

## MANAGEMENT OF MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES IN POLISH ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE

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**Abstract:** The paper presents the most important issues concerning competence management in enterprises. It includes tendencies in competence defining and characterizes the competence management process. Particular attention has been drawn in the paper to the competencies of the managerial staff. It presents categories and specificity of managerial competencies and results of empirical studies concerning the advancement level of managerial competence management systems in polish enterprises. The received results were submitted to stratification regarding such categories as management level, functional area of the enterprise, the size of the enterprise, the type and the range of its business activity.

**Key words:** managerial competencies, competence management, level of advancement of managerial competence management systems

### Introduction

The domain literature does not possess one, renowned definition, explaining what competencies are and what their importance for the organization is. The term competence is most frequently defined as a combination of employee's knowledge, experience and skills together with the possessed mental abilities and adopted attitudes, which are directed at effective realization of the enterprise's strategic goals [2, pp. 29-30; 3; 8, p. 32]. More and more authors indicate that defining competence as knowledge, skills and abilities is not enough, as this treats competencies in a too narrow way. Apart from these components, there are also other important elements, among others, such as: employees' core competencies, manners of operation, ambitions, personality traits. The broad, contemporary understanding of competencies makes them closer to the term of human capital [11, p. 90; 14, p. 41; 9, p. 25].

Competence management means activities, which lead to the increase in the value of the human capital and efficiency growth of the organization's operation. Competence management comprises such processes as: " defining competence standards, planning and organizing activities connected with shaping competencies in the organization, inspiring and motivating people to improve their qualifications and undertake new or wider organizational roles, as well as controlling the course of connected with it processes" [9, p. 225]. In the opinion of many domain researchers competence management constitutes the basis of the whole system of human resources management.

A system approach is recommended to the competence management. This means such a way of conducting personal policy in the enterprise, where the issue of

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competencies becomes the basic element integrating various activities from the field of human resources management. Introduction of the competence management system (CMS) in the enterprise – competence identification on particular positions, their correct defining, determining fulfillment levels, is a big organizational undertaking. The principle of incurred expenditures and expected effects should be applied here. Creating a competence management system comprising all the employees is not always advisable, sometimes it is also impossible. It is recommended that the CMS should first of all comprise these subjects which are important to the enterprise. Organization's managerial staff is considered to be such a subject [10, p. 85].

The basic aim of this paper is to show the advancement level of managerial competence management in enterprises in the theoretical assumptions context.

### **Categories and specificity of managerial competencies**

Managerial competencies are a combination of the possessed by the manager professional knowledge and experience and personal traits, acquired skills, a proper attitude and motivation to act. The proper level of competencies allows to fulfil managerial roles efficiently and at the same time allows to achieve determined business goals of the enterprise. Specificity of the manager's work requires joining and using many competencies. Various criteria of competence grouping are applied. In the most synthetic grasp there are two groups of managerial competencies distinguished: professional competencies and personal competencies, also called behavioural [1, p. 252]. Professional competencies are defined with relation to the particular work post. They are directly connected with task realizing, e.g. technical skills, knowledge of the trade. They are called "hard" competencies. Development of hard competencies is the result of acquired professional experience. They concern behaviours. Personal competencies are known as "soft" competencies. Soft competencies in case of managers, contrary to hard competencies, are not easy to develop. They usually require a change of behaviour. In the economic practice hard competencies of managerial staff still play an important role. They enable, among others, product development, new solutions implementation, respect creation. Requirements towards hard competencies in the light of the last few decades can be recognized as stable. However, the importance of soft competencies is growing. Thanks to them it is possible to realize enterprise's strategy more efficiently, making the use of not only capability of individuals, but also the team synergy. The following terms are associated with soft competencies: leadership, motivating or team relations creation.

The best known category of managerial competencies division, and also one of the earliest, is the competence (skill) typology depending on the management level. This concept was elaborated by Henry Fayol at the beginning of the twentieth century. He divided the competencies that managers should possess into the three groups. Regardless of what the level of management is, he distinguished: conceptual competencies, social competencies and technical competencies. The

importance of each of the distinguished groups is different on various management levels [5, p. 37]. This concept has been developed and popularized by R. L. Katz [7, pp. 33-42]. The model of managerial competencies according to R.L. Katz is presented in Figure 1.

Low management level	Middle management level	Top management
Conceptual competencies	Conceptual competencies	Conceptual competencies
Social competencies	Social competencies	Social competencies
Technical competencies	Technical competencies	Technical competencies

**Figure 1. The model of managerial competencies depending on the management level**

Source: [Oleksyn, T., *Zarządzanie kompetencjami. Oficyna Ekonomiczna, Kraków 2006, p. 169*; Stoner J.A., Freeman R.E., Gillgert D.R., *Kierowanie, PWE, Warszawa 2011, p. 33*]

On the lowest management level (operational) professional competencies in given discipline are most important, which comprise the knowledge of technical issues. On the middle management level (tactical) it is necessary to know the theory and practice of management, which enable employees to perform basic managerial functions. On the highest management level (strategic) most important become conceptual abilities, the ability to coordinate and integrate properly functional areas as well as all the interests of the organization.

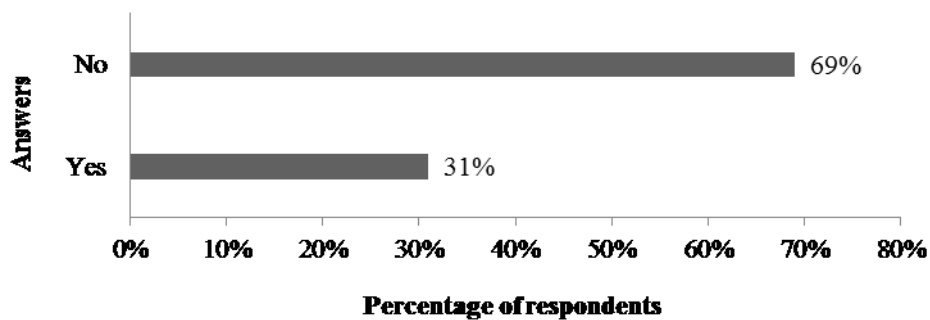
It is not possible to define one "standard" set of key competencies for particular categories. A part of expected competencies is the same for the whole of the subjects, a part is totally different, however, e.g. managerial competencies set is not identical for the whole of managers. Different key competencies should characterize, for example: managers and leaders, staff and line managers, managers operating in the hierarchical and array structures, managers of production

departments, personnel, finance, etc. [9, p. 22]. Lots of competencies can be considered on the enterprise level, which makes it possible to create unique competence models in individual enterprises. This is also true for competence profiles for the managerial positions. A sample competence profile for the managerial positions in the particular enterprise may comprise the following key competencies [12, p. 44]: leadership, strategic thinking ability, work time organizing ability, team creation ability, employee development support, orientation towards task realizing, information management, initiative.

### **Managerial competence management in enterprises – results of own studies**

The applied research technique was a questionnaire interview. While generating the research population it was assumed that it should utterly reflect various management and organizational categories, i.e. management level, functional area of the enterprise, enterprise's size, the type and the range of its business activity, so that it would be possible to receive a representative sample of the entire management structure at least on a micro regional scale. The research was conducted from September 2009 to March 2010. It included all-level managers in enterprises located in Silesia Province. The sample consisted of 408 managers working in 140 enterprises. A detailed description of the research population can be found in the publication "Intuitive abilities of the managing staff of enterprises" [6, pp. 67-70].

In the course of in-depth questionnaire interviews, in the part concerning the issue of managerial competencies administration, the author made an attempt to recognize if, and in what way, enterprises administer managerial competencies. A particular attention was paid to two personnel processes: the recruitment and selection process of managerial staff and the process of managerial competencies improvement. These are basic methods used to acquire needed in the enterprise competencies - managers possessing expected competencies are searched for on the external work market or competencies of own managerial staff are developed and improved. The present paper shows only the results concerning a general recognition if a formal competence management system exists in the enterprise or not. The results are presented in Figure 2 and Table 1.



**Figure 2. Percentage compilation of respondents replies to the question:  
 Are managerial competencies administered in your company in any way? –  
 comparison total**

*Source: The author's study*

If the respondent claimed that in the enterprise where he/she worked managerial competencies were administered, this person was then asked to indicate the management methods applied. Analyzing the results of the conducted studies it can be stated that managerial competencies are not satisfactory administered in enterprises. Only in one in three enterprises managerial competencies are administered in a formalized way.

**Table 1. Percentage compilation of respondents replies to the question:  
 Are managerial competencies administered in your company in any way? –  
 according to specific criteria**

Comparison criterion/Category		Percentage of the respondents	
		a	b
Management level	Strategic	29%	71%
	Tactic	34%	66%
	Operation	31%	63%
Functional area	Administration	22%	78%
	Finance	29%	71%
	Planning	32%	68%
	Staff	4%	96%
	Production	47%	53%
	Marketing	33%	67%
	Comprehensively	28%	72%
Enterprise's size	Micro	15%	85%
	Small	24%	76%
	Medium	25%	75%
	Large	44%	56%
Type of business	Production	41%	59%

activity	Trade	19%	81%
	Services	10%	90%
	Varied	37%	63%
Range of business activity	Local	0%	100%
	Regional	31%	69%
	National	8%	92%
	International	37%	63%

Source: Author's research

The managers, who declared that in their enterprise managerial competencies are administered, most frequently indicated the following methods:

- assigning tasks depending on managers' competencies and predispositions;
- monitoring competencies of the managers and then developing individual abilities of each manager in the field where this managers is most successful;
- reorganization of the enterprise, improving qualifications and skills through organizing or sending to various courses, workshops and managerial trainings, conducted by external training institutions;
- cyclic change of responsibilities (every few months), which allows the employees to develop in different areas. This also allows to determine and check strengths of given employees;
- systematic trainings for managerial staff, the aim of which is to develop managerial competencies.

The basic tools used in the process of competence management include: competence models and formal methods of managerial qualifications and skills improvement.

The advancement level of managerial competence management system in enterprises depends largely on the range of business activity, functional area of the enterprise, the type of business activity and the size of enterprises. Almost a half of managers from the production departments declared that managerial competencies are managed in their enterprises. The most significant fact is the opinion of HR and organization development managers that in the enterprises where they work managerial competencies are not administered at all, or it is done inappropriately (96% of the studied organizations). This proves that the advancement level of competence management system functioning in Polish enterprises is low. Managerial abilities and skills are not administered in any of the local enterprises which participated in the study. They are usually micro-enterprises. This is confirmed by the result analysis according to the *enterprise size* category. Managerial competencies are most frequently administered in large enterprises (44% of the studied organizations), and relatively infrequently in micro enterprises (15% of the studied organizations). The smallest divergence of distribution characterizes the management level category. If a formal system of managerial competence management exists in the enterprise, then it comprises equally all management levels.

The obtained results of the study are convergent with the results of an analogous countrywide study conducted by Deloitte and Polish Association of Personnel Management [4, p. 22].

### Summary

The most important conclusion, which results from the conducted in the paper analyses, is as follows: in Polish organizational practice managerial competences in enterprises are not sufficiently managed. The advancement levels of competence management systems in majority enterprises may be considered as low.

Numerous enterprises have already implemented the competence model. Lots of enterprises are planning to implement this model in the nearest future. However, this does not mean the high level of advancement of the competence management system. In order to recognize the competence management process as a system one it is also necessary to analyze the competence strategic gap, which will enable to identify deficiencies in the employee key competencies and will let introduce remediation so as to eliminate or limit them.

In Poland, a systematic analysis of strategic competence gap is conducted in few enterprises. Almost a half of organizations does not foresee, even in long-term plans, implementing tools of this kind. As a result, the possibilities of management through competencies are not fully used.

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#### ZARZĄDZANIE KOMPETENCJAMI MENEDŻERSKIMI W POLSKIEJ PRAKTYCE ORGANIZACYJNEJ

**Streszczenie:** W pracy przedstawiono najważniejsze kwestie dotyczące problematyki zarządzania kompetencjami w przedsiębiorstwach. Określono tendencje w definiowaniu kompetencji. Scharakteryzowano proces zarządzania kompetencjami. Szczególną uwagę skoncentrowano na kompetencjach kadry kierowniczej. Zaprezentowano kategorie i specyfikę kompetencji menedżerskich. Przedstawiono wyniki badań empirycznych dotyczących zaawansowania systemów zarządzania kompetencjami menedżerskimi w polskich przedsiębiorstwach. Uzyskane rezultaty poddano stratyfikacji, uwzględniając takie kategorie jak: poziom zarządzania, obszar funkcjonalny, wielkość przedsiębiorstwa, przedmiot prowadzonej działalności oraz zasięg działania.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kompetencje menedżerskie, zarządzanie kompetencjami, poziom zaawansowania systemów zarządzania kompetencjami menedżerskimi

#### 在波蘭組織實踐管理能力管理

**摘要：**本文介紹了有關權限管理在企業中最重要問題。它包括能力傾向定義和特徵的能力管理過程。特別注意的文件管理人員的能力已經繪就。它提出的管理能力和實證研究的結果，有關提高水平，管理能力管理系統，在波蘭企業的類別和特異性。接收到的結果提交給有關的企業管理水平，功能區等類別分層，規模的企業，其業務活動的類型和範圍。