinuous, fragmentary and implemented in various contexts and environments in relation to the diverse expectations of employers. In her report, Natalia Hatałska draws attention to this by describing one of her future work scenarios as people per hour, which means freelance economics, increasing market demand for freelancers, independent specialists providing

¹⁵ Ibidem, s. 186–192.

¹⁶ U. Beck, *Spółczesność ryzyka. W drodze do innej nowoczesności*, Scholar, Warszawa 2002, s. 208–221.

¹⁷ M. Rynkowska, *Aktywni +. Przyszłość rynku pracy 2017. Raport Gumtree 2017*, Warszawa 2017, s. 6–8.

just in time services for employers offering project or contract employment¹⁸. This requires the individual to be highly independent in their actions, build professionally creative offers and services as well as an entrepreneurial attitude related to the ability to establish and maintain relationships with the main stakeholders of a given industry, i.e. clients, colleagues, subcontractors, suppliers. Expectations related to the future of work are reflected in trends and conditions of the labour market that we see currently. However, the introduction of modern technologies in Polish work environments is a process and no significant changes are forecast over the next ten years.

Changes in the course of professional careers

When analyzing the literature on the subject, it is worth pointing to the classification proposed by Douglas Tim Hall¹⁹, which categorizes the number of meanings of the term career as follows. Career as moving forward is understood as a sequence of stages or promotions, with each next position, in some global assessment, being „better” than the previous one. Therefore, in order to improve their future perspectives, an individual must perform improvement activities in the field of professional development. In the case of a career understood as a profession, the emphasis is on a relatively long period of practicing the profession and gaining the necessary experience in it. Here, one can understand a career as a „regulated career path”, which the employee overcomes by gaining new and diverse competences. In turn, defining a career as a sequence of work throughout life, removes the evaluative accent of the two previous definitions and focuses on the series of works performed and on the organizations in which they were performed, apart from specific occupations or organizational hierarchy.

The last category of career mentioned in the Hall's²⁰ classification is the career defined as a sequence of experiences related to the human life role. This is the widest of the definitions discussed and is the furthest from the relationship with work and orientation to move forward, because there is the emphasis on the experience of a person related to their individual roles.

¹⁸ N. Hatalska, *Praca: scenariusze przyszłości*, Infuture Hatalska Foresight Institute, Warszawa 2016, s. 27–35.

¹⁹ D. T. Hall, J. E. Moss. *The new protean career contract: helping organizations and employees adapt*, “Organizational Dynamics” 1998, vol. 26, no 3.

²⁰ Ibidem.

It seems true that the last two types of careers are the closest reflection of the conditions of contemporary educational and professional paths. It should be emphasized that employees are currently moving away from a linear, one-dimensional career in one or a maximum of two organizations, with an emphasis on self-realization in successively progressing stages of the career, crowned with preparation for retirement and its implementation. In terms of the implementation of a professional career, we are dealing with a transition from traditional forms of activities to those entrepreneurial, innovative ones. When analyzing the reports of Natalia Hatalaska, who formulates five key scenarios for the future of work, the factors that shape the dimensions of contemporary professional careers are clearly distinguished. The author means here: longer life expectancy, creation of a high technology society and their significant role in work environments, professionalization of individual careers, increasing demand for independent specialists – freelancers, emphasizing the role of transparency in building individual and organizational image and climate change in environment.

There is a strong emphasis on expanding opportunities and development perspectives, building added value to the traditional career path, greater independence and decision-making of individuals, and a higher sense of agency and potential. Groups of employees who do not follow the requirements of the technological society, showing a lack of readiness for lifelong learning and a reluctance to change the model of thinking from traditional to innovative, will be in the group of the so-called useless class; a group of people with average, medium qualifications, which is not of key value in implementing the socio-business concept in the category of the strategic operation of the organization. In addition, they may experience social exclusion, which in turn builds and strengthens the feeling of social helplessness. An extremely important aspect is therefore, building design and implementation competences, the so-called entrepreneurial career. It is based on the principle of operation in external markets, not internal organizations. It is subjectively managed by the unit respecting the rules dictated by the labour market. In addition, a person autonomously builds their own employability and market attractiveness, which are key market values. A professional identity is created, in which the individual becomes responsible for the effects of work individually, which over time presents as their distinctive educational and professional achievements. The task of pursuing an entrepreneurial career can be perceived differently, both by men and women. Men, due to the greater focus on professional development, competition and lower family workload, are easier to become active market players and are able to create

a unique professional identity faster. On the one hand, women, who as a social group are much more burdened with family responsibilities, can view the type of entrepreneurial career as a threat to their sense of stability and security. On the other hand, however, it can be an opportunity for them to combine life, educational and professional roles, as well as greater decision-making and autonomy. Currently, there are an increasing number of women practicing a freelancer career in various industries and areas²¹.

It is worth paying attention to the necessity of retraining several times during the course of each professional career today, in any industry and at any organizational level, which is related to the currently developing phenomena of shortening the company's time on the market and increasing the duration of professional activity (irrespective of principles of pension systems or other governmental solutions). This situation imposes independent and responsible creation of own career in education and profession, in relation to the criteria of individualising goals, needs and directions of continuous search for new challenges and attractive working conditions (often related not only to the financial aspect but also equally important), development aspect, the possibility of collecting valuable knowledge and experience, drawing constructive conclusions, making adequate and professional decisions, achieving desired results and taking responsibility for them.

In the context of the considerations contained in this part of the article, specific challenges emerge for employees and organizations. Regarding the future of the workforce, the following changes can be observed²². First of all, according to the authors of the Report 2019 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends, the alternative workforce is now mainstream. For years, many considered contract, freelance, and gig employment to be “alternative work,” options supplementary to full-time jobs. Today, this segment of the workforce has grown and gone mainstream even as talent markets have tightened, leading organizations to look strategically at all types of work arrangements in their plans for growth. Best practices to access and deploy alternative workers are being invented just now. If the economy continues to grow, organizations must be more flexible

²¹ M. Christoph, E. Krause, *Kariera zawodowa kobiet we współczesnych organizacjach*, „Studia Edukacyjne” 2019, nr 53.

²² *Leading the social enterprise: Reinvent with a human focus*, Report 2019 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends, https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/5136_HC-Trends-2019/DI_HC-Trends-2019.pdf (accessed: 28.09.2019). It is based on Global Human Capital Trends survey, which polled nearly 10,000 respondents in 119 countries, pp. 3–6.

in adapting to these new work arrangements, and plan to use them in a strategic way. Second of all, we can see the transition from jobs to superjobs. A vast majority of organizations told us they expect to increase or significantly increase their use of AI, cognitive technologies, robotic process automation, and robotics over the next three years. As organizations adopt these technologies, they are finding that virtually every job must change, and that the jobs of the future are more digital, more multidisciplinary, and more data – and information-driven. Paradoxically, to be able to take full advantage of technology, organizations must redesign jobs to focus on finding the human dimension of work. This will create new roles that we call “superjobs”: jobs that combine parts of different traditional jobs into integrated roles that leverage the significant productivity and efficiency gains that can arise when people work with technology. And third of all, the leadership we can see is the intersection of the traditional and the new in modern leadership. Developing leaders is the perennial issue of our time. Eighty per cent of survey respondents told us that leadership was an important or very important issue, and 80 per cent of respondents said that “21st-century leaders” face unique and new requirements. To be effective in the 21st century, leaders must take a nuanced approach to pursuing traditional business goals: an approach that takes into account the new context in which such goals must be achieved, and that draws on critical new competencies—including leading through change, embracing ambiguity and uncertainty, and understanding digital, cognitive, and AI-driven technologies—to get there.

In turn, referring to trends and changes in future organizations, the following aspects are pointed out by the authors of the report²³: 1. From employee experience to human experience: putting meaning back into work. One of the biggest challenges we identified this year is the need to improve what is often called the “employee experience”: Eighty-four per cent of our survey respondents rated this issue important, and 28 per cent rated it urgent. But the concept of employee experience falls short in that it fails to capture the need for meaning in work that people are looking for. We see an opportunity for employers to refresh and expand the concept of “employee experience” to address the “human experience” at work—building on an understanding of worker aspirations to connect work back to the impact it has on not only the organization, but the society as a whole; 2. Organizational performance: it is a team sport. The shift from hierarchies to teams is well underway. Thirty-one per cent of survey respondents

²³ Ibidem, p. 7.

told us they now operate mostly or almost wholly in teams, with another 65 per cent saying they are mostly hierarchical but with some cross-functional team-based work. Yet most organizations have not yet refreshed leadership, job design, and rewards to adapt. Our research shows that many leaders do not know how to operate in teams and have not yet adopted the team model of engaging with each other. Deeper in the enterprise, many organizations are still struggling to build programs and incentives that support teaming as well. In 2019, technology is making team models of work easier: Organizations must now refresh the rest of our talent practices to keep up; 3. Rewards: closing the gap. Organizations are exploring a dizzying array of perks and rewards to motivate their people. But they are not keeping up: in our 2019 survey, only 11 per cent of respondents told us their rewards systems were highly aligned with their organizational goals, and 23 per cent reported that they did not know what rewards their workers value. How can organizations develop rewards that align with more agile models for performance measurement and management, and at the same time address workers' legitimate expectations and needs? A focus on building relationships with workers—and eschewing external benchmarking in favour of curating a differentiated suite of rewards—can help organizations close the gap.

Summary

Due to the determinants of the modern labour market and changes in the sphere of work and professional biographies, the educational and professional aspirations of young people are also modified²⁴. It can be said that at present they are increasing in direct proportion to education and awareness of the existence of multidimensional career perspectives. Young people require a positive and real transfer on the line of knowledge and practical skills, which in the opinion of employers should be strong, direct, measurable, flexible and authentic. Young people develop pragmatic and demanding attitudes (praise for every little effort) and reduce (not completely lack) the level of reflexivity, unselfish aspirations – for example volunteering, active participation in casual educational meetings, thematic seminars, even meetings with social and economic representatives. In addition, the high awareness of graduates about their own potential, values

²⁴ A. Furlong, *Youth studies. An introduction*, Routledge, London 2013, p. 64 (*Young people's perspectives on education*) & p. 68 (*Some implications for policy*); see also A. Roulstone, C. Barnes, *The challenges of a work-first agenda for disabled people*, [in:] A. Roulstone, C. Barnes (eds.), *Working futures? Disabled people, policy and social inclusion*, Policy Press, Portland 2005, pp. 17–28.

and competencies determines further educational and professional choices, and the aspirations of high achievements in this area are reflected in strong individuality, certainly shape the need to introduce new methods of education (learning independence and at the same time with others in team). The requirements of graduates towards the companies employing them are increasing, but not only. Young people are looking for an „attractive school, college” and „attractive employer” which manifests itself in the willingness to implement further educational tasks quickly and technically as well as a quick path of promotion and professional development in the workplace, in the name of the principle: quick effects – here and now with low reflexivity and effort oriented towards building quality.

In the light of the above considerations, there is a need to develop a career counselling²⁵ offer, in which the main emphasis will be placed on choosing the right path of education to the student’s potential – its value and key competences – which in turn should open opportunities for employment appropriate for education candidate. Achieving harmony in terms of suitability and educational-occupational matching in the workplace²⁶ allows reducing the costs of inappropriate professional decisions, generating inefficiencies, but above all allows for balanced, qualitative development of the individual, commitment to tasks and feeling rational responsibility for one’s actions. In this, new school tasks appear, reflected in response to a change in the demand for qualifications in the labour market, and relating to the building of specific competences. As far as the student’s knowledge is concerned, it will be important to organize the content and highlight key issues, select the material sensibly, transfer in an interesting and diverse way, for example via digital technologies, simulations, workshops and practical projects that transfer responsibility and activity to an independent recipient. In terms of skills, it is valuable to search for information from reliable sources, independent (or only supported) building knowledge from available sources, critical and selective thinking, active independent and team action as well as identification with goals and needs, assumptions of tasks we are working on, educational institutions or employers.

Summing up the above issues, it can be stated that education plays an extremely important role in the process of preparing young people for an effective entry into the labour market. There is a clear need to shape young people who

²⁵ U. O’Farrell, *First steps in counselling*, Veritas, Dublin 2014, pp. 15–22.

²⁶ M. Belbin, *Twoja rola w zespole*, GWP, Gdańsk 2003.

are independent, aware and actively creating their own goals and career paths, as well as people who have the ability to learn throughout their lives. This is the basis for shaping an authentic, rational and effective dialogue with a modern employer.

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