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HR MANAGEMENT: CHALLENGES FACED BY EMPLOYERS DURING MARTIAL LAW IN UKRAINE

УПРАВЛІННЯ ПЕРСОНАЛОМ: ВИКЛИКИ, З ЯКИМИ СТИКАЮТЬСЯ РОБОТОДАВЦІ ПІД ЧАС ВОЄННОГО СТАНУ В УКРАЇНІ

The article examines the current issues of HR management in the context of military operations, with a particular focus on their impact on the business environment and labour market of Ukraine. In the wake of the February 2022 events, businesses were confronted with a dearth of personnel, a consequence of mass migration and internal displacement. The article identifies the principal challenges confronting employers, including the maintenance of stable teams and the reduction of staff turnover. The authors put forth a series of proposed solutions, including the elevation of wage competitiveness, the cultivation of a positive work environment, and the implementation of programs designed to bolster the psycho-emotional well-being of employees. The article places particular emphasis on the mental health and psychological support of employees, which have become of particular importance in the context of military operations. In conclusion, the study confirms that effective HR management is the key to business stability and efficiency in the face of external challenges. Attracting and retaining staff in the context of military aggression: new challenges for Ukrainian employers.

Keywords: management, personnel, team, labour shortage, military operations.

Управління персоналом відіграє ключову роль у будь-якому бізнесі, оскільки саме від кваліфікації, мотивації та добробуту працівників залежить загальна ефективність організації. В умовах сучасної України, особливо після початку повномасштабної війни в лютому 2022 року, ситуація на ринку праці суттєво змінилася. Багато підприємств зіткнулися з новими викликами: відсутністю достатньої кількості працівників, змінами у попиту на товари та послуги до нестабільності економіки. Ця стаття присвячена аналізу двох основних проблем, що постали перед українськими роботодавцями в нинішніх умовах: необхідності залучення нових працівників і забезпечення сталості колективу.

Згідно статистичних даних, мільйони українців покинули країну в пошуках безпеки та кращих умов життя, що призвело до шаленого дефіциту робочої сили.

У статті розкрито сутність управління персоналом та визначені особливості такого управління в умовах воєнного стану. На основі узагальнення основних теоретичних підходів обґрунтовано точку зору щодо важливості посилення адаптації персоналу до нових умов діяльності, розробки низки мотиваційних заходів, що дозволять утримати професійні кадри, не допустити їх масового відтоку. Узагальнено проблеми, з якими стикається підприємство в умовах воєнного стану та їх вплив на здійснення управління персоналом. Особливу увагу приділено важливості методів стимулювання, адаптування та впливу на персонал в сучасних

українських реаліях. Висвітлено напрями ефективної комунікації, сучасних підходів, методів відбору, формування організаційної культури, які відіграють важливу роль сьогодні та впливають на особливості управління персоналом. Розроблено низку практичних рекомендацій щодо управління персоналом, бо в умовах війни дуже важливо підтримувати ментальне здоров'я працівників, забезпечуючи їм доступ до психологічної підтримки, організовуючи тренінги та створюючи сприятливе робоче середовище.

Ефективне управління персоналом в умовах викликів війни є не лише завданням, але й необхідністю для досягнення успіху підприємства. Власники бізнесу повинні адаптувати свої стратегії управління, щоб підтримувати стабільність та розвиток у цей надскладний час.

Ключові слова: управління, персонал, колектив, дефіцит робочої сили, воєнні дії.

JEL Classification: J24, J63

Problem statement. The management of human resources has consistently been a pivotal responsibility for managers and business owners across a spectrum of industries and service sectors. The efficacy and efficiency of a company's operations are contingent upon the effective utilization of human capital. The manner in which a team is constituted, the distribution of functions and responsibilities, the nature of communication at all levels, and the tracking of the results of group and individual employee work all exert a significant influence on the overall operation of any organization. Consequently, the effective management of human resources is a crucial responsibility for those in senior management positions.

This area has become of even greater significance in Ukraine following the invasion that commenced in February 2022. The full-scale invasion has had a significant impact on both the labour market and the general characteristics of doing business. The challenges currently facing employers in Ukraine include an increased risk profile due to the unstable situation, production reductions resulting from processing and supply chain limitations, a decline in demand for goods and services, and difficulties in implementing business plans due to changes in the socio-economic environment.

Furthermore, the labour market is characterized by considerable instability, which presents a significant challenge to the economy and society in the context of the ongoing conflict. In such circumstances, there is a notable exodus of labour due to the decline of certain economic sectors and the concomitant increase in demand in others. The migration of a significant portion of Ukraine's population abroad has resulted in a considerable labour shortage, with businesses and companies striving to survive in these challenging conditions also facing prolonged vacancies.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The study of personnel management issues at Ukrainian enterprises is paid attention to by many domestic scientists, including such as L. Glushchenko, T. Pilyavoz, N. Koval [1], Y. Gurbyk, S. Bilyaev, Bagunts O.S. [2], Yeletskikh S.Y., Bryzhnychenko V.E. [3], Sardak S.E., Shapoval O.A., Taranichev S.L. [6], the problems of personnel management under martial law were paid attention to by Przyk-Kovalska O.O., Kovalskiy O.I. [5]. Foreign scientists who deal with theoretical and practical aspects of personnel management in the organisation's management system are: D. Ulrich, L.U. Stout, M. Armstrong, H.T. Graham, R. Bennett, G. Dessler, etc. Thus, the issue of improving the enterprise's personnel management system in modern conditions remains relevant.

The implementation of martial law in our country has given rise to a number of novel challenges in the field of personnel management, which require urgent attention.

Formulating the goals of the article. The objective of this article is to examine the primary challenges encountered by employers over the past two and a half years and to investigate potential solutions, with a focus on methods to mitigate the impact of the current situation.

Presentation of the basic research material. The primary concern for any business is the scarcity of labour. According to a variety of data sources, since the beginning of 2022, between 7.7 million and 11.7 million individuals have left Ukraine. Internal displacement has only partially offset this trend, with displaced persons from the eastern part of Ukraine settling in central and western regions in search of employment opportunities and to fill existing vacancies.

However, as time progressed, companies and enterprises adapted their production, sales markets, and sources of raw materials and supplies in order to return to previous performance levels and volumes. Meanwhile, the number of individuals in question continued to decline. This situation gave rise to an urgent question: where might workers be found and how might they be attracted to work, given that every business is striving to create appropriate working conditions to entice people to join.

In order to attract workers, it is possible for employers to leverage the basic advantages that they offer:

- the provision of competitive salaries and corporate benefits represents a primary objective for Ukrainian job seekers, particularly those with low- and medium-level skill sets;
- the creation of a positive working atmosphere that facilitates the comfortable adaptation of newcomers;
- the advancement of employees' careers, particularly for younger individuals seeking to fulfill their professional aspirations, is also facilitated through the promotion of professional development;
- the provision of remote working opportunities.

It is important to acknowledge employees' achievements and to support a balance between work and personal life.

Despite the challenging external circumstances and wartime conditions in which all citizens of Ukraine live, these conditions remain relevant in the vast majority of workplaces. Therefore, business owners must ensure that their job offers include these basic elements. It would be advantageous for employers to expand this list and assist their employees in addressing the challenges and problems they face during the war.

The provision of opportunities for remote work is a key aspect of the company's human resources strategy.

The acknowledgement of employees' achievements and the provision of support to achieve a balance between work and personal life.

Notwithstanding the challenging external circumstances and wartime conditions in which all citizens of Ukraine live, these conditions remain relevant in the vast majority of workplaces. It is, therefore, incumbent upon business owners to ensure that their job offers include these basic elements. It is therefore recommended that employers who expand this list and assist their employees in addressing the challenges and problems they face during the war will find themselves in a more advantageous position.

To illustrate, for women with children, beneficial provisions may encompass part-time work, flexible work schedules, or the capacity to cease work at any given moment to collect their child from kindergarten or school, should circumstances necessitate such a decision. For individuals who have been internally displaced, assistance from employers in the form of housing or partial payment can be a significant factor in their decision to pursue employment. In the event that an organisation is granted the authority to exempt its employees from military conscription, this presents a unique opportunity to not only retain highly skilled professionals but also to recruit new male individuals who have reached the age of conscription.

The restricted range of specialists in the labour market forces employers to hire older individuals (even in instances where age restrictions were previously in place) and graduates or students without experience (where prior experience was a mandatory requirement). This trend has its advantages, as it allows those who previously faced employment issues a chance, but it can also significantly impact the organization's performance.

Consequently, despite the considerable difficulties and issues associated with recruitment during the military state in Ukraine, there are still a number of potential avenues and solutions that can be employed to address the shortage of available personnel. The primary objective for a business owner is to adopt a people-oriented approach.

The second challenge for employers in contemporary Ukraine is the retention of employees and the reduction of staff turnover. The stability of a team is a crucial guarantee of business effectiveness, as it affects not only the psychological atmosphere within the organization but also

helps to lower personnel costs (including the costs of closing vacancies, on-the-job training, mentoring, and other forms of compensation).

In the current context, it is of paramount importance for employers to consider the mental health and psychological state of their employees. The ongoing military conflict, the aggressive actions of the Russian Federation, the pervasive atmosphere of uncertainty, the frequent sounding of air alarms, the regular occurrence of power outages, and other daily challenges have a detrimental impact on the well-being of individuals, regardless of their proximity to the front line. It is therefore incumbent upon business owners throughout Ukraine to provide support for their employees' psycho-emotional health.

It is within the remit of employers to implement a variety of measures designed to promote the mental wellbeing of their employees. The most frequently employed methods are as follows:

1. Psychological support is defined as the provision of access to the services of a psychologist or counselor who has expertise in the field of mental health.

2. The establishment of a salutary work environment necessitates the provision of a conducive workspace and the adherence to principles governing the consumption of nutritious foods and the engagement in physical activity.

3. The implementation of educational initiatives, including the organization of training sessions and seminars on matters pertaining to health and psychological well-being.

4. It is of the utmost importance to provide support in order to achieve a balance between work and personal life. Such outcomes may be achieved through the encouragement of the utilization of leave, flexible working schedules and the availability of remote working opportunities.

5. The promotion of communication and collaboration necessitates the pursuit of transparent communication, the resolution of disputes, and the provision of support for inter-employee interaction.

6. The encouragement of physical activity is facilitated by the organization of fitness breaks during the working day and the promotion of sporting activities.

In general, proactive measures to support employees' mental health have been demonstrated to enhance overall team well-being and improve work productivity, particularly during periods of heightened stress and uncertainty. Furthermore, employers may consider implementing stress management, emotional support, and conflict management programmes. It is similarly vital to implement a career development policy that encourages personal achievements and self-development. Moreover, facilitating access to relaxation and meditation techniques, as well as organising fitness sessions and sports competitions, can assist in supporting employees' physical and psychological health.

Any measures and actions that help restore individuals' sense of control over their lives, increase awareness, mindfulness, and confidence – even just for today's circumstances – will foster a comfortable psycho-emotional atmosphere and subsequently impact the overall stability of the team and individual members.

Conclusions. The military aggression of the Russian Federation and the events that have ensued over the past 2.5 years have had a significant impact on the specifics of doing business in Ukraine and on human resource management policies. In light of the aforementioned circumstances, it is imperative for employers to dedicate considerable effort to the processes of seeking, hiring, and retaining employees. It is therefore incumbent upon owners and managers to be fully cognizant of the array of available methods and to deploy them in a strategic manner, with a view to identifying the most effective and efficient programs that will enable them to maintain a stable workforce and achieve the goals set before their companies.

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