

IDENTIFICATION OF RISK: AN EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

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Abstract: The focus of the paper is to identify risks in various areas of operation of a selected trade and production company. The risks primarily referred to threats that had direct or indirect impact on the functioning of the organisation, thence the causes of their occurrence and effects are determined. Identification of individual risks is made based on analyses of internal and external context of the enterprise. In this study, over thirty key risks were identified, in the operational and strategic area, which is related to the taking of immediate action. The final stage of the paper includes preparation of control mechanisms allowing for minimisation or elimination of the discovered risks.

Keywords: organisation context, threats, risk management, risk identification, risk analysis, risk assessment, control mechanisms.

1. INTRODUCTION

Risk management is currently an area of science and a realm of operation of various organisations which acquires increasing significance due to the essence of the broadly understood safety (Monkiewicz and Gąsiorkiewicz, 2010). Enterprises, institutions, and other organisational units that implement tasks in risk management are more aware of the opportunities and threats in their immediate and more distant environment and thus become capable of efficiently minimising the risk of failure and maximising the intended outcomes and profits (Knosala, 2018). Thus, they take care of their continuous development and safety and implement the agreed strategy better (Niciejewska and Kiriliuk, 2020; Niciejewska and Obrecht, 2020; Nikolova-Alexieva et al., 2018; Woźny, 2020).

Risk management primarily relies on performance of an efficient risk management process. It comprises several consecutive (or parallel) stages, such as: determination of the organisation's context and thus delineation of risk management goals, risk identification, risk analysis, risk assessment, reaction to risk, control, and communication. The aim of the current study is to identify the quality of risk management policies and actions implemented by an enterprise. Thus, the object of

the study is a production and trade company that is in the Slaskie Province, Poland. The research was carried out in the third and the fourth quarter of 2020 (i.e. in June 2020 and in November 2020). The methodology is of a survey descriptive type and a broad range of research methods are used to successfully achieve the tasks and goals of the study. As a result, an identification of risks occurring along with causes, effects and control mechanisms are implemented.

Based on a literature review in the field, the first stage of risk management process refers to the designation of all aspects of an organisation's operation, which may be susceptible to the occurrence of threats. Subsequently, identification of potential risk factors is made and areas that they may refer to. Threats are characterised and the causes and effects (consequences) which they can lead to are determined (Wróbel, 2015). The third step is proper analysis of risk consisting in determining its value (probability, effects or additionally others). In the risk assessment it is necessary to specify whether the calculated level of risk fulfils the terms of acceptability or not. If the assessment indicates that the risk occurs on a non-acceptable level or a conditionally acceptable level, then it is necessary to determine the modes of handling such risk. Reaction to risk is a stage that consists in implementation of preventive activities or completely new control mechanisms. This is a stage during which costs of implementation of safeguarding measures are planned and the date of their performance, as well as the team of persons who will be responsible for such tasks. The penultimate stage is efficient communication among all interested entities.

On the other hand, monitoring is a stage in the risk management process that occurs in parallel with other stages and is carried out on a practically ongoing basis. It comprises monitoring of threats, assessment of implemented ex-post activities, as well new formation of the process. Individual stages of the risk management process require application of proper methodology and thus methods, techniques and tools that enable its performance. The selection of methodology is free and adjusted to the specific nature of a given company and its profile of operation (Jajuga, 2007; Kaczmarek, 2010; Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2010).

The paper is structured as follows: following the introduction, in the second part is described the research methodology. This analysis paves the way for the third part, consisting in identification of risks in a company and compilation of control mechanisms. The fourth part stresses on the results and discussion based on the research. The article closes with summary and conclusions in the field of risk identification.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The studied enterprise is a production and trade company that is in the Śląskie Province, Poland. The company's core activity is water jet cutting and laser cutting. The orders are performed for economic entities (very small and very large ones), as well as for retail clients. The method of cutting is intended for single-piece production, short-series production and processing of materials that are difficult to handle with other technologies. The performed service is dedicated to a broad group of recipients, e.g., manufacturers of machines and technological lines in the food industry, producers of machines and devices for mining and energy industry, producers of fittings, producers of laboratories, as well as the advertising industry, arms industry, construction industry, etc.

The water jet cutting technology belongs to one of the most environmentally friendly technologies. It does not emit harmful vapours, heat, or waste. Additionally, it makes use of natural materials, clean water, and electricity. The company's competitive advantage is the fact that it holds a permit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration for performance of activities around production and trading in products and technology for military or police use. This is related to multiple opportunities, as well as threats, which will be discussed in a further part of this study. The company holds a certified quality system according to the EN-ISO 9001:2009 standard and successfully completes annual audits. The company has held the EN ISO 9001:2000 certificate since 2008 it is annually confirmed by the TUV Nord Cert GmbH audit. Furthermore, it holds the BISNODE Business Reliability Certificate of 2015 and Złoty Płatnik Certificate from 2015 - Euler Hermes.

For the purposes of this paper, the studies were carried out in the third and the fourth quarter of 2020 and its results will be used for further analysis and assessment of risk and performance of a holistic risk management process in the studied company with the aim of implementing a system compliant with the ISO 31000 Risk Management - Principles and Guidelines System.

The study methodology comprised verification of the company's documents, a discussion, an interview, as well as a control list prepared with the employees of individual company divisions. Three main stages of the risk management process were completed, namely determination of the organisation's context, identification of risks and reaction to risk. Statistical data were used along with other information deriving from main areas of the company's operation: finances, production, sale and marketing, quality management and HR resources management in the company, strategic management.

3. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The first stage of the study was to determine the internal and external context of the studied enterprise. The internal environment referred to such areas of the company's operation as: mission, vision, values, management, organisational structures, roles and responsibilities of the company's personnel, strategies, goals, policy, organisational culture, standards, guidelines and models accepted by the organisation, opportunities, resources and knowledge (e.g. capital, time, people, intellectual property, processes, systems and technologies), data, information systems and flow of information, relations with internal stakeholders, taking into account their remarks and values, as well as contractual relations and obligations. On the other hand, the external context consisted in analysis of the following range: social, cultural, political, legal, regulatory, financial, technological, economic, and environmental factors, international, domestic, regional, and local ones, key factors and tendencies affecting the organisation's goals, contractual relations and obligations. With respect to the above, the following elements were distinguished, which may generate risks, but also opportunities for the company's development:

- servicing of economic entities (large and small) along with retail clients;
- price and quality of products, quality of provided services;
- longest experience in Poland in the water jet cutting technology;
- observance of top payment standards;
- · engagement and cooperation of employees;
- · customer servicing;

- · responsibilities and rights of the Quality Management System Representative;
- · democratic style of management;
- · profitability of the company;
- · sourcing new clients;
- · zero complaint level;
- the company's development (maintenance of 100% employment, proper management of financial resources, launching of the abrasive recycling system);
- strictly defined work organisation (assignment of tasks and control of their correct performance);
- · regular team meetings (briefings);
- · counteracting mobbing at the workplace;
- · integration meetings and company trips;
- implementation of the PN-EN ISO 9001:2009 standard:
- license for sub-systems and elements of military or police-use products;
- · documented procedures, instructions;
- · company secret;
- modern machines and devices cutting plotters (water, laser) with a wide range of application;
- · computer equipment with specialist software;
- the company's financial capital (funds accumulated on the bank account and in the cash register);
- subsidies from the European Union (EU funds);
- IT systems: Soft 4 Sale (management), IGEMS (water cutting design), TRU TOPS (laser design);
- databases: employees, clients, suppliers and other contracting partners;
- internal communication with employees (internal management, system documentation, trainings, periodical personnel meetings);
- · contracts and liabilities;
- exchange of know-how;
- tax relief;
- · inflation, unemployment;
- natural environment and external catastrophic threats;
- costs of labour, energy and transport;
- level of skills of the engineering and technical personnel, qualifications and experience of personnel;
- · demand on the side of the army and police;
- threat on the side of competition;
- · technological stability;
- · possibility of service differentiation;
- dependence of certain services on the supply of abrasive.

Among most important factors of the internal and external environment that affect the functioning of the studied company are these which belong to the relations with clients (demand on the side of key buyers - the army and the police) and suppliers, competition, modern and costly technology, quality of provided services, safety systems, demand for personnel, as well as economic factors, legal and political ones, as well as factors related to the natural threats. At the time of current events related to

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the international COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, there are also important factors in which the company must function in new, adverse conditions, which generates new threats.

One can look for opportunities and threats in every one of the above-listed elements of the company's environment. Given the fact that there are many of them, risks identified on such basis were aggregated. In relation to this, only these were selected that pose the greatest problem on the strategic and operational level of the organisation, as well as these that require priority activities (in the first place, activities minimising and eliminating the level of risk are taken about them) and they are presented in Table 1.

Table1 Identification of risks occurring in the studied enterprise along with control mechanisms

Nº	Risks	Causes	Effects	Control mechanisms
1.	Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic	Global emergence of a virus which is a threat to people's health and lives	Lockdown, suspension of business, downsized production, loss of financial liquidity, loss of income and key clients	Activities minimising the spread of virus, adherence to the recommendations of the Chief Sanitary Inspector and the Ministry of Health, observance of safety procedures, procurement of financing from the state anti-crisis shield programme, governmental subsidies
2.	Lower consumption of water and electricity	Problems related to the transfer of utilities on the side of suppliers	Halted production, production losses	Securing lack of water for 8 hours: a 1000 L Mauzer container, contracts with suppliers, negotiation of prices
3.	Increased competition on the side of large entities	Significant position of competitors on the market, diversification of services by competitors, emergence of new competitors	Reduced demand, loss of a part of clients	Diversification of provided services, sourcing new clients, filing applications for the funding of innovative activity of economic entities, marketing activities
4.	Foreign exchange fluctuations	The state's financial policy	Increase in the price of offered services, reduced demand, loss of a part of clients, reduction of profit	Possibility of dividing streams of revenues or foreign exchange payments into minor portions, paid in various periods, possibility of sale or purchase of foreign currency in forward transactions

Nº	Risks	Causes	Effects	Control mechanisms
5.	Lack of	Long payment	Halted production,	Change in the terms of
	financial	deadlines from	loss of a part of	payment transactions
	liquidity	suppliers	clients, loss of the	
6.	Increase in	Inflation,	company's image Increase in the	Selection of optimum
0.	fixed and	increase in	price of offered	cutting parameters,
	variable costs	labour costs,	services, reduced	optimum cut-out of
	variable code	energy,	demand, loss of a	materials, savings,
		transport, raw	part of clients, lack	change of suppliers,
		materials and	of profitability	sourcing new clients,
		materials		applications for financing
				business activity as part
				of EU projects and
				subsidies
7.	Economic	Financial policy	Loss of	Crediting of orders,
	problems of	of the company,	cooperation, lack of	deferral of orders and
	major clients	economic	clients' solvency,	payments, discounts and
		factors	drop in profits, drop in financial liquidity,	price reductions, sourcing new clients
			court cases	new cherits
8.	Economic	The country's	Drop in demand for	Adjustment of activities to
0.	situation	economic	products and	the current economic
		policy, external	services, loss of	situation
		determinants	revenues, lack of	
			qualified personnel	
9.	Technical	Incorrect	Direct threat to	Insurance, observance of
	failures,	maintenance of	human health and	safety principles, proper
	construction	machines,	life, panic,	use of machines, devices
	catastrophes	devices and	necessity to	and construction facilities,
		construction facilities,	evacuate people, disruptions in	performance of the risk
		exceeding	transport and	management process
		authorisations,	communication,	
		failure to	disruptions in	
		observe	operation of the	
		provisions and	gas grid, electricity	
		safety	and heat network,	
		procedures,	destruction of the	
		lack of risk	company's	
40	Theft/learner	analysis	property	Taskalastasus II
10.	Theft/ loss of material and	Crime, burglary,	Financial losses, breaks in	Technical safeguards,
	financial	fraud, lack of implemented	production	insurance, security services, security
	assets	safety	production	procedures, alarm
	400010	procedures		systems, monitoring,
		p. 000 aa. 00		roles and responsibilities
				of key employees
11.	Destruction of	Crime, burglary,	Financial losses,	Insurance, protection from
	resources	force majeure	loss of key	burglary, securing of
		(natural	information	materials, protection of
		disasters)		resources, adherence to

Nº	Risks	Causes	Effects	Control mechanisms
				safety principles, implementation of security systems
12.	Lack of resources on the market	Economic and foreign policy of the country	Halted production, no possibility to provide services, loss of a part of clients, loss of company image	Stock of standard materials or most frequently used materials, searching for alternative suppliers of resources
13.	Violation of information security	Lack of knowledge and trainings for employees, lack of safeguards and data protection; failure to implement information security procedures, imprudence of employees	Loss of key information, violation of company secret	Implementation and observance of security principles, training and teaching of employees, IT safeguards, security audits, employee trainings, introduction of information security system
14.	Irregularities in the use of EU funds	Lack of supervision and control	Liquidated damages, return of funds, incorrect use of available assets	Division of obligations, training and improvement of knowledge, internal control system, analysis of risk in the area of financial abuse, ethical conduct
15.	Difficulties with sourcing new clients and retaining current ones	Consumer habits of clients, competition on the market	Sourcing clients via competitors, reduction of prices of services in order to maintain production and financial activities	Building relations with clients, quick reaction to the clients' needs, proper choice of the target group of clients, personal approach to clients, professional communication, extended marketing activities.
16.	Activities for the sake of the natural environment	Use of garnet for production	Environmental pollution, high costs of garnet utilisation	Introduction of abrasive recovery system
17.	High temperature resulting in overheating of machines	Weather factors - hot summer	Failures, suspension of production, high costs of production, financial losses	Heat disposal (triple circulation system)
18.	Substitute (plasma cutting)	Development of plasma cutting technology,	New possibilities and opportunities for the company,	Laser cutting is applied in the cutting of precise elements with complex

Nº	Risks	Causes	Effects	Control mechanisms
		scientific	subsidies for	shapes, with small
		accomplishment	innovative activities	diameters (e.g. inner
		S		angles, loops, arcs,
				combs)
19.	Insufficient	Lack of	High employee	Proper employee
	competence	evaluation of	fluctuation,	recruitment and selection,
	and errors of	employees'	excessive errors,	on-boarding trainings,
	employees	competence,	delays in service	cooperation with
		inefficient	performance,	secondary schools in the
		system of	breaks in	area of education,
		education,	production,	refresher trainings,
		recruitment of	additional costs,	ongoing development and
		employees	financial and	self improvement,
		without	material losses	correction and adjustment
		experience, lack		of labour utilisation,
		of trainings		replacement
20.	Inefficient	Lack of efficient	Excessive errors,	Introduction of an
	system of	system of	delays in service	integrated information
	information	information flow,	performance,	flow and exchange
	flow	lack of	breaks in	system among the
		communication	production	company's units
		trainings	p. 0 d d o d o d	
21.	Lack of	Incorrect	Excessive errors,	Employee motivation, fair
	employees'	employee	delays in service	remuneration system,
	engagement	incentive	performance,	system of prizes and
	3-3-	scheme,	breaks in	penalties
		conflicts in	production,	,
		teams, low	additional costs,	
		remuneration	termination of	
			employment	
			contracts	
22.	Accidents at	Failure to	Employee	OHS principles,
	work	adhere to the	absenteeism,	employee trainings,
	WOTH.	OHS principles,	halted production,	proper preparation of
		incorrect	additional costs,	work positions and
		safeguarding of	loss of image	designation of hazardous
		machines and	1000 of liftage	zones, application of
		devices, failure		personal protection
		to use personal		equipment, limitation of
		protection		hazardous factors,
		equipment,		investments in new
		occurrence of		technology, insurance,
		hazardous and		adequate assessment of
		detrimental		professional risk
		factors in the		professional risk
		labour		
		environment		

Nº	Risks	Causes	Effects	Control mechanisms
23.	No possibility to enforce liability with	Lack of legal regulations pertaining to the	Excessive errors, delays in service performance,	Seeking damages amicably or in court
	respect to the entrusted property	liability for the entrusted property, failure to enforce the law	breaks in production, additional costs, termination of employment contracts	
24.	Lack of stability of supplies	Lack of resources on the market; unstable economic situation, lack of suppliers or limited number of suppliers, disruptions in timely supplies	Lack of production stock, financial and production losses, loss of clients	Planning of deliveries in advance, confirmation of dates of delivery at the tendering stage, safety stocks, liquidated damages for late deliveries, reserve suppliers
25.	Monopolist position of suppliers	Too few suppliers on the market, high bargaining power of suppliers in the sector	Lack of availability of production materials, breaks in production, delays in service performance	Planning of deliveries in advance, confirmation of dates of delivery at the tendering stage, safety stocks, liquidated damages for late deliveries, reserve suppliers
26.	Late deliveries	Lack of materials on the market, problems with transport	Break in production, delays in service performance	Planning of deliveries in advance, confirmation of dates of delivery at the tendering stage, safety stocks, liquidated damages for late deliveries, reserve suppliers
27.	Low quality of raw materials	Lack of criteria to verify suppliers	Production problems, low quality of offered products and services, financial losses	Verification of supplies, requirement of licenses;
28.	Resistance of employees, unwillingness to changes	Lack of proper motivation of employees	No possibility of introduction	Delivery of up-to-date knowledge and information about the implemented changes, presentation of benefits from the introduced changes, building a feeling of security, building correct

Nº	Risks	Causes	Effects	Control mechanisms
				interpersonal relations,
				participation and
				motivation of employees,
				engagement of
				employees, planning of
				changes
29.	Failures of	Obsolete	Light or severe	Inspections, maintenance,
	machines and	machines and	bodily injuries,	use in compliance with
	devices	devices, lack of	even death,	user's manuals, remote
		maintenance	complete	removal of failures
		and inspections,	destruction of a	
		incorrect	device, production	
		exploitation	losses	
30.	Incorrect	Employee's	Losses in	Preparation of material
	choice of	errors	production,	inventories, experience of
	cutting		destruction of	programmers
	parameters		materials, financial	
			losses, loss of the	
04	Diamontiana in	Failure studios	company's image	Consider last of water for
31.	Disruptions in	Failure, strains	Break in	Securing lack of water for
	supplies of	in consumption,	production, financial losses	8 hours: 1000 L Mauzer
	energy and	environmental	iinanciai iosses	container
20	water	issues The client's lack	Lacaca in	Chapting dimensions and
32.	Incorrect drawings		Losses in production,	Checking dimensions and offering details with
	provided by	of experience, errors	destruction of	dimensions, approval of
	the client	GITOIS	materials, delays in	offers by the client
	the olient		service	oners by the elient
			performance	
33.	Lack of access	Incorrect	Break in	Archiving of data and
	to data	securing of	production, delays	preparation of back-up
	necessary in	data, loss of	in service	copies
	the production	data, failure of	performance	
	process	the ICT system		
34.	Failure of the	Lack of stable	Break in	Audit of IT system and
	IT system	operation of one	production, delays	implementation of
		of the system	in service	required changes, system
		components,	performance;	updates (implementation
		technical errors	disruptions in	of necessary extensions,
		in the system,	continuity of	data archiving and
		natural	operation, possible	preparation of back-up
		disasters,	loss of access to	copies; anti-virus
		intentional or	data, data	systems, preparation and
		accidental	confidentiality	implementation of security
		actions of man		policy)
35.	Break-in into	Breaking of	Break in	Anti-virus software,
	the system	safeguards,	production, delays	firewalls, authentication
		incorrect system	in service	(use of strong passwords,
		configuration,	performance;	passwords to routers and
		incorrect actions	disruptions in	other security systems)
		of users	continuity of	

Nº	Risks	Causes	Effects	Control mechanisms
			operation, possible	
			loss of access to	
			data, data	
			confidentiality	

Source: own study

Identification of risk is the second and essential element of the risk management process, underlying further analysis, assessment, and reaction to risk, whereas in a further perspective, it also concerns two stages of the process that occur in parallel (control and communication). Based on identification of risks in the studied company and analysis of Table 1, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- pursuant to the analysis of the company's documents, carried out during interviews with the management and personnel, as well as on the basis of statistical and strategic analyses of the company, thirty-five main risks were identified which form a basis for implementation of a further risk management process;
- 2) the identified risks are primarily operational risks, related to the production process, as well as market risks, pertaining mainly to suppliers and resources, IT risks, risks for human resources, and recently also the external risk and the strategic risk;
- 3) major risks from the point of view of the company's profile of operation and further perspectives of its development are: risks directly related to the production process, given the generated financial losses, increased competition in the sector forcing the enterprise to take actions aimed at reduction of prices and increase in the quality of provided services, risks related to suppliers and clients, including risks related to the sourcing of new clients in difficult market conditions, risks related to the economic situation, economic problems, indirectly also related to the current state of the pandemic. Furthermore, an important role is played by risks related to the human factor on account of the problems with sourcing competent employees on the labour market, having specialist qualifications, ready to take innovative actions supported by new projects and external funds. Less important risks relate to machines and devices on account of use of a modern and safe technology and observance of basic safety principles, risks of accidents at work (no events were recorded), as well as risks related to information security (implemented information security systems, implementation of security policy) and ensuring high quality of provided services (given the implementation of ISO 9001 and its cyclical certification). It is worth drawing attention to the fact that a significant opportunity has appeared among risks: plasma cutting as a substitute activity, thanks to which the company has a possibility of conducting innovative activities and sourcing funds for development;
- 4) the most frequent causes of risk include: global threats, market determinants, increase in fixed costs, the state's economic policy, lack of qualified employees, errors of employees and lack of engagement in innovative activities of the company, price-quality ratio, problems with sourcing clients and new suppliers, high requirements of clients with respect to prices and competition in the sector, low quality of raw materials and lack of resources;

- 5) the most frequently occurring effects of identified risks include: halts in production and disruptions in continuous operation of the company, lack of financial liquidity, financial losses, loss of clients due to increased competition and increased prices of services, and even - in a pessimistic scenario - suspension of the company's operation.
- the most important control mechanisms include: application of safety procedures. ensuring continuity of operation, insurance, safeguarding of stocks, diversification of operation, among others via innovative activities and sourcing external financing, changes in terms of payment transactions, sourcing new clients and suppliers, introduction of systematic training for employees, as well as holistic implementation of the risk management process in the enterprise;
- activities minimising or eliminating risks (control mechanisms) are mainly focused on elimination of causes of specific risks and also the resulting effects of threats. However, this is related to a thorough analysis and assessment of risk, using determination of values of risk parameters (probability and effects) with the application of adequate quantitative or quantitative and qualitative methodology (e.g. a risk matrix).

4. CONCLUSION

Summing up the discussion pertaining to the identification of risks in the examined enterprise, it may be concluded that the company is currently in an uncertain situation as far as making strategic decisions in the face of external determinants is concerned. As follows from the organisation's context, although there are more internal factors than external ones, their impact is less significant when the potential effects are concerned. In this study, over thirty key risks were identified, in the operational and strategic area, which is related to the taking of immediate action.

The paper presents only three stages of the risk management process, thus the next step in this research project will be preparation of a detailed analysis and risk assessment with the application of proper methodology relying on risk parameters, such as probability (or the level of impact on the organisation) and its effects. An interesting and, at the same time, a practical approach would also be considering potential opportunities that may appear in the company, with respect to the taking of innovative actions, which are currently a very important area of the company's development.

Given the occurrence of a significant number of aggregated risks in the studied company, it is also necessary to make decisions about the introduction of the 31000 standard and implementation of the risk management system, as all areas of the company's operation are engaged in risk generation (FERMA 2003, AIRMIC Risk Management ISO 31000:2017, Standard AS/NZS 4360:2004). Implementation of risk management standards minimises such risk, allowing for integration of the remaining systems (e.g. ISO 9001, or 2700). The company is continually developing and looking for new intellectual potential; it implements new technologies and plans further diversification, thus appearance of new threats and opportunities for the organisation is becoming an inevitable issue. The paper does not exhaust the issue of risk management process; it is an open aspect and requires further analysis and assessment of the problems presented in the work.

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