

EMPLOYEE UPSKILLING IN A TEAL ORGANISATION AS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF ITS FUNCTIONING

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Abstract

Acquisition of skills and knowledge by employees is one of the most important elements of gaining competitive advantage, but also of creating a modern company based on knowledge and experience. This article aims to highlight the issue of employee upskilling in teal organisations. The particular importance of this issue stems from the fact that such companies do not offer typical career paths and their employees have to look after their development and acquisition of new and useful skills on their own.

The article presents the actions undertaken by a teal organisation and its employees in terms of supplementing qualifications and acquiring new skills. The article is based on literature on the subject of employee training and upskilling. In addition, information was also taken from sources which describe the functioning of teal companies. The aim was to present the process of knowledge acquisition by employees in teal organisations and its effect on the functioning of a given organisation.

Keywords: teal organisation, training, upskilling, employees, communication, negotiation, functioning of organisations.

1. Characteristics of a teal organisation

Trying to determine the point when organisation management according to the teal paradigm began is difficult. Entrepreneurs who describe their companies as “teal” emphasize that they did not know that their way of managing staff and the entire organisation fits into the teal paradigm. The origins of teal organisations can be found in the works of Edwards Deming from 1950–1970, which defined Deming’s

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14 Points. Therein one can find tips concerning the functioning of organisations in a changing environment. These tips concern, among others, aspects related to quality, human resource management and building lasting relationships with suppliers [Gałat, 2018]. 2014 was a groundbreaking year for teal organisations, as it changed the way they are perceived. This change was largely caused by Frederic Laloux's book "*Reinventing Organizations: A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness*". In this book, the author showed that it is possible to employ a new approach to management, based on respect and trust in people, while emphasizing that this new approach improves the efficiency of functioning of companies [Gałat, 2018].

It is worth noting that Laloux created a classification of companies encompassing four types which can be found on the market. In addition to these four types, he also indicated a fifth type, which he believes is the most efficient in terms of cooperation between people. Persons employed in such a company make decisions for which they are responsible, which in turn requires everyone to follow the principles of partnership and trust [Laloux, 2015]. The priorities on which an organisation is based are important for all organisations, including teal organisations. These priorities include:

- self-management – refers to abandonment of a hierarchical structure in favour of a flat structure, where people work in teams and in accordance with a specifically prepared scope of responsibilities. There are no positions in this structure. Employees perform tasks together and make decisions for which they are responsible. Loyalty and trust, which must be the foundation of human cooperation, play a central role in such a structure,
- wholeness – allows authenticity in every moment of life. The employee presents his full persona at work and wears no masks. There is an emergence of open principles of cooperation based on partnership. Work environment is meant to foster the exchange of ideas and reflection and to make employees feel free to learn new things and grow,
- evolutionary purpose – one that is appropriate to the changing reality, inspires the employees to act and is adequate to their competences. It must be consistent with goals of the employees and with the current situation [Laloux, 2015].

In a way, teal organisations revolutionise the natural order. For them, good life is a core value which should be prioritised by making changes in work organisation. Work must be organised in such a way as to provide a sense of meaning in life, enable growth and offer space for creativity and innovation. It is important to ensure good life in the social aspect, that is to form relationships as partners, not as competitors, to cooperate and to support each other instead of competing and to build good relationships based on trust [Blikle, 2014]. Ensuring balance in mutual relationships is considered a feature of healthy competition, and thus constitutes an indispensable condition for successful achievement of set goals [Kałwa-Rojczyk, 2018].

In hierarchical companies, teams are headed by leaders, and large teams are divided into smaller teams with local leaders. Local leaders, in turn, form a task force at a higher level. Orders flow from top to bottom, and task completion reports flow from bottom to top. The fact that power is placed at the top, which divides employees into those with power and the rest, makes it seen as a scarce commodity that must be fought for. These situations bring personal ambitions, behind-the-scenes games and mistrust and fear to the front. The result is that not everyone has equal influence on power [Kałwa-Rojczyk, 2018]. In contrast, teal organisations have no centralised control. Nodes place orders with each other to perform work or deliver a product. A node can be a single employee or a team of people consolidated to perform a given task. Network structure changes dynamically depending on the tasks performed by its nodes and their groups. Every team that has work to perform must distribute tasks and resources among its employees. Teal organisations have no superiors in the traditional sense. Above all, there are people who collectively organise their work in a dynamically changing network. They are decision makers one day and implementers the next [Blikle, 2014]. In teal organisations, decisions are made by those with expertise in a particular area, and other employees trust them in this regard. Functioning in this manner is referred to as partnership democracy and is a core feature of teal organisations. If an employee takes the initiative to make a decision, it is made immediately. If not, the initiator consults with people who have greater expertise in the particular field. If no-one objects to the position, the decision is announced publicly. If there are objections, discussion begins. The superior-employee paradigm is replaced by the customer-supplier paradigm. The party dictating the terms is the customer who places the order. The basis for effective functioning of teams, both within the teal organisation and with respect to cooperation with customers and suppliers, is good and clear communication [Kałwa-Rojczyk, 2018].

Holarchical teal organisations create a safe space for people to fully realize their humanity at work. It is worth referring at this point to the integral theory proposed by K. Wilber, according to which holarchy is a great morphogenetic field which provides the evolutionary space where human potential can develop. Safety of that space is built on two key foundations: nonviolent communication model and shared values. That way, employees can experience their authenticity by becoming defenceless against themselves. The employee is fully realised through appropriate practices, which include: group and individual coaching, practicing M. Rosenberg's nonviolent communication, performing tasks in the scope of corporate social responsibility, but also processes related to human resources, such as: recruitment and training. All employees can be involved in the recruitment process. A person applying for a job in a teal organisation is interviewed by each employee. The focus here is not on the competences or skills of potential candidates, but on fitting them to the model and purpose of the organisation's existence. New employee introduction begins with a series of training sessions concerning the culture of the organisation and the abil-

ity to build and maintain relationships. New employees initially follow a rotational work schedule, which allows them to understand the structure and nature of work in such a company [Trzcionka, 2018]. A teal organisation does not manage the careers of its employees. All employees are responsible for themselves and choose their educational path in accordance with their interests and competences. This allows them to explore their own vocation. First and foremost, they choose training courses in accordance with the role they have undertaken in the organisation. It should be noted that training courses are conducted by employees themselves [Trzcionka, 2018].

The most important competences for teal organisation employees are a well-established worldview, i.e. a value system consistent with the long-term vision and mission of the organisation, as well as communication and personal skills. If an employee has these skills, factual knowledge is not a problem, as it can be supplemented at any time. In addition to physical (raising awareness, knowledge and experience) and intellectual (idea, analysis, intuition) involvement, it is also necessary to build emotional involvement in employees. That way, employees do not become tired of work, they live the challenges, putting their whole hearts and minds into the organisation which they want to develop and improve. This is why working on employee awareness is so important, so that they identify with the vision and mission of the organisation and adhere to the same values, such as respect, honesty, fairness and reliability [Kałwa-Rojczyk, 2018].

Modern organisations, such as teal organisations, are built around knowledge and skills. They strive to make full use of various abilities and skills to become creative and learning communities ready to teach other communities. Employees, as the backbone of every organisation, represent a high level of expertise, education or experience, and dissemination and practical application of knowledge are among the most important work objectives. Through them, employees innovate and develop organisations, either directly or indirectly, and create new products, services, plans and marketing strategies. It can be said that they are the driving force of modern economy. Their importance has increased in parallel to transition from the traditional era to the knowledge era, as organisations began to redefine their business. The most visible effect of these changes has been the shift in blue-collar workers, who have become knowledge workers capable of collecting and processing acquired information, value its significance and make adequate decisions. It is expected that by mid-21st century, the number of employees who work using mainly their minds rather than their muscles will constitute between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ of all employees. This tendency will grow over the years with development of the economy [Matejek, 2014].

The current lack of suitable employees on the labour market and the resultant fighting for good and reliable employees cause employers to strive to create the right conditions to keep the best employees in the company. Employees are more and more often changing jobs of their own volition, driven by salaries, but also by the opportunity to improve their qualifications. This flexibility stems from globalisation,

and, by extension, from increasing competitiveness of companies on the markets. Studies conducted in the European Union have clearly showed that the most important feature of a dream job is to arouse interest and give meaning to the performed work. On the other hand, the financial aspect ranked 6th. In a similar study conducted in Poland, the financial aspect ranked 4th. It should be noted that achieving the required features of an organisation is tied to the employee training and education system [Majewski, 2020].

2. Upskilling of employees of organisations

Training is one of the basic tools for human resource development; it is defined as a set of purposeful and systematic actions which occur within the organisation and are aimed at deepening and broadening specific human resource elements as well as equipping human resources with new elements necessary from the perspective of current and future needs of the organisation. Training goals stem from the adopted employee development strategy and from the identified discrepancies between the desired and existing competence profiles of individual employees and entire teams. The development of employees through vocational training takes place by being complemented with specific elements of know-how, practical skills and formation of attitude. Transfer of know-how can encompass both general and specialised content related to the manner of performance of specific functions, to specific technological processes or to work methods [Pocztowski, 2003].

Training and professional development are an important element of human resource management in all modern organisations. Their purpose is to develop and improve skills related to the performed job. A company's development programmes are meant to improve the competences required to achieve that company's set goals. Nowadays, employees are required to undergo additional training to develop the knowledge needed to perform their jobs. Upskilling viewed as training is an element of professional development. It should be noted that all training courses and development programmes are a component of the HR process carried out in a given organisation. An organisation that does not train employees and does not help them acquire the necessary skills is unable to keep up with the changes and compete on the market effectively [Matejek, 2018].

Analysis and identification of training needs constitute the most important stage, as their accuracy affect the entire training process. Poor identification of needs can result in incorrect selection of the type of training method, and consequently to inappropriate allocation of funds. The training needs of employees are determined at three levels: professional, organisational and individual. At the professional level, it is important to analyse goals and jobs as well as competences necessary to perform a particular job. With respect to the organisational level, it is necessary to consider the current state of the company as well as its development and planned projects.

Finally, individual needs are determined by analysing the results of interviews and employee career paths. At this stage, significance is ascribed to the training needs reported personally by employees who seek professional development [Matejek, 2018].

Greater employee participation in the organisational management process requires appropriate knowledge and experience. It is generally known that the quality of participative management depends on the level of employee knowledge. That is why continuous education and development of employees is so important, because it is the foundation of proper functioning of teal organisations [Majewski, 2020].

In a teal organisation, there is no such thing as a training programme designed to help employees climb the career ladder. In return, training sessions are offered in which new employees participate, regardless of the roles they have been assigned. Everyone is trained in nonviolent communication, conflict resolution or effective action without hierarchy. One-off training programmes do not always fulfill the purpose of teaching new employees new habits and assimilate them to new policies. Therefore, training modules are organised that expand on previous training, as well as numerous workshops that are introduced into everyday life. It should be noted here that most teal organisations have stopped using external trainers' services. Staff members who are passionate about the topic and adapt the materials to the language and culture of the organisation take on the role of instructors [Kalwa-Rojczyk, 2018].

The biggest change with training is that employees are responsible for their own learning. There is no requirement for who can and cannot participate in training and at what point. There is also no clear training programme. It's up to the teams to decide their own learning needs and find the best provider to deliver the training themselves. It should be noted that teal organisations have the freedom to choose an external entity in case the team needs to expand its knowledge in a specialised area [Laluox, 2015].

Management is responsible for development and training in any organisation. Although there is a move away from a hierarchical leadership structure in a teal culture, this does not mean that they have been removed to "some sort of non-existence." Such an action would deplete the company of its most valuable tissue of knowledge, experience and skills. They go from being managers to teal idea leaders. They are the ones who build the climate and culture of the organisation by also being mentors and trainers for other employees, but also facilitators and coaches [Blikle, 2018].

One form of upskilling in a teal organisation is coaching. As it has already been mentioned, the role of a coach is played by someone with experience and knowledge so that they can transfer the necessary knowledge to the employee in the best way possible. Coaching itself is based on the assumption that the individual is ultimately responsible for their life and the results they achieve. This includes workplace, established relationships, home, etc. If we recognise that we are responsible for something, it implies that we have power over it and can influence it. This sense

of personal responsibility as a coaching principle is extremely important if we are to empower people to act effectively and positively in their particular situations [Starr, 2005]. Coaching is a process by which a person finds and implements solutions that are most consistent with their worldview and appropriate for themselves. This is achieved through dialogue, which helps the coachee mature new perspectives and better understand their own thoughts, emotions and actions, as well as understand people and situations that happen around them [Wilson, 2010]. At the core of coaching is the idea of empowering people by facilitating self-education, personal growth and improved performance. Coaching involves asking questions in such a way that the recipient feels empowered. By asking, the coach simultaneously presents different options and possibilities for action. In this way, their awareness and understanding of the subject become deeper – they know more about who we are, our self-image, and how we function in everyday life [Miskimin, Stewart, 2011]. The role of the coach in the case of a teal organisation is not to prevent predictable problems from occurring, but to support the team in solving them. In addition, they allow their teams to make their own choices to solve the problem. Support the team by asking insightful questions and finding appropriate solutions. The coach is the one who builds trust that the team has what it takes to operate smoothly [Laluox, 2015].

Transfer of knowledge and experience by practitioners is one of the most effective forms of professional development, because in addition to expertise, it also provides the opportunity to transfer the experience and skills acquired over the years. With good communication, the trainee can offer new and innovative insights, which, combined with the trainer's experience, can significantly improve the tasks at hand [Kalwa-Rojczyk, 2018].

Creating new and, above all, safe workplaces starts with raising awareness among everyone that words and actions undermine or create the work environment. These types of organisations devote a significant amount of time and energy to training all employees to learn some of the most important principles that are supposed to determine healthy and productive collaboration [Laluox, 2015].

Teal organisations offer two types of training that are rarely used in traditional organisations: training in establishing a shared culture and training in personal development. At the very beginning a new employee has to get to know the company culture which is based on such principles as honesty, respect and openness. They must also obtain relevant information about the performance of their duties. Acquiring the right knowledge is a guarantee to perform at your best on the job. However, skills trainings that are peer-led and deeply infused with company values and culture are prevalent. A new employee in the first days of a new job learns the rules of how to move around the company. They also learn three key principles: self-management, pursuit of wholeness, and evolutionary purpose [Laluox, 2015].

The self-management training programme is designed to help the new employee understand how things work, what skills are needed to function well, and

how to grow within the company. It's worth noting that a new work style can be especially difficult for people who have worked in management positions at previous companies. New employees are also trained in the core principles, assumptions, and values that allow people to be more authentic. New hires are invited to reflect on their personal calling and how it resonates with the broad purpose of the organisation [Laloux, 2015].

An important qualification for an employee of a teal organisation is the ability to negotiate. Negotiation in any type of organisation, including teal, stems from its essence as a particular type of social group that pursues specific goals. It is an effective tool for business management and especially for conflict resolution and collaboration. In a teal organisation, negotiation has its own specific character, so that negotiation processes are carried out both between its internal interest groups, but also by its representatives with entities of its environment. It should be emphasised that negotiation is a method of managing conflicts between parties who seek to achieve their own goals and obtain the best possible results. The underlying factor in any negotiation is the pursuit of mutual benefit, that is, the development of an agreement that is mutually beneficial for both parties. The parties in this type of enterprise have common fundamental goals, which are expressed in a solidarity of success and development. That is why teal organisations devote a great deal of time and energy to training all employees to learn the basic principles that are a prerequisite for healthy and productive collaboration. Negotiation is a process in which opposing positions are combined into a common decision [Kozina, Pieczonka, 2017].

In self-managing organisations, leadership is diffused and therefore there are no leadership roles for which employees must prepare. People naturally encounter many opportunities to learn and grow. Senior management, on the other hand, doesn't have to worry about providing these opportunities to people. They can be trusted to shape their own professional journey. Careers in teal companies emerge spontaneously and come from human interest, but also from taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the freedom to work [Laloux, 2015].

Another important skill that employees of a teal organisation must learn is the process of nonviolent communication. The exchange of messages between people to achieve intended common goals is communication. The word communication is derived from Latin *communicatio*, meaning a statement, communication but in that case it indicates a thing and not an action. It is right, therefore, to refer to the word *communicare*, meaning to confer, consult, communicate. This process is not only about communicating, but also about creating community during and as a result of communication. By communication we mean the mechanism by which relationships between people can exist and develop. In the process of communication, a person or group of people or an organisation (the sender) transmits information to other people, groups, or organisations (the receiver). Communication, then, is an exchange of information between its sender and receiver involving an understanding between

the two. The sender decides the form in which the information is conveyed and how it is conveyed so that it reaches the receiver and is understood by them. By coding, we mean “translating” information into a form that allows the receiver to understand the content of that information. Once the information is “encoded”, it is transmitted (sent) through communication channels to the addressee. The receiver is the target of the information transmitted. When they receive a message, they proceed to decode it, that is, they transform the message into information. Once the information is decoded, the receiver may or may not send feedback to the sender. In this way, the sender knows whether the information they have conveyed has been properly read and understood and whether it is having the desired effect [Szaban, 2007].

The creator of nonviolent communication is Marshall Rosenberg. The basic assumptions are independence and reciprocity. Rosenberg understood the first concept as a person’s ability to decide for themselves what their needs are, further elaborating on the methods used to meet those needs and the ability to evaluate which methods are effective. Reciprocity, in turn, is a person’s ability to understand the needs of others and to consider the relationship between meeting those needs and their own sense of fulfillment. In realising these assumptions, it is necessary to rely on good observation of reality, feelings, needs and requests. The key role here is language as a tool for talking about feelings and expressing requests. Nonviolent communication presents ways to formulate specific messages that will allow communication to build understanding, respect, show willingness to cooperate, and in difficult and conflict situations, readiness to solve problems [Misztal, 2016].

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PODNOSENIE KWALIFIKACJI PRZEZ PRACOWNIKÓW W ORGANIZACJI TURKUSOWEJ JAKO ISTOTNY ELEMENT JEJ FUNKCJONOWANIA

Streszczenie

Pozyskiwanie umiejętności oraz wiedzy przez pracowników to najważniejsze elementy uzyskiwania przewagi konkurencyjnej, ale też stworzenia nowoczesnego przedsiębiorstwa opartego na wiedzy i doświadczeniu. Celem artykułu jest wskazanie na kwestię podnoszenia kwalifikacji przez pracowników organizacji turkusowych. Jest to szczególnie istotne, ponieważ w tych firmach nie funkcjonują typowe dla innych ścieżki kariery, a pracownicy sami muszą zadbać o swój własny rozwój i zdobywanie nowych przydatnych umiejętności. W artykule zostały zaprezentowane działania organizacji turkusowej oraz jej pracowników pod kątem uzupełniania kwalifikacji i zdobywania nowych umiejętności. Wykorzystano literaturę przedmiotu z zakresu szkoleń oraz podnoszenia kwalifikacji przez pracowników. Poza literaturą dotyczącą szkoleń wykorzystano też pozycje opisujące funkcjonowanie przedsiębiorstw turkusowych. W ten sposób starano się zaprezentować, jak wygląda proces zdobywania wiedzy przez pracowników organizacji turkusowych i w jaki sposób przekłada się on na funkcjonowanie danej organizacji.

Słowa kluczowe: organizacja turkusowa, szkolenia, podnoszenie kwalifikacji, pracownicy, komunikacja, negocjacje, funkcjonowanie organizacji.