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## Report – after the seminar: *Work and Career in the Period of Economic Recovery*

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On June 20, 2020, an **open on-line seminar** *Work and Career in the Period of Economic Recovery* was held, organised by the Institute of Human Capital (SGH Warsaw School of Economics), together with the Postgraduate Studies in Educational and Vocational Consulting, Development Management and Coaching (SGH), and the Postgraduate Studies in Human Capital Management (SGH).

The event provided an opportunity to exchange ideas about the future in organisation and human capital management, conducted by representatives of leading employers in Poland in various industries and sectors, representatives of the world of science and education, students and participants of various forms of education and other people interested in the subject. In total, the meeting was attended by nearly 100 participants.

The seminar was opened by **Professor SGH Roman Sobiecki, Dean of the Collegium of Business Administration** and **Professor SGH Agnieszka Wojtczuk-Turek, Director of the Institute of Human Capital**. They paid attention to the social and economic situation in our country and the difficult unambiguous assessment

of the state and dynamics of the Polish and world economy due to the limited data available for analysis. They also stressed that the development of individual companies is influenced by numerous determinants, some of which were not taken into account in the period before the pandemic. Examples include varying perceptions by managers and employees of the level of risk from the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on work organisation.

The first discussion panel led by Dariusz Danilewicz, PhD, titled *Labour market and employment strategies for the period of economic recovery* was started by **John Guziak**, representing **Deloitte**. He talked about strategic planning of employment in the changing economic reality. J. Guziak noticed that experts have been discussing the ‘new organisation’ for a long time, but only now companies are facing a real challenge to make the internal transformation. This change should not only be the result of the pandemic situation in the world, but should also be a consequence of the change in the way the organisation is perceived: companies have become a ‘living organism’, constantly changing, reacting to the internal situation and transforming in the reaction to the changes in the environment. The panellist presented the key factors of global change and turned the attention to the phenomena of competence shortages in many labour markets, the need to fight for talented employees and for the growth of tasks whose effective implementation will be possible through the cooperation of man and robots, or artificial intelligence.

The second speaker was a representative of **Adecco**, **Paula Rejmer**. The panellist presented the latest changes in recruitment processes taking place in Polish companies. First of all, she focused on the new roles and multitasking jobs resulting, on the one hand, from the suspension of some business processes and the emergence of new areas of development in companies. She further pointed to the wider use of new technologies in recruitment, selection and on-boarding processes. She emphasised the growing role of the image of employers created in the virtual world. P. Rejmer also presented organisation activities in human capital management at the operational level as a result of the pandemic situation, one of which was the interpretation of the provisions of the Labour Code in relation to the working time of employees (the challenge of measuring the time of remote work, where professional and household duties are often combined).

The next speaker, **Krzysztof Wiśniak** from **Danone**, presented good practices in the field of employee protection during the COVID-19 pandemic. The corporation has provided employment guarantees and financial security for each employee, supported healthcare (personal protective equipment, support for remote work), as well as offered psychological assistance in the form of workshops or consultations with a psychologist. In addition, the company has strengthened support for local

hospitals and local communities. Each of these actions met with a very positive response from the beneficiaries.

**Agnieszka Szostek**, a representative of **mBank**, also spoke about good practices of human capital management in the new socio-economic reality. The need for continuity of the bank's operations required a radical change in the functioning of the company's employees – they fully switched to remote work within a few days; the bank aided employees in many areas to make the work comfortable and effective for them and, on the other hand, to ensure that the change did not affect the quality of customer service. The panellist emphasised that the bank's HR strategy in the pandemic period is even more focused on employability of employees, strengthened by creating a fast and easy learning culture of the organisation, building organisational resilience and efficiency necessary to function in uncertain times, getting employees used to change, building their courage, sense of influence and responsibility for the organisation, creating an environment and culture stimulating talent development, providing opportunities for personal development.

During the panel *New faces of HCM – how to manage work in organisations* invited guests – experts from the **Antal, Grant Thornton and Randstad** companies presented their diagnosis of the situation, which then became a starting point to a moderated discussion with the participants of the seminar.

**Joanna Wierzbowska** from **Antal** mentioned the main areas of challenges in human capital management, which included leadership, building commitment and satisfaction among employees, and retaining key employees with potential. The indicated priorities for personnel actions are a roadmap for coping with the crisis. In her speech, **Monika Smulewicz – Grant Thornton**, high-heeled HR – paid special attention to the role of human capital management specialists and leaders in organising work, especially the remote one. We should be aware that, despite the fact that remote working in the anti-crisis shield is allowed by law, there are many unregulated areas that cause implementation difficulties, but also risks for the future. The issue of remote working was further developed by **Mateusz Żydek from Randstad**, who indicated the extent of the phenomenon in the pandemic period – more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the employees are working remotely in whole or in part – and the difficulties and challenges it generates. The experts' discussion allowed identifying priorities and good practices that help to organise work so that organisations and those working for them can gain satisfaction and results.

Ipsos research shows that 71% of those surveyed consider the climate crisis to be as serious as the one resulting from the COVID-19 threat. Therefore, a discussion was launched on the solutions which organisations and labour and employee managers can implement to deal with both crises.

In the conclusion of the panel, it should be highlighted that human capital management, during the crisis recovery period, implements organisational changes which require finding creative solutions in contradictory cases. Thus, one must face global as well as ad hoc challenges, engage employees with the vision and daily leadership practices despite uncertainty, act legally despite the lack of appropriate law, maintain remote working, and build interpersonal relationships.

The third part of the seminar was devoted to the problems of digitisation of management in the area of human capital management and was entitled *HR digitisation*. The following persons were invited to participate in the discussion: **Agata Kaczmarek (DentsuAegis Network Poland)**, **Ewa Gołębiewska (Capgemini)** and **Tomasz Zubrzycki (Oracle)**. The panel was led by **Professor SGH Tomasz Rostkowski**. In the first place, it was pointed out that HCM digitisation is inevitable, which is additionally visible in the pandemic situation, as well as that there is a significant gap in digitisation, which is clear when analysing Poland's very distant position in European and world rankings in this respect. The panellists' presentations emphasised both the benefits of digitisation for the organisation's management boards as well as for managers and employees. There is a chance for a significant improvement in performance through the availability of information. Parallel to the presentations, there was a discussion and exchange of comments through a chat, which extended the scope of discussion to include the problems of age diversity of employees. As it seems, the invited panellists were highly convincing in the presentation of the benefits of using the solutions supporting the HCM based on cloud solutions, and therefore, questions to the invited guests concerned mainly the details of using such resolutions.

To sum up the discussion panel, it can be said that the implementation of digital HCM solutions is no longer only an opportunity for further improvement of management in organisations, but must also be considered as a threat. In Poland, the scope of use of such solutions is low. The presentations indicate that cloud systems supporting HCM are not able to automatically improve the applied solutions. Their advantage may, however, be the opportunity to improve management. Therefore, it may be that using the term 'IT systems for human capital management' is a kind of abuse, since in practice we often deal with very flexible IT solutions which, however, are not so much a system but they provide valuable support for system developments in the HCM field. It also means that if defective or insufficiently adapted HCM system solutions are computerised, no improvement should be expected, and even a misdirection of efforts of both employees and managers of the organisation is possible.

The seminar was a significant success, which is evidenced by the great interest of participants and their involvement in discussions both at the forum and using

various forms of remote communication. It also proved that meetings of practitioners and theoreticians are not only interesting events, but also provide an impulse for changes in practice and new research inspirations. Therefore, such activities will be continued and the remote form will be maintained, as it is conducive to attracting both the most eminent practitioners and, by consolidating the discussion, their views may also be useful for those who did not have the opportunity to participate in the event.

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- Armstrong, A. (2005). *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi*. Kraków: Oficyna Ekonomiczna.
- Organ, D.W., Podsakoff, P.M., & MacKenzie S.B. (2006). *Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Its Nature, Antecedents, and Consequences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Juchnowicz, M. (2014). Istota i struktura kapitału ludzkiego. In: M. Juchnowicz (Ed.), *Zarządzanie kapitałem ludzkim. Procesy, narzędzia, aplikacje*, Warszawa: PWE, 29–37.
- Anderson, N. & Gasteiger, R.M. (2008). Helping Creativity and Innovation Thrive in Organizations: Functional and Dysfunctional Perspectives. In: J. Langan-Fox,

C.L. Cooper, R.J. Klimoski (Eds.), *Research companion to the dysfunctional workplace* Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., 422–440.

Zhang, Y., Lepine, J., Buckman, B.R., & Wei, F. (2014). It's Not Fair... or Is It? The Role of Justice and Leadership in Explaining Work Stressor-job Performance Relationship. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57(3), 675–697.

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