



VERSATILE LEADERSHIP AS A DETERMINANT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT. DHL EXPRESS (POLAND) SP. Z O.O. EXAMPLE

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ABSTRACT. Background: The changes which are taking place today, forces companies to ask themselves about the quality of leadership in the organization and whether the existing work in this area supports the success of the company. In the global environment, both social structure and political are changing. Demographic changes irrevocable impact on the market more than ever before. For company it is necessary to introduce new paradigms of leadership to have a chance to succeed in this new environment.

The aim of researches was to recognize methods, which allow to improve the quality of management of transport companies.

Methods: Researches were conducted based on literature review and questionnaires sent by employees.

Conclusions: Leadership agility model seems to be the answer to the question of how to survive in the new world. Concept of leadership agility draws attention to a smooth transition between the different management styles as well as the end of the heroic leadership, (focused on only one leader) and the beginning of the post heroic leadership, where the contribution of the whole team count. In the new environment, a significant part of the company's success will depend on the commitment of its employees, and hence the added value of their work. Model of leadership agility is used in DHL Express daily and build the base for achieving excellent results not only business but also those related to human capital.

Key words: leadership, engagement, manager, challenge, agility.

INTRODUCTION

Literature confirms that in recent years the world has been significantly transformed [Kotler, Caslione 2009, and Christensen 2011]. Contemporaneity is marked by technological change, economic unrest, multiplying transformations, both social and economic. Economic periods are shortened, information is spreading faster than ever before in the history. This noticeable evolution of the world is reflected in the emergence of the new trends that define the world in new dimensions.

Future trends such as:

- digital Natives, who will create a new world [Small, Vorgan, 2008],
- innovation in the cloud, which will be the largest possibility of a change in the history of the universe [Armbrust et al. 2010],
- bio-economy and well-being, which will become the new motors for the economy, will not be primarily facilitating manager's life [Luoma, Vanhanen, Tommila 2011].

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Universal access to the knowledge and information, and the fact that the generation born after 2000 does not know a world without

a free access to the Internet, is causing an increase in the importance of virtual reality. Transformation of the world and the possibility of cooperation on a global scale using the cloud environment, presents some new challenges for persons managing organizations. The virtual world implies a need to adapt to the new trends, as well as to the new pace of these changes. Progressive globalization has a significant impact on the shape of the organization's environment. The concept of a "globalization" has a long genesis, dating back to several decades. In the past, different authors have been using them [e.g. Stonehouse et al. 2000, Scholte 2000, Held et al. 1999, Levitt 1983] The concept of "globalization" appeared for the first time in Germany in 1953 in the newspaper "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung". Once again, the term "globalization" was used in the magazine "The Economist" in 1959. It was expressed in the economic context, related to "an increase in the amount of import cars globalized". Two years later, the concept was found in Webster's dictionary (Webster's Dictionary) of 1961. Today, however, it has a special meaning "(...) globalization, and with it the global competition, concentration of ownership and capital, expansion of cooperation between companies in the world, differently than previously understood policy of investment and innovation, the growing importance of an economy based on intellectual capital, the rapid development of information technology and telecommunications mean that modern company must rise to the challenge and the need to adapt to the new demands of the global market. This makes it necessary to modify the existing management systems and redefine the paradigms that existed in the past. It is the beginning of a kind of race to the future - making the effort to develop global strategies and more flexible organizational structures easily, develop changes in work systems, implementation of e-business, the introduction of elements of management responsibilities, including standards of ethical and environmental responsibility. "So it seems legitimate to redefine the business environment and give definitions of new meanings. In this context, was born the concept of "VUCA world" [Horney et al. 2010, Johansen 2009,

Joiner 2006], which is acronym of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of the enterprise environment. The term sometimes replaces the previously used concept of "global environment" [Malara 2006] and is giving it a different, much broader dimension. Multidimensionality of the reality in which organizations have to exist, invites us to reflect on the optimal model of a leadership, as a leading determinant of employee engagement in these new and complex conditions.

Employee engagement is a factor which directly translates into business performance [Kruse 2012]. Companies face the challenge of providing the greatest added value for shareholders, while maintaining a high level of employee's commitments. Engagement is defined in several ways [Kahn, 1990, Roberts, Davenport 2002, Johnson, Groff, Taing 2009]. The first concept of the use of "employee engagement" was created by Gallup [1985]. Then other research companies [TowersPerrin, HayGroup, IES, DDI] involved issues concerning engagement in the area of research. In parallel, the academic world constructed its own definitions of the term "engagement". W.A. Kahn [1990] described the engagement as "harnessing ego of members of the organization to fulfill its role in the work" [Kahn 1990]. C.R. McCashland [1999] defined it as "emotional outcome for the employee on the basis of the emerging key ingredients jobs" [McCashland 1999]. Another definition says that "(commitment to) the extent to which the individual personally join in helping organizations working better than is necessary to maintain the position" [Smythe 2009]. For this study, the authors have adopted a definition A.M. Saks "the intellectual and emotional commitment to the organization or the amount of effort put in work", as well as the definition of J.K. Harter, F.L. Schmidt and T.L. Hayes [2002], which describes motivation as an individual effort of employees at work [Juchnowicz 2010], satisfaction with the work and enthusiasm towards her [Harter, Schmidt, Hayes, 2002]. Complicated nature of VUCA world and the growing importance of the engagement of employees to the performance of the organization, caused the fact that the personage of a manager and the question about

the contemporary model of leadership is coming to the center of scientific inquiry.

A study conducted in 2006 by KornFerry [Falkowski, Nowakowski, 2006] shows that the average Polish manager uses little expressive style of a leadership, while the variation is relatively flat. In 2013 [www.outsourcingportal.pl] Hays company confirmed in its development the trend noted before. The study, performed on a sample, showed that 49% of Polish managers use only one leadership style. This could be a potential threat because the volatility of the economic and social environment forces managers to be more flexible at their daily work, including the area of management teams, as well as other, more innovative approach to problem solving. Researches carried out in recent years indicate that the "leadership agility" is required, to survive in the new world [Horney, Pasman, O'Shea, 2010]. Unfortunately, in the Polish language there is no good equivalent of describing the denotation of "leadership agility". The direct translation would sound "leadership adroitness," which does not seem to give a full sense of the definition, introduced by the creators of this concept B. Joiner and S. Josephs [2006].

B. Joiner and S. Josephs had understood it as an exact analogy to the organization of "agile" and identify it with the ability to prudent and effective action in a complex, rapidly changing world. L. Iacocca and C. Witney [2007] had supplemented the above definition with the ability to think from the different perspectives and with different mindset. The authors decided to propose their own translation of the term "leadership agility" using the innovative concept of "versatility leadership". It illustrates the subject of a study in a much broader context than the term "flexibility of a leadership", which better fits in the classical theory of a leadership. Authors, transferring the concept of versatility leadership on the polish ground, indicate the key determinants of the style. These include a strong focus on the adoption and providing feedback, consultative nature of decision-making, personal involvement in the team activities, readiness for quick and courageous changes, ability to cooperate, and the skill

people's involvement to achieve business objectives. Undoubtedly, such a model of leadership could arise only if organizational culture supports behavior enhancing the versatility of leadership.

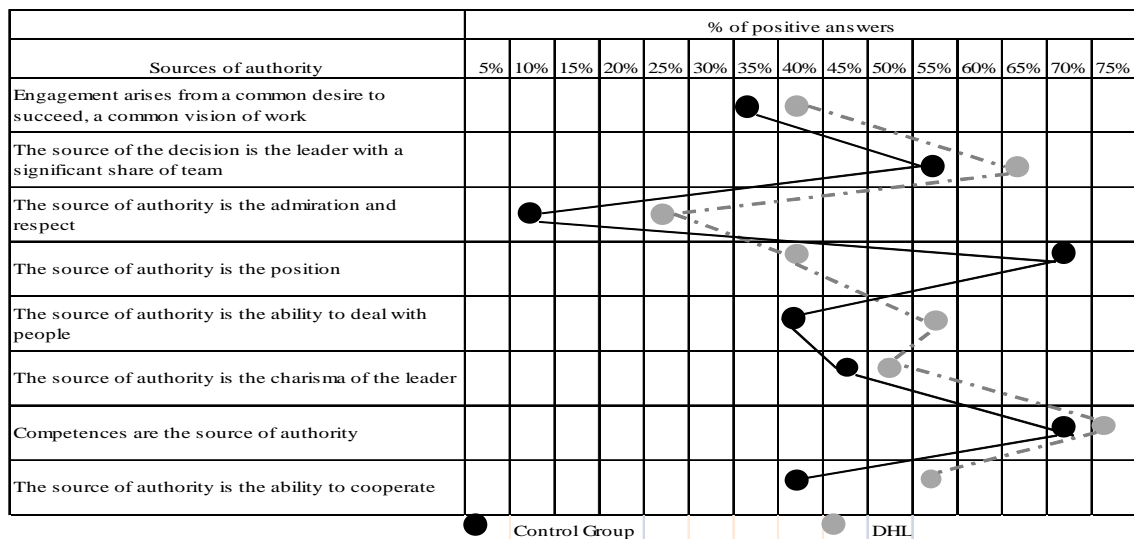
DHL EXPRESS (POLAND) SP. Z O.O. EXAMPLE

The transformations taking place in the business models of Polish companies in the last two decades have been mostly creating a hierarchical organizational culture or market-oriented one. Not much has changed in this matter [Heidtman, Wolfhart, 2010]. One of the companies that consciously is working on a change of the organizational culture, and thus the change in leadership paradigm is DHL Express (Poland) Sp. z o.o.. The company is present on the Polish market since 1991. In 2003 the Polish branch of DHL merged with Servisco - national courier service provider. As a result of the merger in 2004, DHL Express (Poland) Sp. z o.o. was founded. Today, DHL Express (Poland) Sp. z o.o. employs more than 6 000 employees and couriers, is present in more than 50 locations, and has over 2 300 courier routes. The company operates in the field of courier services, on the market dominated by large international players. The most important trend in courier services is the growing importance of modern technology and the Internet. Business is more often conducted online. Importance of a flexible behavior and a speed to match customer's expectations is growing. Simpler, faster, better is becoming a motto. The policy objective of the company is to provide services in a way that affects the positive perception of the brand - for example, by increasing the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty. To build competitive advantage, the company knowingly uses the available tools in the area of modern human capital management. Since 2008, DHL Express (Poland) Sp. z o.o. has been consciously taking steps to balance organizational culture between two areas: "market" and "clan". One element of this change is the conscious shape of a leadership style. Main attributes rely on two pillars: respect and results. Significant emphasis is placed on a close contact with employees through regular meetings aimed at

giving and receiving feedback, engaging employees in corporate initiatives, pursuing a transparent policy of employment and remuneration, and fast implementation of changes. Certainly, it can be concluded that the direction of a change in the conduct of the dominant leadership style in the organization is in compliance with, the above-mentioned, versatility of leadership.

Analyzing the data collected during the original surveys to determine the sources of leadership at DHL Express (Poland) Sp. z o.o. and in companies of the control group, it was found that the specificity of human capital management in DHL Express (Poland) Sp. z o.o. is significantly different from that characterizing other companies present on the market. Leading sources of authority in DHL Express (Poland) Sp. z o.o. are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Sources of authority in DHL and in the control group
 Tabela 1. Źródła władzy w DHL i w grupie kontrolnej



Source: own compilation

Table 1 shows the percentage of respondents who agreed with the statements contained in the left column. The collected data show that DHL Express (Poland) Sp. z o.o. essentially creates a better atmosphere to strengthen the leadership versatility (team's motivation stems from the desire to succeed, the source of the decision is the leader with a significant participation of employees, the source of authority is the ability to deal with people, skills and ability to cooperation).

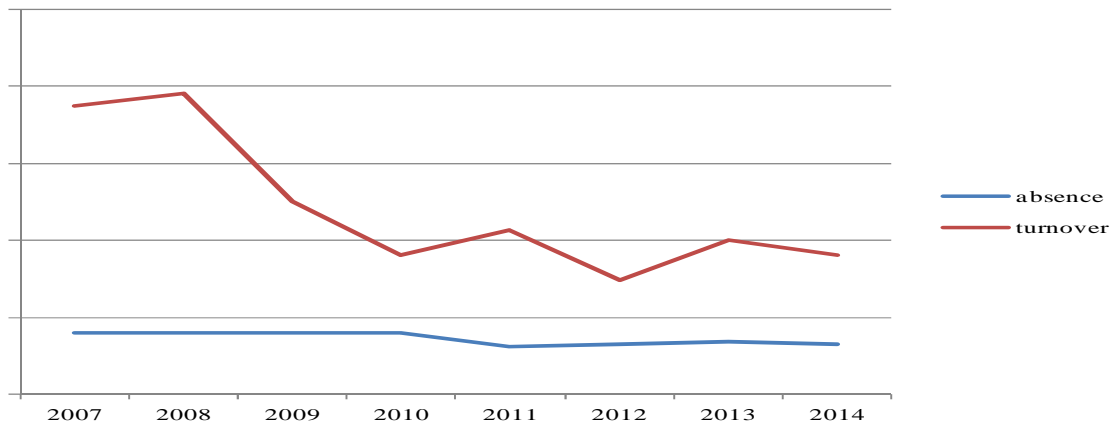
Light of the foregoing authors had inflicted the question whether the development of paradigm of leadership, running in a parallel to the process of a change in organizational culture, results in the increase of employee's engagement. To find the answer to this question, the authors have compiled together

the firm's performance in the area of turnover and absenteeism. The choice of these variables has been dictated by the adoption of generally applicable notion that a high absenteeism rate is one of the indicators of the low engagement of employees. And turnover is the final result of progressive deterioration of engagement. Chart 1 shows the dynamics of changes in the turnover and absenteeism in the years 2007 - 2014. It shows that the turnover has decreased significantly since 2008 and remains at a low level. The same regularity applies absenteeism, whose value in 2010 decreased by 1 percentage point and remains low till now.

The authors decided to get a broader picture, to track changes in the engagement index, which is the subject of the annual employee opinion survey. It should be noted

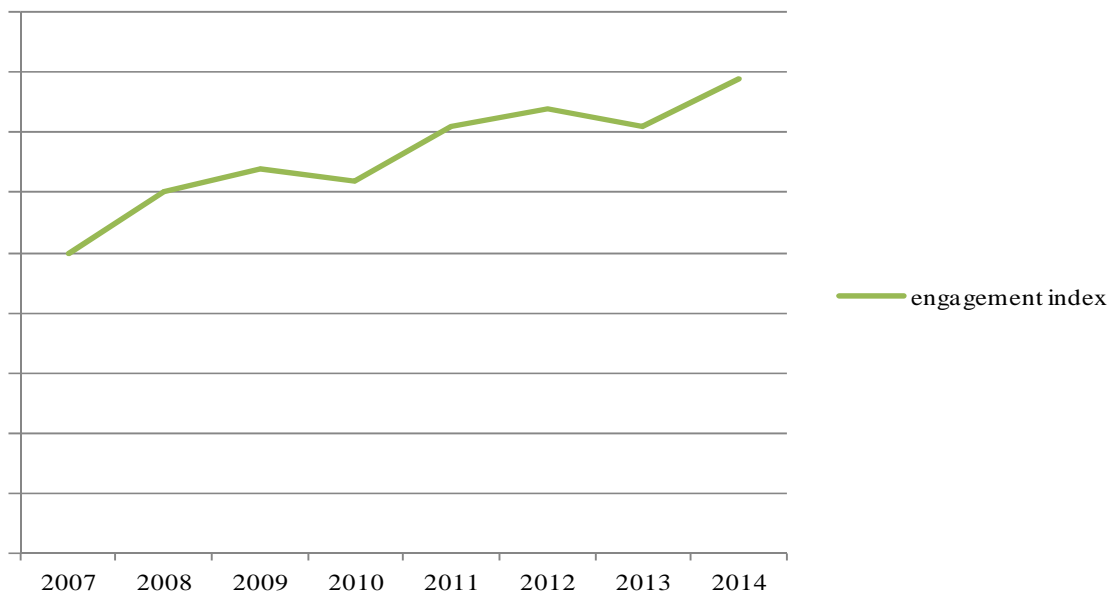
that since 2010, the participation of employees in this anonymous survey is more than 90%. Thus, we consider the results as fully representative. Chart 2 illustrates the changes in the index of engagement that have taken

place in the years 2007 - 2014. They show clear evidence of the high level of commitment emphasized by a clear boundary point of changes in 2011.



Source: own compilation

Fig. 1. Dynamics of changes in absenteeism and turnover in the years 2007 to 2014
 Rys. 1. Zmiany w absencji i rotacji w latach 2007 -2014



Source: own compilation

Fig. 2. Dynamics of changes in the engagement index in the years 2007 -2014
 Rys. 2. Zmiany w indeksie zaangażowania pracowników w latach 2007-2014

CONCLUSIONS

Graphs shown above clearly represent that the focus on versatility leadership (giving

feedback, inspiring others to achieve high performance, paying attention to the development of others, focusing on self-improvement, tracking trends, readiness to implement the changes), and at the same time focus on a changing the organizational culture,

directly influences the improvement of the main factors determining the efficiency of human capital (absenteeism, turnover) and also, perhaps above all, the engagement of employees. If we look at the market position of the DHL Express (Poland) Sp. z o.o. we can certainly say that over the past years it has been consistently building a type of leadership style that had a desired result in increasing employee engagement, which in turn contributed to strengthening the company on the market and to provided stakeholders with the expected added value.

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WSZECHSTRONNOŚĆ PRZYWÓDCZA DETERMINANTĄ ZAANGAŻOWANIA PRACOWNIKÓW NA PRZYKŁADZIE DHL EXPRESS (POLAND) SP. Z O.O.

STRESZCZENIE. Wstęp: Zmiany zachodzące współcześnie wymuszają na przedsiębiorstwach postawienie sobie pytania o jakość przywództwa w organizacji i o to czy dotychczasowe działania w tej dziedzinie wspierają sukces firmy. W otoczeniu globalnym przedsiębiorstw zmienia się zarówno struktura społeczna jak i polityczna a nieodwołalne zmiany demograficzne wpływają na rynek bardziej niż kiedykolwiek wcześniej. Aby firmy miały szanse na odniesienie sukcesu w nowym środowisku niezbędne jest więc wprowadzenie nowych paradygmatów przywódczych. Celem pracy było rozpoznanie metod pozwalających na istotną poprawę jakości działania przedsiębiorstwa transportowego.

Metody : Badania wykonano na podstawie literaturowej analizy badanego tematu oraz analizy ankiet przesłanych przez pracowników.

Wnioski: Model wszechstronności przywódczej (ang. leadership agility) wydaje się być odpowiedzią na pytanie jak przetrwać w nowym świecie. Koncept leadership agility zwraca uwagę na płynne przechodzenie menadżerów pomiędzy różnymi stylami a także odwrót od przywództwa heroicznego, skupionego na jednej tylko sobie przywódcy na rzecz przywództwa postheroicznego, gdzie liczy się wkład całego zespołu. W nowym środowisku znaczna część sukcesu firmy zależeć będzie od zaangażowania jej pracowników, a co za tym idzie od wartości dodanej jaką wytworzą. DHL Express (Poland) stosuje w codziennej praktyce model wszechstronności przywódczej osiągając dzięki temu nie tylko znakomite wyniki biznesowe ale także te odnoszące się do kapitału ludzkiego.

Słowa kluczowe: przywództwo, zaangażowanie, kierownik, wyzwanie, elastyczność

VIELSEITIGE GESCHÄFTSFÜHRUNG ALS DETERMINANTE FÜR DAS ENGAGEMENT DER MITARBEITER AM BEISPIEL DER DHL EXPRESS GMBH (POLEN)

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG. Einleitung: Die Änderungen, die in der heutigen Zeit vorgehen, zwingen Unternehmen dazu, sich die Frage nach der Qualität der Geschäftsführung zu stellen. Eine andere Frage ist es, ob die bisher unternommenen Aktivitäten in diesem Bereich den Erfolg der Firma unterstützen. In der globalen Umwelt der Unternehmen ändert sich sowohl die soziale als auch politische Struktur. Demographische Änderungen beeinflussen den Markt mehr denn je zuvor. Um in der neuen Umwelt erfolgreich zu bleiben, müssen die Firmen neue Führungsparadigma einführen. Leadership Agility scheint die richtige Antwort auf die Frage zu sein, wie man in der neuen Welt wirtschaftlich überleben kann. Das Ziel der Arbeit war es, die Methoden, die die Qualität der Verkehrsunternehmen verbessern helfen, zu identifizieren.

Methoden: Die Studie wurde auf der Grundlage einer Literaturrecherche und der Auswertung der unter den Empfängern von Verkehrsdiensten durchgeführten Befragungen ausgearbeitet.

Fazit: Das Konzept von Leadership Agility macht auf eine reibungslose Umstellung und Anpassung der Manager an verschiedene Führungsstile sowie auf die Abkehr vom heroischen, nur auf den Geschäftsführer fokussierten Führungsverständnis, eher auf die Zuwendung der postheroischen Geschäftsführung (wo nicht nur die Führungskraft sondern das gesamte Team zählt) aufmerksam. In der neuen Umwelt hängt der Erfolg des Unternehmens im großen Teil von dem Engagement der Mitarbeiter und von der von ihnen erarbeiteten Wertschöpfung ab. Die Firma DHL Express (Poland) nutzt das Leadership Agility-Modell in der täglichen Praxis und bildet dadurch die Voraussetzungen für großartige Ergebnisse nicht nur in Bezug auf Business-Erfolge sondern auch auf das Menschenkapital.

Codewörter: Führung, Engagement, Manager, Herausforderung, Agilität.

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