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The Power of Mentoring and Digitalization as Processes of Strengthening the Human Resource Departments' Activity

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Abstract. Human resources (HR) represent the core of any organization. The way the human resources activities are understood, managed, standardised and mentored is vital for the survival, development and success of any organization in market competitions. In the digitization era HR and HR departments activities contribute to the safety and efficiency of the company, sharing part of assets, investment and profits. The professionals working in the HR department (HRD) are undergoing a profound transformation of mentality and technological change as main challenges of finding specialists and retaining employees. There present research studies the way the coming years will influence the company top management and staffs' activities so that the profit and market share not to be diminished or lost

Keywords: resources, digitization, mentoring, HR department

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1. Introduction

Welcome In recent years, human resources (HR) development faces lot of challenges due to new practices and complex approaches facilitating or hindering adjustments to the emerging business confrontations in the market with profit and social implications. Thus, the HR development has begun to shift from a transactional, dedicated, to a transformational role with a truly strategic contribution to the company. In this evolution an important contribution is the technology, which takes over the burden of routine processes on the HR team's shoulders. Because digitalization and automation are replacing the existing skill sets at a rising pace, HR specialists are obliged to accept and embrace the transformation and develop their capacity to adapt to this new landscape. In the very near future, at a time of digital transformation and Big Data (Scholz, 2017), there will be a significant change in employee's engagement. In



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this fight, market talent is likely to win companies exploiting technology to maximize the potential of data in their human resources systems.

Lots of studies have been developed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the HR activity. This managed to profound transformations (Filippone et al, 2012) of the human resource professionals obliged to grab the technological change and accept the challenge of finding high skilled specialists and retaining employees (Salleh & Wee-Keat, 2002). Such an example is given by the study "Trends and Challenges in HR 2017" developed by Valoria in partnership with Business Mark. This study refers on the perception of HR executives and HR executives about the strategic challenges that marked the transformation of the HR function. The report is based on questions regarding the way "the digital technology will turn human resources departments to become closer to the market and society needs" (Cernian, 2018).

Here is what the results of Valoria study about Romanian companies reveals.

The results of the study "Trends and Challenges in HR 2017" show that the biggest challenges faced by HR departments are to find specialists and retention of high-potential employees, as well as to increase the involvement of employees. The figures on the HR digitization budget show the reality: 6 out of 10 companies have roughly the same budget as last year's digitization of HR, 11% increased this budget by more than 20% in 2017, and 11% had an increase of less than 20%. However, for 7% of companies this budget declined in 2017 by more than 20% compared to last year, while 9% had a decrease of less than 20% of this budget.

With regard at the automation of HR processes, in 2017, half of the respondents say they hold solutions for automation of HR processes, while one third of them do not want to implement, and 15% say they do not even now and do not intend to implement it. In most cases (Johnson & Gal, 2011), where the HR department uses IT solutions, they are punctual and treat a particular process individually (such as payroll, timing, etc.), the essential component missing is the integration of these processes into one much more powerful tool. If 85% of companies say they use software for payroll, only 13% have software for employee management and training (Mathis, 2017). Only 17% use software to manage compensation and benefit programs, 19% say they have software for recruitment, and 26% have software for employee performance management.

The use of HR technology is perceived with a positive impact although more than half of the companies have estimated that the use of IT systems they use in the HR area has a positive impact on business, the survey results show that 4 out of 10 respondents say that the IT systems available to manage recruitment have no impact on the company's ability to deliver an efficient HR, and one in ten thinks the impact is negative. Of the respondents, 47% believe that the use of HR technology is of high importance for the department's performance measurement (ROI), 28% are undecided or believe it is only somewhat important, and 19% consider it to be a key critical item.

The implementation of Artificial Intelligence is perceived figure out as an addition beyond the IT systems implementation, for both managing HR processes and the hidden uncertainties. The global trend is increasingly going towards integrating artificial intelligence into HR automation, especially in the case of routine activities that take a long time. Only 30% of Romanian companies believe that artificial intelligence and process automation will be advanced enough to influence the HR function over the next 2-5 years, while 17% expect this period to be 6-10 years. 43% of companies believe that artificial intelligence is one of



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the most important trends that will significantly change the function of HR, other relevant trends being mobile and social media applications (47% of companies), political and economic developments (43%) and demographic change (42%). The main advantage is the reduction of time for the various standardized processes (Noe et al, 2017).

"Digitization" is a new term that coagulates under existing umbrella existing needs by giving them a name. Needs, however, are not us. We all want to make our work more efficient, we can bring real value to our job, and this involves allocating as little time as possible for "operational" activities such as a holiday or a travel request (De Mauro et al, 2017). These needs have become the basis of the pyramid for both employees who want to get the few clicks they need, as well as for the employer, who seeks to analyse, standardize and improve their processes using the data from digitized processes.

In HR processes, digitization typically takes the form of automation of HR processes through IT development improvements - with a high focus on self-service for colleagues and managers; or the introduction of robots into the HR Shared Services area for standardized processes (the so-called Robotic process automation). I say transition and not change, because I sincerely believe that there is no way back. It is only a matter of time until Romania, in everything that is industry, services, education or medicine, will enter the advanced world and technology will be available and present in the lives of all, not just those of the big urban agglomerations or those working in advanced and resourceful companies (Hecklau et al, 2016). But what does digitization really mean and what is the impact on our professional life? Everyone is talking about digitization today, companies are thinking about all sorts of initiatives, but if you ask executives, human resources people or employees, it is very possible to get completely different answers about understanding the phenomenon. For some, especially among executives, digitization is about deploying advanced technologies in everyday work: from 24/7 phone email to real-time tracking of sales results, to robotizing on lines production. For others, for example, for marketing and sales people, it means a new way of getting in touch with customers, keeping in touch and being able to communicate with them. For others, maybe even a whole new and totally new way of doing business.

In a recent article, McKinsey website said none of the above definitions is necessarily incorrect, but shows a lack of alignment with the vision, the direction in which companies need to grow. That is why, the same article shows, companies are starting different initiatives and efforts are being made in ways that not only do not use the market opportunities, but, more than that, they tire the company and squeeze out the performance of its potential real (Novak et al, 2018).

A wise thing for top management teams and equally for human resource people would be to define, first of all, what the digitization phenomenon means in their company. This requires even clarification of language, alignment with the vision of the future and the strategy to get there. Because digitization means, besides bringing technology into the hands of each employee, a profound cultural change, a change in how we relate to the use of technology, information security, the various levels of access to information, decision-making and team and team communication. Transformation is far more subtle than implementing a new system or new technology within a few months of the purchase decision. It is a paradigm shift that primarily affects people, and therefore business leaders, operational managers, human resources are the ones who have to prepare first and understand the effects of the transition to digitization.



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2. The Propensity to Use New Technologies and Apply the Results

Over the past weeks, I have worked with a team of managers who run a car parts foundry within a large industrial platform. Already, team leaders have an ergonomic tablet mounted on their left hand and have access to information on process parameters, costs, people present at work, and their tasks. Real-time connectivity to all of these data, the need for correct use, or correct data entry in the system while you're in the middle of production operations require a team leader to distribute, concentrate, react instantly, understanding the impact of such a system on top management decisions on the client - who also has more access to information on production volumes, delivery times or other technical details (Manolescu, 2001). Here is the future here, begins today, and subjects people to trials they might not have thought about a year or two a year ago.

The skills I'm talking about here are difficult to train, require perseverance and awareness, require middle management skills for coaching and supervision, positive communication, and on-going feedback. The decision to implement tablets could be punctual, adapting to working with them, and changing relationships and how to make decisions across management levels can take a long time. Regardless of what form of digitization is I think we have faced, in the last decade, two interesting trends that influence the digitization of HR processes:

1. Changing perspectives in how HR systems (HRMS) are configured, with an increased focus on employee experience (the so-called Employee Experience Journey). In recent years, new HRMS solutions, especially cloud-based solutions, are built on an architecture that starts from the type of experience we want for the employee, compared with the 10-15 years ago, which were built around managers' needs and HR functions. New solutions focus on accessibility, applications available in all mobile formats, and open discussion forums within the communities where its members are.

2. Increasing the need for Data Analytics to quickly make decisions about human capital. In such a dynamic environment as today, it is essential that you have as a manager, but also as an employer, the relevant data to make the right decisions about retention and attraction of talent. Business intelligence is becoming an extremely important topic in the current context, not just for customer and colleague decisions. The way employers are able to understand trends in the labour market, but also from their own organization, looking at analytics (for example, generation change, average retention of talent, retention rate, and talent advancement) will help adjust their Human Capital strategy and interventions in anticipation of future changes (Rogers, 2016).

3. Conclusion

In this context, HR people should rethink their role, from a service provider to a solution facilitator and a promoter of a healthy organizational culture. The HR function faces a major transformation in which time for operational issues will be reduced, many of these processes being moved to the digital area, with most of the time and resources being allocated to support the organization in its role an internal consultant on all Human Capital initiatives.

With the change in the structure of the workforce, digitization will certainly increase. As such, our colleagues will have high expectations of response time for standardized HR services, which can be delivered in a digital format.



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In the coming years, at a time of digital transformation and Big Data, there will be a significant change in employee engagement. The results of the study "Trends and Challenges in HR 2017" show that the biggest challenges faced by HR departments are to find specialists and retention of high-potential employees, as well as to increase the involvement of employees.

In this fight, market talent is likely to win companies exploiting technology to maximize the potential of data in their human resources systems (Bengtsson & Bloom, 2017).

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