



World Scientific News

WSN 78 (2017) 233-239

EISSN 2392-2192

Human Resources Management in Polish Hospital

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ABSTRACT

Human capital in the hospital plays a very important role. It is therefore justified to address this topic. The aim of this article is to draw attention to the problems in managing human capital in the health service and pay attention to the problems of modern health care

Keywords: management, human resources, hospital, health care

1. INTRODUCTION

A recurring issue for the last decade has been a health care system, so omnipresent in the political life of every government. All widely discussed models of health care, restructuring, transformation and privatization processes seem to treat hospitals as entities comprising objects without regard to their subjective aspect, which is human capital or simply people. Skipping or purposeful depreciation of medical personnel has been a cause of tensions and frustration, both on the part of hospital workforce as well as the recipients of their services, i.e. patients. Therefore, it seems justified to introduce changes in hospitals, not only on the systemic level but first and foremost the changes which would organize the work of medical personnel by applying human resources management, staff assessment, development and appropriate remuneration as well as observance of the labour law. The aim of the present paper is to present the main areas of improvement in human resources management.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN POLISH HOSPITALS

Human resources management is a science of approaching people in an enterprise as its most valuable asset. In the context of managing hospitals, the most accurate seems to be the definition provided in 1995 by Storey: 'HRM is a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce, using an array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques'. In an organization such as a hospital, its quality and competitiveness depends on qualifications of its personnel. Human capital is the key element decisive for the possibilities, capabilities and opportunities for development of hospitals. Therefore, the aims of hospital management should include first of all the following:

- Acquiring and keeping the best employees;
- Creating opportunities for raising qualifications;
- Introducing employee-friendly company culture;
- Rewarding employees;
- Helping to adjust work requirements to external factors (e.g. introducing new models of hospital management by the National Health Fund (NFZ) – Diagnosis-Related Groups of Patients, DRG);
- Organization management seeking to take care of workforce.

The management concepts include diverse models and schools, which can be divided into two general groups: the 'hard' ones and the 'soft' ones. The 'hard' approach is based on the quantitative, calculation and economic aspect, where employees are treated as one of the elements of expenditure as opposed to performance results. The choice of employees is based on the cost analysis versus quality and effectiveness. In the 'hard' approach, an organizational strategy plays a dominant role over human resources management assuming the convergence of interests of an organization and its human capital.

The 'soft' approach is based on human relations, with emphasis on eliminating communication noise, motivation and leadership. This model considers the needs and expectations of employees as the most important element of an organization. A mission statement conveys an organization management model. For instance, the Province Hospital in Łomża phrases its mission statement in the following way: 'The mission of the Province Hospital in Łomża is to become a modern service company with a humanitarian message. While implementing the mission, we pay a special attention to the quality of the services we provide, respect for the patients' (clients') rights and continuing personnel training.' When analyzing this mission statement, one should notice that the soft approach is strongly emphasized here by stressing professional development of employees, which aims at improving the quality of services. The success of an organization depends on the qualifications and opportunities for professional advancement of its medical personnel.

Therefore, medical personnel is a key asset of hospitals. One of the elements of HRM is personnel policy, which defines the personnel strategy of an organization. The main aim of personnel policy is to define the rules of:

- The selection of employees;
- Recruitment;

- Work assessment;
- Rewarding;
- Professional development of employees;
- Motivating;
- Participation in management;
- Work structure.

With regard to the segregation of duties among organizational units, the following models can be distinguished:

- A traditional model – the most frequently applied in Polish hospitals, with a line manager responsible for recruitment, management, rewarding and dismissing employees, and human resources department playing an administrative role.
- A functional model – groups employees with regard to their functions in an organization, specializes them according to the tasks delegated to them, when all units cooperate and can be interdependent.
- A divisional model – in which employees work within specified units (e.g. regional branches, representative offices) and form their own structures, in which they play specific functions.
- An integrated model is based on competences of employees, according to which tasks are allocated and targets are set.

Competences are gaining importance due to the constant need for an organization to adjust to the ever changing environment, especially in the field of medicine, where patients make independent choices of health care establishments. A competence is defined in the dictionary of the Polish language as the authority of an office or an official to deal with certain matters and make decisions about them, or as a scope of someone's knowledge, skills and experience. When speaking of organizations, competences can be divided into:

- Corporate competences, whose aim is to support an organizational mission, are translated into an organizational structure by detailed instructions.
- Competences related to the post held are precise competences required at a given post.

In health care organizations competences are transferred into qualifications of their members. The level and scope of qualifications is defined by work specialization depending on the post held in a given unit. Qualifications are the main factor in the recruitment process. What cannot be skipped in the theory of human resources management is management by objectives, which is especially effective in appraising the work performed by employees. Its main idea is to set individual aims for each and every employee, which would stem from the strategic aims of an organization. The main benefits include:

- Setting objectives for each post;
- On-going control of the achievement of targets;
- Information about the achievement of targets.

The model of employee assessment shows that clear objectives, timely feedback and transparent remuneration systems are the key to success. Certainly, it is achievable only by engaging personnel in the work appraisal model, which is why it is crucial that employees be

informed and trained with respect to work assessment and rewarding. As human resources are an intellectual capital of an organization, recruitment is an important process and one of the central elements of human resources management. Its aim is to attract employees that are valuable not only because of their competences but also thanks to their personalities, which should suit the company image. It is especially important in health care institutions, whose reputation is shaped by its personnel. M. Armstrong distinguishes three stages of the recruitment and selection process:

- Defining requirements – preparing job descriptions and specifications, deciding terms and conditions of employment;
- Attracting candidates – reviewing and evaluating alternative sources of applicants, deciding methods of recruitment inside and outside the company, using consulting agencies;
- Selecting candidates – sifting applications, interviewing, assessing candidates, deciding to offer contracts.

It needs to be emphasised that an efficient organization uses a complex recruitment model (irrespective of its tier), clear requirements concerning education and experience as well as the selection methods such as reviewing:

- Attainments;
- General intelligence;
- Motivation;
- Physical make-up;
- Interests;
- Special aptitudes;
- Circumstances of changing jobs.

This 7-point recruitment plan is called the Rodger's plan. Although the recruitment and selection process allows for selecting a candidate who meets the specific organizational requirements, an essential element of managing employee is their motivation. Motivation is a process of influencing employees by creating opportunities for professional advancement, implementing tasks and being rewarded for high performance. M. Armstrong distinguishes three components of motivation:

- Direction – defining aims;
- Effort – the input made by an employee;
- Persistence – how determined an employee is to achieve the aim.

The motivation is about influencing employees so their actions are convergent with our assumptions. Generally, we speak of material and non-material motivation. In order for a motivational system to be effective, it should always refer to the needs of employees. Defining these needs is a starting point for constructing a motivational system. In a health care system material and non-material motivation seems to be equally important. The opportunities for self-development, attaining specialization levels, and finally satisfaction are part of the image of a modern doctor. Therefore, an important stage is to define precisely each employee's needs and a current phase of his/her professional career before deciding how to motivate him/her. An inept motivational move is giving an opportunity of specialization to a

medical doctor at the end of his/her career. A measurable factor of the effects of motivation is the system of employee assessment with precise criteria, used to appraise the attainment of targets and the performance levels. There are a number of performance appraisal methods depending on the positions held by employees. In health care systems, it seems that the 360-degree method is more effective than others. Its components include the opinions of the following entities, with equal importance attached to them:

- Superior's appraisal;
- Peer appraisal;
- Patients' appraisal;
- Self-appraisal.

For an assessment to be meaningful, it must produce some result; otherwise it is futile. It can be a starting point for:

- Financial reward (bonuses, pay rises, various allowances);
- Defining the employee's career phase;
- Setting short-term and long-term goals.

An inherent thing in hospitals (and other types of health care establishments) is the requirement of continuing professional development. The system of continuing professional development of doctors includes:

- University programme in medicine;
- Post-graduate internships;
- Specialization degrees;
- Lifelong learning;
- Advancement in professional skills related to a given area of specialization and treatments performed.

The ways to reach subsequent stages of career development for doctors are provided for by statutes and regulations of the Minister of Health, such as:

- The Act of 5 December 1996 concerning the profession of a physician and a dentist (Journal of Laws of 2005 No 226, item 1943 as am.);
- The Regulation of the Minister of Health of 24 March 2004 concerning post-graduate internships for physicians and dentists (Journal of Laws No 57, item 553 as am.);
- The Regulation of the Minister of Health of 20 October 2015 concerning specialization degrees for physicians and dentists (Journal of Laws No 213, item 1779 as am.);
- The Regulation of the Minister of Health of 6 October 2004 concerning the ways of complying with the duty of professional advancement for physicians and dentists (Journal of Laws of 2002 No 21, item 204 as am.).

The professional development of doctors can be divided into the rights and duties imposed on medical personnel. The rights of medical personnel include:

- Access to education – trainings, internships, courses, conferences;
- Opportunity to take advantage of professional development forms guaranteed by an employer such as a training leave;

- Pecuniary benefits such as co-financing of trainings, courses, conferences by employers;
- Opportunities for professional development – promotion, expert positions, etc.

The duties of medical personnel include:

- Lifelong learning;
- Supplementary trainings in the case of a 5-year period of not practising as a doctor;
- Supplementary trainings in the case of non-compliance with the duty of lifelong learning;
- Professional accountability.

Lifelong learning of doctors can be called a career path if it marks the stages of individual development. However, it needs to be emphasised that doctors choose their own direction for career on their own: after obtaining a diploma they choose a specialization area (e.g. cardiology), do a compulsory internship in the hospital ward in this area (e.g. a cardiology unit). Unfortunately, theory and practice often diverge, which is observable in Polish hospitals.

3. CONCLUSION

The above brief analysis of human capital management at the hospital shows very poor management. Staff employed in a Polish hospital is poorly paid. Health care workers are badly perceived by the patients. Such a socially important profession is struggling. Today with total loss of positive image.

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(Received 14 June 2017; accepted 10 July 2017)