

INFLUENCE OF RECRUITMENT PROCESS ON TEMPORARY WORK QUALITY

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Purpose: The purpose of the article was to analyze and evaluate practices related to the recruitment process of temporary workers in enterprises in the logistics and warehouse industry (provision of services). At the same time, the aim of the article is to indicate the directions of actions in the field of the recruitment process that can be undertaken by the management of such enterprises in order to improve the quality of services provided by improving the quality of work.

Design/methodology/approach: The study was preliminary and based on conducting a pilot qualitative study using the method of individual in-depth interview (IDI). The study covered the subject of the recruitment process of temporary workers in logistics and warehouse companies operating in the Great Poland region, and the subject of the study were the temporary workers themselves. The article presents the results of the study conducted among 25 temporary employees.

Findings: The main aspects, covered in the study, regarding recruitment process are related to the way the recruitment meetings are handled, how the basing employment information are being passed to the candidate and whether what has been proposed is covered in the reality. As there have been gaps identified in those recruitment elements the author suggests some recommendations to the companies.

Research limitations/implications: The presented results of the initial pilot study may be subsequently verified in the actual study. At the same time other human resources management processes, in the field of temporary workers, may be subjected to additional study. On this basis, it is possible to build a full picture of the practices used in enterprises, affecting the quality of work by temporary workers, and to indicate the directions of changes in order to improve the achieved results in terms of quality.

Practical implications: The results of the study might be used by the companies interested in the form of temporary work and companies struggling with lowering quality of products or services as a result of employing temporary employees.

Originality/value: As the temporary work in Poland usage is significant and increasing it is important to understand the factors influencing the quality of temporary employees' work. This area has not been explored enough through research study.

Keywords: temporary employment, agency, job quality, services.

Category of the paper: Research study.

1. Introduction

The dynamically changing market situation requires the management of companies to quickly adjust their production capabilities to market demand (Bartoll, Ramos, 2020). From the point of view of the company's management, ensuring such flexibility is inherent in the use of appropriate solutions in the field of human resources management. An example of solutions that allow for the adjustment of resources directly related to the production of goods or the provision of services is the implementation of flexible solutions in the field of the working time system and settlement period, as well as the training of employees to perform various tasks as part of the so-called "multiskills" programs. However, a very important element for enterprises is the possibility of using the form of temporary work, which is important not only in the case of enterprises with seasonal work, but also those for which production volumes fluctuate over a longer period of time. The ability to quickly and adequately change the level of employment seems to be crucial for maintaining the effectiveness of the organization (Haberer, Arlinghaus, 2021).

Even before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine, according to Eurostat data, in 2018, 14.1% of workers aged 15-64 in the European Union were temporary workers. In Poland, the share of temporary workers was significantly higher than the average in the European Union at 24.3%, placing Poland in second place, right after Spain, with the share of temporary workers at 26.9% (Eurostat, 2024). A significant share of temporary workers in the employment structure in Poland proves that the management of enterprises is willing to use this form of employment, ensuring flexibility in adjusting the level of employment to the production needs. However, regardless of the form of employment, all persons working in the company are expected to achieve the assumed effects of work, including the effects of meeting the required level of quality of manufactured products and services.

The research conducted so far indicates that increasing the number of temporary workers in the employment structure in a company affects the deterioration of the level of quality of manufactured products and provided services (Wiengarten, Onofrei, Fynes, Humphreys, 2020). The level of quality in question is, in turn, the result of the quality of the work carried out by temporary workers. Temporary workers, despite the temporary nature of their work, rely on a number of human resources management processes in the company, such as the recruitment process, the onboarding process, the competence development process, or the process of terminating cooperation. The way these processes are carried out in a company is one of the elements influencing how employees perform their tasks (Nowakowska, 2011). The process that has been chosen for the purposes of this publication is the recruitment process, through which company verifies e.g. the candidate's fit with the organization and the organization's match with the candidate (in this case, the temporary worker with the employer-user and vice versa). At the same time, as part of this stage, the candidate should be presented

with the scope of tasks, responsibilities, requirements and other important issues for both parties that may affect potential cooperation.

Based on the above, the aim of this article is to analyze and evaluate practices related to the recruitment process of temporary workers in enterprises in the logistics and warehouse industry (provision of services). At the same time, the aim of the article is to indicate the directions of actions in the field of the recruitment process that can be undertaken by the management of such enterprises in order to improve the quality of services provided by improving the quality of work.

It is assumed that a properly planned, effective and efficiently implemented recruitment process for temporary workers has a significant impact on the quality of their work, and thus on achieving the assumed level of quality of products and services (Govand, Shukur, 2015).

2. Temporary work in Poland and temporary employees' recruitment process

The form of temporary work is certainly an interesting legal construction, consisting in the so-called borrowing of an employee, in order to ensure flexibility of work in the company. Certainly, important features of temporary work include three-parties construction and limited duration of this form of employment. The three-parties construction referred here is understood in the presence of three entities and the relations between them. These three entities include a temporary employment agency, a temporary worker and employer-user. A temporary employment agency can hire a temporary worker and assign him or her to work at the employer-user, i.e. it plays the role of an employment agency. At the same time, a temporary employment agency is a formal (from the point of view of legal regulations) employer of a temporary worker. The employer-user, on the other hand, is the entity to which the temporary employment agency directs the temporary worker and for whom the temporary worker will perform the work. In the context of this article, the employer-users are the companies in the logistics and warehousing industry. The last subject of this three-parties agreement is the temporary worker, i.e. a person employed by a temporary employment agency and performing work for the employer-user.

The form of temporary work is regulated in Polish legislation and in accordance with Article 2(2) of the Act of 9 July 2003 on the Employment of Temporary Workers (Act of 9 July 2003), a temporary worker is an employee employed by a temporary employment agency solely for the purpose of performing temporary work for and under the direction of the employer-user. However, the moment when employer starts using the work of a temporary worker depends on a number of factors. One of the most important factors is to make arrangements between the temporary employment agency and the employer-user in the following scope: the type of work

to be entrusted to the temporary worker, the qualification requirements necessary to perform the work, the expected period of temporary work, the working time of the temporary worker and the place where the temporary work is to be performed (Act of 9 July 2003).

The use of temporary work can be attributed to almost every industry (Majewska, 2014). However, logistics and warehousing, in the broad scope, is one of the largest industry employing temporary workers in Poland. Temporary workers are hired for a variety of tasks, such as packing, sorting, loading, and unloading goods. The reason for the large scale of temporary workers in logistics and warehouse centres is, of course, the so-called peak periods, which fall on the period of, for example, Christmas or the so-called Black Friday. Right after the logistics and warehousing industry, we can distinguish the manufacturing and construction industries, where we can also find great interest in the form of temporary work, followed by the hotel, food and retail industries (Nurzyńska, 2009).

Due to the nature of temporary work, the main group of employees performing such work includes line workers who directly perform operational tasks and often work in shifts. Operational tasks, on the other hand, should be defined as those that are mainly physical in nature and consist in performing specific activities, for example, at the production line (Urbaniak, Sobczak, 2014).

First of all, temporary work allows for quick adjustment of the number of employees to changing market conditions, which are reflected in the planned volume of manufactured products or services. On the one hand, specialized temporary employment agencies are able to acquire, in a short period of time, a large number of candidates, and on the other hand, the legal structure of this form of employment in Poland allows for a quick reduction in the number of people providing temporary work¹. Acquiring a large number of candidates by a temporary employment agency in a short period of time is an undoubted advantage of this activity and definitely constitutes an added value for organizations that want to take advantage of this form of employment. However, the pool of candidates for temporary work must be verified during the recruitment process². The methods and tools used to implement this stage will determine the human potential of the organization, and thus its achievement of the assumed effectiveness (Snopkiewicz, 2011). The basic elements of the recruitment process include (Snopkiewicz, 2011):

- analysis of application documents (CV, cover letter, references, etc.),
- conducting a job interview (e.g. recruitment meetings),
- conducting professional aptitude tests.

Of course, each organization will conduct the recruitment process according to its own needs, reflected in the procedures and tools used.

¹ This is due to the fact that a temporary employment agency may conclude a large number of contracts with a temporary worker for short periods (e.g. for a week).

² As the literature indicates, this stage should be comprehensively defined as the recruitment and selection stage (for the purposes of this article, it will be referred to as the recruitment process).

The process of recruiting temporary workers can take place in various configurations (recruitment meetings), whereas, as the author's experience shows, the most effective process is the one in which the temporary employment agency conducts an initial recruitment (the pool of candidates is reduced only to those who meet the basic conditions set by the company), and then the second stage of recruitment takes place in the company where the temporary worker would work. This gives a full picture of the situation for both the employer-user and the potential temporary worker. Elements of the recruitment process, important from the point of view of both parties, are discussed during such a recruitment meeting. The activities included in the recruitment process may have an impact on how the temporary worker will perform his or her work (the quality of the work performed) and, consequently, whether the required quality of manufactured products and services will be ensured.

3. Quality of temporary work

The quality of manufactured products and services referred to in this publication is considered in the context of internal and external quality. The internal quality level may be characterized by the indicator of non-conformities identified in the company, while the external quality level may be measured by the number of requests from external customers concerning non-compliance with previously established assumptions (Grzybowska-Brzezińska, 2007).

Employees, performing their work in accordance with the rules adopted in the company, and included in the form of work procedures and instructions, are to ensure that the products and services produced by the organization are compliant. For the purposes of this publication, other errors that may occur and are directly independent of the work of a line worker are omitted, e.g. inconsistent design of the product and service, or improper design of the process of manufacturing the product and providing the service. Regardless of whether the work in the organization is performed by a permanent³ or temporary worker, the same quality of work is expected, i.e. work in accordance with procedures and instructions, and thus achieving the expected quality results of products and services (Pollio, Landini, 2023).

The subject of the quality of work and job satisfaction is a broad topic that has been discussed many times in the literature on the subject, from philosophical considerations to research carried out in enterprises. There are many factors influencing how employees perform their work, and the most frequently mentioned ones include the quality of life in general, wage and non-wage terms of employment, relations between employees, the atmosphere in the organization, the involvement of superiors in employee development, and how processes are carried out in organizations, including processes related to human resources (Islam, 2012).

³ An employee employed by a company on the basis of an employment contract.

Temporary work, despite its advantages, also has some drawbacks that can have a negative impact on the approach of temporary workers to the quality of their work (Striler, 2020). Due to the nature of the publication, examples of shortcomings related to the recruitment process will be discussed.

On the one hand, the advantage for the employer-user is the presence of a temporary employment agency, relieving the company of the recruitment process, while on the other hand, it is an additional intermediary between the temporary worker and the employer. This intermediation may cause some communication noise, already at the stage of the recruitment process, in terms of providing information about tasks, responsibilities or working conditions. One may ask whether a representative of a temporary employment agency will be able to present to a temporary worker the specifics of the processes carried out in the company and the related quality requirements in relation to products and services. The lack of a comprehensive picture by the representatives of temporary employment agencies may be reflected in the fact that the employee will assess the reality differently than it was presented at the recruitment stage.

The above-mentioned communication shortcoming can be further strengthened when the employer-user shifts the entire burden of responsibility for the recruitment process to the agency and the employer's representatives do not engage in any stage of the process at all. Then it is the employees of the agency itself who will ultimately decide who will do the work in the organization.

Another example of the disadvantage of temporary work, for people who perform it, may be, as a rule, the lack of stability of employment. Based on the characteristics of temporary work, it can be concluded that it is a natural element of this form of work, which makes the organization flexible. This is not a drawback of the recruitment process, however, organizations often declare to temporary workers the possibility of later employment, directly in the organization, after meeting certain conditions. However, the provision of such information must take place in the recruitment process, as it seems to be an important aspect of encouraging the candidate to take up the job and perform it as intended.

Elements resulting from potential shortcomings of the process of recruitment of temporary workers were questions in the study, the results of which are presented in this publication.

4. Temporary employees' recruitment process based on companies from logistics and warehouse industry

4.1. Metod of the study

The study was preliminary and based on conducting a pilot qualitative study using the method of individual in-depth interview (IDI). The study covered the subject of the recruitment process of temporary workers in logistics and warehouse companies operating in the Great Poland region, and the subject of the study were the temporary workers themselves.

The scope of the study included 25 temporary workers who are line workers, as defined earlier in this article. Employees who met the criteria of at least two years of experience in working through a temporary employment agency (in the logistics and warehouse industry and/or in the goods manufacturing industry) and as part of this experience had at least six months of work experience with an employer-user from the logistics and warehouse industry, were invited to participate in the study. At the same time, employees who currently work for an employer-user in the logistics and warehouse industry were selected for the study. The temporary workers who were subjected to an in-depth study came from four companies located in the city of Poznań and within a radius of 50 km from the city of Poznań.

The study group consisted of both men and women, with a share of 52.6% of women and 47.4% of men. Half of the respondents (50%) are young people, aged 25-31. People aged 39-45 accounted for 20% of respondents, followed by 18-24 and 32-38 aged 15% respectively.

The majority of respondents were of Polish nationality (65%), followed by employees of Ukrainian nationality (20%). People from Belarus and Georgia accounted for a smaller percentage of respondents, 10% and 5%, respectively.

As part of the identification of the surveyed group, temporary workers were also asked about the number of employer-users for whom they had provided work in the last two years. The vast majority of employees (75%) worked for one or two employer-users, while the remainder (25%) worked for three or four employer-users.

4.2. Results of the study

As part of the in-depth interview, temporary workers were asked to answer questions related to how the recruitment process was carried out at the current employer-users. The questions that were asked of temporary workers focused on whether they had been provided with all the necessary information during the recruitment process, including the scope of tasks and quality requirements, relevant to the decision to start a job. Equally important was the question of whether the declaration of the temporary employment agency and the employer-users in terms of working conditions was reflected in reality. At the same time, the respondents had the opportunity to indicate potential changes to the process of recruitment of temporary workers so that through this process a better match between the employee, the employer and the work performed would be ensured.

Almost half of the surveyed employees (48%) completed the recruitment process both at the headquarters of the temporary employment agency and at the premises of the user's employer. This has certainly enabled employees to obtain a wide range of information about what the temporary employment agency itself and the employer offer to them. Five employees (20%) held a recruitment meeting only at the premises of the temporary employment agency, and 7 employees (28%) only at the employer-users. While a recruitment meeting at the employer-user seems to be a natural approach, a meeting at the agency itself may not have given employees a sufficient picture of the future workplace and the working climate there. Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses to the question about the place of the recruitment process.

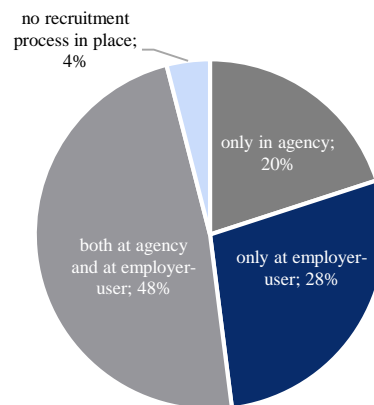


Figure 1. Place of recruitment process performance.

Source: Own study.

Among the employees who participated in the recruitment process, at the premises of the employer-users (including a previous meeting at a temporary employment agency or without such a meeting), the vast majority of respondents (over 70%) indicated that they had the opportunity to see the processes carried out in the company (during the interview itself, the employer-user presented the employee's workplace, machinery and equipment, etc.). Such a possibility certainly increases the probability that the employee's (at this stage the candidate's) decision to take up employment will be more thoughtful, and the employee will remain in the employment for a longer period of time (of course, assuming a positive assessment from the employer). Reduced turnover, in turn, will result in processes being carried out in a more stable and repeatable manner by the same team of employees. Such a state of affairs should be reflected in the achievement of the assumed level of quality by the company (this applies in particular to enterprises where the implementation of processes is largely dependent on the employee). With regard to the question about the possibility of seeing the processes in progress at the employer's premises, more than 65% of employees answered in the affirmative to another question about whether this influenced the employee's decision to take up work. This confirms the above-mentioned assumption that this is an important element of the recruitment process, on which it is worth devoting resources on the part of the employer-user.

An important element of the recruitment process is to present candidates with what tasks they will perform in a given position and what quality requirements must be met during the implementation of processes. In the vast majority of cases (almost 90%), temporary workers confirmed that during the recruitment process they were presented with the tasks they will perform at their workplace and what quality requirements must be met. The results for these two questions are presented in Figure 2 and Figure 3 respectively. At the same time, according to the author's experience, candidates often, already at the stage of the recruitment process, getting to know the specifics of the job and the quality requirements, resign from further participation in this process. They feel that the presented processes are too complicated for them or they simply do not have the desire to learn new processes. On the one hand, such an approach will save the company's time for onboarding an employee, and on the other hand, if the candidate does not feel that this is a place for them at this stage, the likelihood of making mistakes due to the lack of a positive approach to the tasks performed decreases.

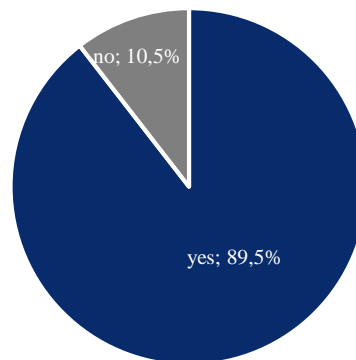


Figure 2. Submitting of tasks to temporary employee.

Source: Own study.

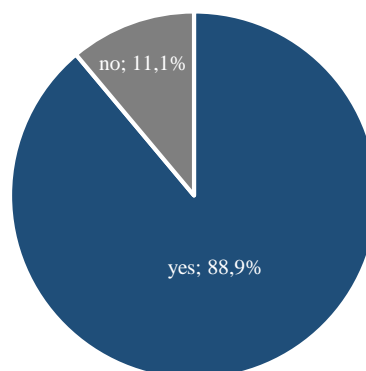


Figure 3. Submitting of quality requirements to temporary employee.

Source: Own study.

In the scope discussed above, employers should continue (or start, if they do not do so) the practice of presenting candidates for temporary work with the tasks for a given position and quality requirements, which will certainly affect a better match between the employer, the employee and the work, and this in turn will translate into ensuring the required level of quality.

Continuing the aspect of transparency of the employer-user (so far understood as presenting employees with the scope of tasks and quality requirements), the respondents were also asked whether they had been thoroughly informed about the salary and non-wage conditions that would apply to them during the recruitment process. Figure 4 presents the results in relation to:

- basic salary (grades);
- conditions for granting bonuses (if any);
- non-wage benefits (if any) and
- conditions for switching to an employment contract with the employer-user (more stable employment conditions and the possibility of benefits that do not occur during employment by a temporary employment agency).

Within this question it was not analyzed whether the information was provided by representatives of the temporary employment agency, representatives of the employer-user, or both parties concerned (this depended on where the recruitment process took place). At the same time, the conditions in question could be offered by both the temporary employment agency (as the official employer, the temporary employment agency also has the option of offering non-wage benefits) and the employer-user.

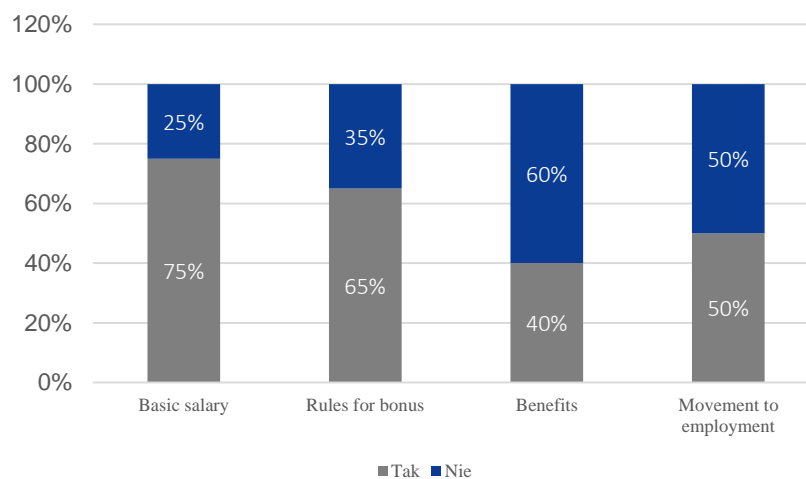


Chart 4. Submitting of working conditions (salary and benefits) to temporary employee.

Source: Own study.

On the basis of the data presented in Figure 4, in terms of basic salary, 75% of temporary agency workers declared that they had received information about the basic salary and the share of those employees who declared that they had received information about the conditions for granting bonuses was similar (65%). While in the case of bonuses, in the author's opinion,

the result is not particularly surprising (as a rule, employees themselves focus less on the bonus as it is not a fixed part of the salary), the result concerning the basic salary is surprising. This is the base component of compensation that employees are always most interested in. There can be many reasons for this, but the most likely ones include ineffective communication between the temporary employment agency and the employer-user, as well as verbal (only) presentation of the terms of employment to the temporary worker.

In the event of ineffective communication between the temporary employment agency and the employer-user, the agency representatives may not have had detailed information about the salary structure of the employer-user and the values offered for each position. Such a state of affairs makes it impossible for the agency's representatives to present such information to the employee, e.g. by referring to the fact that when the employee is physically at the employer's place, he or she will receive all the information. At this point, it should also be noted that 25% of recruitment meetings took place only at the headquarters of the temporary employment agency, which coincides with the percentage of respondents declaring a lack of knowledge about the basic salary.

The second reason given was only the verbal presentation of the conditions of the grade to the employees. This, in turn, makes it impossible for the temporary worker to return to this information at a later date, causing some of the workers to believe that they have not received it. In the case of both the first and the second reason, it may be a good practice to create so-called cover letters, in which the main terms of employment (and other useful information for temporary workers) would be described. This letter would not serve as a letter of intent but would serve as a written statement of the main information about what the employee can expect from the user's employer. Standardizing communication in this area can help both the temporary employment agency and the user's employer to provide clear and consistent information.

The percentage of people who received information on non-wage benefits is not high and amounted to only 40%. A slightly larger percentage of respondents (50%) received information about the conditions of transition from the status of a temporary employment agency to the status of an organization, which for many employees is an important aspect that increases the level of employment stability. If the organization is planning the activity of transferring temporary workers to the state of the organization at all, it is good to define and communicate the criteria that must be met (e.g. the level of absenteeism, the result of periodic evaluation).

The respondents, who confirmed receiving information about the terms and conditions of employment at the recruitment stage, were additionally asked whether what was declared to them was reflected in reality. Almost 80% of respondents confirmed this state of affairs. A good direction for the future may be to increase the number of people confirming this state of affairs, because it definitely affects the approach to work (employees perceive the user's employer as reliable) and, ultimately, the quality of the work performed. This credibility, which has been mentioned, also influences future potential candidates in the company's recruitment processes. It is necessary to avoid a situation where competent people will not apply to the organization due to negative opinions about the company, including its credibility.

The presented research results come from a preliminary pilot study hence the next stage may be to verify the conclusions in a study relevant to the logistics and warehouse industry and extend the study to the manufacturing industry. At the same time, in the author's opinion, other resource management processes, such as the onboarding process or the competence development process, may be subjected to further research. In this way, it is possible to get a full picture of the processes carried out, which have an impact on the quality of temporary work, and thus on the quality of manufactured products and services.

5. Summary

Temporary work, as one of the tools in ensuring flexibility of human resources in a company, is very popular in Poland. Companies in the logistics and warehouse industry or production organizations are examples of industries that benefit the most from this form of work. Temporary workers are a special group of employees for whom the rules of work are regulated in the Act on the Employment of Temporary Workers. As a rule, temporary agency workers receive similar basic conditions of employment (e.g. personal grade) as employees employed by the organisation, on the basis of an employment contract. However, there are a number of terms and conditions of employment that differentiate between the two groups, as well as the processes that these employees go through. Despite this, each employee is expected to be similarly committed to their work and meet the required quality of work, which is reflected in the quality of manufactured products and services.

On the basis of the research presented in the literature on the subject, it has been found that increasing the number of temporary workers in the employment structure of the organization affects the deterioration of the quality of manufactured products and services. Temporary workers go through a number of human resources management processes in an organization, where the first such process, considered by the author to be crucial, is the recruitment process. Therefore, in this publication an attempt was made to analyze and evaluate the process of recruitment of temporary workers and to indicate recommendations to be implemented in enterprises in order to improve the quality of work, and thus improve the level of quality of services provided. On the basis of a preliminary pilot study conducted on a group of 25 temporary workers from logistics and warehouse companies located in the Great Poland region, the following conclusions were prepared:

- Participation in the recruitment process both at the headquarters of the temporary employment agency and at the premises of the employer-user or only at the premises of the employer-user allows employees to obtain a wide range of information about what the agency itself and the employer-user offer. It seems that such a practice should be firmly rooted in the process of recruiting temporary workers.

- It is a good practice to allow candidates to see the user of the processes carried out at the employer's premises, which, according to the survey, influenced the decision to take up employment in over 65% of people. This is an important part of the recruitment process, and it is worth devoting resources to it on the part of the employer-user.
- At the recruitment stage, it is recommended that employer-users start or continue (depending on the current state of affairs) the practice of presenting job candidates with the tasks for a given position and quality requirements, which will certainly result in a better match between the temporary worker and the employer-user, which in turn will translate into ensuring the required level of quality.
- Based on the results of the survey, it can be concluded that there is room for improvement in terms of transparency regarding the presentation of working conditions (basic salary, bonus, non-wage benefits, conditions for transition to employment in the organization). It may be a good practice to create so-called cover letters, which would describe the main terms and conditions of employment (and other information useful to temporary workers). Standardizing communication in this area can help both the temporary employment agency and the employer-user to provide clear and consistent information (regardless of where the recruitment process is conducted).

The presented results of the initial pilot study may be subsequently verified in the actual study. At the same time other human resources management processes, in the field of temporary workers, may be subjected to additional study. On this basis, it is possible to build a full picture of the practices used in enterprises, affecting the quality of work by temporary workers, and to indicate the directions of changes in order to improve the achieved results in terms of quality.

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