

## Modern trends in human resource management in the czech chemical companies

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*The aim of this research was to identify modern trends in HR management nowadays applied in corporate practice. The paper also states how these trends are applied by selected chemical companies in the Czech Republic. The interviewing scenario was compiled on the basis of a thorough literature review. The outcomes were obtained through the directed interviews with HR managers of the selected companies. The research outcomes show that the awareness of modern trends in HR management is relatively wide, but their implementation in practice is largely of a non-systematic character. The main limitation of this study is that it is based on responses from five companies only. The choice of companies was based on personal contacts as anonymous questioning often did not bring sufficient response. The paper also identifies the possibility of improving work with human resources within selected chemical companies in the Czech Republic. The findings can be used by HR managers as proposals on how to improve their work to achieve maximum possible effects for their company. As an experience that a systematic application of modern trends moves HR management to a completely different level.*

**Keywords:** Human resource management; Education; Age management; Diversity management; Holistic management; Talent management; Corporate social responsibility; Work-life balance

### Introduction

HR management is a concern of all corporate senior executives. Such a team aims to make sure that the company is efficient. This can be achieved by continuous

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improvements in corporate human resources bringing a long-term positive effect. This paper shows which new HR management trends can be applied to make it possible for a company to achieve its strategic targets through its employees.

The influence of globalization, lack of labour force, new technological solutions, and a lot of other factors bring together changes not only for a company, but also for the employees themselves. The speed of adaptation, adoption of measures to cope with the situation, and finding a suitable way of application are important factors deciding whether one stands up to the competition in the market and finds a way to succeed. New trends in HR management penetrate the business sphere and they should help companies and their employees to cope with the developing situation and facilitate their adaptation to the forthcoming changes not only in the labour market, but also in their lives. Application of these modern trends should help to solve the problems of access to human resources in a way that enables to solve the company's needs in the area of human resources in a sufficient quality and, at the same, it should lead to a more comfortable situation of employees at their company and to an increase of their satisfaction.

## HR management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

A corporate success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is principally based on the fact how a company is able to form the human resources and utilize them to set the targets. Apart from the term “human resources”, there is also a new term, “human capital”. It has appeared for the reason that it expresses better the character of modern human labour. A resource is something that is being consumed or converted into something else in a process. On the other hand, capital is an active element that is invested and that is capable of bringing a long-term effect and an added value. As for human capital, it is in the form of invention and creativity and helping to make a matter move [1].

The elements that are typical for this century include changeability, a turbulent character, and awareness [2]. Three main factors that can be considered as current creators of changes in the market include globalization, where there is integration of a society into larger units with a worldwide operation radius. In addition to that, market liberalization, where there is smaller regulation by internal national regulations and companies can merge with each other in the multinational corporations. The last and main factor is digitalization, especially in communication outside a company, but also inside the company itself. These factors give rise to higher performance demands placed on employees, who have to be able to fulfil more and more complex tasks [3].

In connection with these factors, it is possible to select technological changes that will significantly affect the form of HR management in the future. The most important ones include the problems of **Industry 4.0**. Industry 4.0 is a concept including a number of elements and procedures, such as automation,

digitalization, robotization, implementation of cyber-physical systems, utilization of the internet of things, the internet of services, the internet of people, artificial intelligence, 3D print, cloud computing, big data and business intelligence, smart factories, digital economics, etc. [4]. This concept will also affect the HR management. What this impact will be like is one of the questions which will be topical in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In this area, there are two approaches, where one of them – the pessimistic one – expects a large loss of jobs and an increased necessity of checking employees. The optimistic view then anticipates conversion of the current jobs into new, different job positions [5]. Whichever forecast comes true, it is clear that it will affect the form and structure of HR management, and the company will have to respond to the situation.

Yet another area often presented as a part of Industry 4.0 is the sphere of extended and virtual reality. This element is nowadays often used as a form of education, and Stýblo [6] introduces the term a “Virtual HR Business” that should help companies to solve problems with a high grade of centralization. The principle consists in the allowance of communication without a physical contact and without stopping transfer of information and concurrent work with the other employees. The advantage of this type of company is mainly in its flexibility and the individual approach.

## **Modern trends in HR management**

This millennium has brought new approaches to work with human resources. Their enforcement in corporate practice might be just the factor that will help companies to cope with the forthcoming changes. Modern trends in HR management are voluntary approaches that a company can implement to make the work with human resources more effective. These approaches have benefits not only for the company–employee relationship, but they are also largely implemented just for employees that need a help in increasing the rate of their satisfaction, which is subsequently reflected in the quality of work performance.

New trends of HR management can be seen in:

- corporate social responsibility,
- emphasis on the role of ethics and legislation,
- holistic management,
- work-life balance,
- employee education and development,
- alternatives to full-time employment,
- talent management,
- age management,
- diversity management,
- HR assessment.

**Corporate social responsibility (CSR)** represents a voluntary business philosophy, which is thought to support the companies' commitment in behaving responsibly with respect to the society and the environment, also beyond the obligations stipulated by law [7]. Models of social responsibility management reflect the concept of sustainable development [8]. On the basis of the currently known approaches in CSR, it is possible to divide the social responsibility areas to the economic, social, environmental, ethical, and philanthropic areas [9]. Employees belong to the social area, which is connected with care for them, the working environment and working conditions the company creates for them [10]. People spend a substantial part of their lives at work. A satisfaction in job is also mirrored in personal satisfaction, affecting the quality of one's life. The corporate activity in the social area of CSR is reflected in the increased employee motivation and creativity. It enhances their work efficiency and loyalty to the company and, finally, it helps to achieve the corporate targets.

**Ethics and legislation** help to keep business in the order. The legal framework for work with human resources in the Czech Republic is given by the Labour Code, the Antidiscrimination Act, the Unemployment Act, and the Personal Data Protection Act. The elements of ethical standards are captured in the CSR program. The right ethical behaviour should lead the company to a decent behaviour towards entities inside and outside the company. Enforcement of ethics prevents discrimination and undesirable practice [11]. The document that deals with a set of norms and guide-lines governing relations among the community members is called the Code of Ethics [12]. It indicates how to apply ethical values within the corporate culture.

**Holistic management** is a holistic approach to the issue of HR management, where their management is comprehensively understood and the overall interconnecting view of them is decisive. The most significant benefit consists in discovering the hidden reserves and ensuring the corporate prosperity thanks to the approach of innovation management. The possibility of perceiving a company as a whole helps to maintain balance between the individual activities, which leads to prevention of corporate imbalance [13]. The holistic management approach is also based on the fact that it may affect all the aspects of an individual, who is also seen as a whole [14]. The human aspects that are affected by this approach include emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual ones. The terms that are distinguished are human guidance and human management. If we speak about stimulation of the physical and mental aspects, we speak about management. If we focus our attention on the spiritual and emotional aspects, we mean the human guidance. If the approaches merge and they are applied as a whole, it is an example of a holistic approach [15].

**Work-life balance** refers to harmonization of the personal and professional life to satisfaction of an employee. The main elements that help to push this approach through include alternatives of the full-time employment, maintaining a contact with employees on parental leave, advisory, and legal services for solving

the crisis situations, company nurseries, or an employee benefit system. A balance is, in this case, not understood in the way we set the working conditions for an employee according to their situation on a permanent basis, but as a variable factor that changes in the course of human life and it is flexibly modified according to the situation. This balance is set on the individual basis, and it cannot be standardized. It depends on the individual's priorities at work, in life, their health, their lifestyle or the demands of their life outside working hours; e.g., in the form of different hobbies [16]. Flexibility is, especially as for the possibilities of performing the work, very intensively supported by IT technologies. For example, the use of remote access makes it possible to offer an employee a work from home, or communication with the working environment from different locations using available technological means [17].

**Employee education and development** are essential parts of maintaining the desired knowledge of an employee. This process should not be omitted, and it should go beyond the mandatory training, as it is just the fact that the information is up-to-date what is a substantial element of success and may help to attract new talented employees. It should also include the modern ways of acquiring new knowledge and experience; e.g., in the form of shadowing managers or utilization of modern technological tools. New trends and processes include “Just-in-Time Education”, where the training is implemented as close to the time of task fulfilment as being possible [18]. This education is flexible and quick [19], and it can have the form of, for instance, a workshop before commencement of a project [20]. Another trend is development of e-learning [21], which can be carried out as M-Learning (self-study using mobile technologies), eTwinning (the possibility of creating virtual laboratories and virtual training projects), or Blended Learning (it combines different forms of education to complement each other). At last, we can also mention Cross-Training, where an employee acquires and develops his/her knowledge to be able to use it in more positions. In the event of cancellation of a position, it is possible to adapt quickly to another one. In the present interconnected world, it is also necessary to put emphasis on the employees' language knowledge that is particularly necessary in the international working environment. Modern trends in the area of education can also include so-called gamification, i.e. incorporation of game elements and simulation in the education process [22].

**Alternatives to full-time employment** represent a way how to meet employees' needs in the form of e.g. part-time contracts, distance jobs, workplace sharing, flexible working time, or temporary work agreements (on a completing a job or performing a work). It always depends on a particular job if it is suitable for modification to another type of contract. What also plays a role here is the superior's opinion on the fact whether he/she is able to manage and check the employee outside a regular working-time regime. Also, it is not possible to omit employee's personal and working characteristics, their attitude to work, experience, or position in the company [23]. Introduction of alternatives to the

full-time employment also brings certain risks; e.g., problems with organization of work at the time of holidays, disruption of interpersonal relationships in-between the employees and of their communication, it may lead to frustration and feelings of discrimination, as it is not possible, with respect to the type of activities performed, to offer such a position to everybody. It can also be admitted that there will not be direct information sharing and that it may lead to a more difficult coordination of teamwork [24]. An employee might also suffer from a psychical barrier if he/she has to use a webcam and microphones for teleworking, and work from home results in a certain rate of social isolation due to the absence of direct contact with the colleagues. An opportunity to promote an employee may be omitted, and another risk can be seen in making corporate data accessible from outside, which means they can be misused more easily. Practising jobs outside the workplaces also limits some traditions connected with fears that the company might, in such a case, lose control over the quality of work, work results, and productivity at work [25].

**Talent management (TaM)** is an approach focusing on employee evaluation of the respective disposition and talent. It includes the process from the gifted employee and a leader searching to plan their career growth together and evaluation of their benefits for the company. Talented employees represent an important element in the process of meeting corporate targets, and so they should enjoy an appropriate and special approach. Compared to knowledge management, which is focussed on the entire company, talent management is aimed at a defined part of the staff, and it is perceived as an opportunity increasing the possibility of their employment at the position that will be of the greatest benefit for the company [20]. Kursch [26] considers the following TaM trends as significant: utilization of (i) Talent Experts (search for talented employees using experts, but not managers), (ii) Talent Multiplication (they can use their potential in combination with their strong points in different positions within the company), (iii) Talent Mindset (talent support at all the corporate levels), (iv) Tailor Made Talent Management (TaM contents tailored to the needs of the company and the employee), (v) Strategic TaM (TaM adjusted to the corporate strategy), (vi) Talentship (it places emphasis on the current and future talented employees), (vii) Smart TaM (focusing on education of talented employees and spreading knowledge acquired by the talented employees among the other staff), (viii) Resource-Based TaM (search for positive effects supporting development of a talented employee), (ix) TaM based on the supply (it solves talent oversupply or shortage), (x) Global TaM (spreading time-proven elements worldwide), and, finally, (xi) Accelerated TaM (it sets a target for a talented employee, and it is up to him/her how he/she is going to achieve it).

**Age management (AM)** deals with the role of age in working with company employees. It is necessary to be attentive to all employee age categories, take account of the expected demographic development and the increasing life, work-life expectancy and use the pros and cons of each age group as much as

possible [14]. Application of AM makes it possible for the company to ensure equal opportunities for all its employees and thus fulfil the social pillar of CSR. When implementing AM, an important role is played by the corporate management and culture, which should support the given approach and create a suitable environment. HR planning is based on the age structure of the current staff, and in the phase of recruitment, it is necessary to prevent age discrimination [27]. Introduction of AM has a lot of advantages [28]: elimination of financial costs (decreased employee absence and turnover), high-quality and satisfied staff (retention of experienced employees, their satisfaction and increased loyalty), strengthening of corporate culture (support of diversity, equal treatment, no discrimination), increased diversity and quality of human resources, fulfilment of the CSR concept and the overall image.

**Diversity management (DM)** focuses on management of diversity in the staff, which tries to cope with, ensures equal opportunity for them, and their effective incorporation into the company. A diverse structure of a work team has a number of positive consequences: it offers new possibilities of how to get new employees, it helps to improve reputation of the company, it brings an increase in motivation and efficiency, variable performance within the work teams, a decrease in the cost of absence and turnover, improved globalization impact management, smoother communication between the different cultures, etc. [29]. On the other hand, it is a new stressor both for employees and managers, the so-called diversity stress [23]. Hubbard [30] classifies diversity as (i) primary (age, ethnic affiliation, gender, mental and physical abilities, race and sexual orientation) and (ii) secondary (communication style, education, family status, military experience, organizational level, religion, mother tongue, geographic location, income, job experience, and style of work). One of the most frequent divisions of diversity is distribution into gender, age, ethnic and religious diversities [23]. In the area of gender, it is important not to forget the stereotypes that assign to men the roles of production and confine women to the area of caregiving and household chores [31,32]. In the area of gender, it is necessary to prevent any discrimination. When implementing DM, it is necessary to take account of the particular situation in the company, where it is possible to use diversity audit. As for employment of foreigners, it is also necessary to take into account a more complicated administrative aspect [33]. When employing a foreigner in an EU member state, it is also important whether they are permanent residents, citizens of another EU or EEC country or Switzerland plus their family members, citizens from the third countries, or applicants for international protection (asylum). The process of employing foreigners imposes more demands on work with information, administration with authorities and the applicants themselves. Nevertheless, today's interconnected world leads to a higher employment of foreigners, and HR officers will be confronted with this situation more and more often.

**HR assessment** is an essential part of determination of the effectiveness of approaches to employee management. It aims the company to find out what the performance of the employees are, how they have integrated themselves into work teams, how they utilize their personal potential to the benefit of the company as a whole. It is necessary, for assessment of the correctness of their functioning, to look for their shortcomings and potential proposals for improvements. To evaluate the status of human resources in a company, it is possible to use the HR controlling. This tool does not focus only on quantitative, but also qualitative indicators, and also on the strategic ways of management and operative controlling. The other HR management and development assessment methods include, e.g., a SWOT analysis, HR management and development audit, or audit of HR administration. For HR assessment, it is also possible to use technological means. It is possible to evaluate data concerning work processes, employee efficiency and cost of employee education e.g. using Business Intelligence Tools [34]. To assess the efficiency of a company, it is also possible to make use of benchmarking (systematic comparison with the best companies in the branch of business). The aim is to identify how assignments are carried out and to experience such ways during their observation [35].

Characteristic features of the today's world are large-scale migration of labour force and expectation of significant changes resulting from the technological development. This brings HR management the necessity of changing the approach to employees. It also certainly brings problems with new mentality of employees, which has to be taken into account by their management, and with high demands on qualifications and their continuous extension with respect to the technological progress.

Companies must remember that the composition of today's employees is considerably varied. The baby boomers are still working, they are not too committed and they have strong social perceptions with a focus on respect for human rights [36]. The generation X represents a large part of current employees; this generation is enterprising, seeking opportunities. They prefer to work independently. The Y generation [37] is not too dedicated to work. This generation is influenced by information technology and the Internet, as employees they are not very loyal and they are very impatient and sceptical [38]. Nowadays, businesses are experiencing the emergence of a new generation of Z, which will often lead to the changes of job, the members of this generations rely on freedom and independence, and have lower emotional intelligence [39]. Matching the coexistence of differently oriented generations in working environment is not an easy task for companies.



## Research methods

This research aimed to map the situation in the area of application of modern trends in work with human resources at selected chemical companies in the Czech Republic. The most significant trends in HR management were identified on the basis of a detailed literature search. Five large chemical companies were chosen upon agreement from the addressed companies and the company managers' willingness to participate in this research. A questioning scenario was drawn up, and its topic focused on application of modern trends in HR management, on the basis of which a directed interview was conducted with the HR manager of each of the company. The interview outcomes were subsequently processed altogether.

## Results and discussion

In accordance with the companies' request for maintaining anonymity, the companies were marked with letters "A–E". Their basic characteristics are:

- **Company A** – its core production activities include processing the plastics, advisory activity, and development activities associated with this area of industry. The company, having about 1300 employees at two manufacturing plants, supports the quality of production by implementing ISO 9001 and ISO 14,001 standards. Their responsible policy was also awarded the certificates of the Safe Company and the Responsible Care. The company does business with foreign partners in large scale, and it is a part of a group associating the companies from different industries.
- **Company B** – it focuses mainly on manufacturing in the area of dyes and pigments, nitrocellulose and products in the area of organic chemistry. The company supplies its production from its own energy sources. Nowadays, there are about 1600 employees. The company is certified under a number of norms and standards, such as ISO (ISO 9000 and ISO 14,000), OHSAS 18,001, the Responsible Care, the Right Manufacturing Practice, and it is also a member of ETAD (the Ecological and Toxicological Association of Dyes and Organic Pigments Manufacturers). The company is also a member of a group associating companies from different industries.
- **Company C** – it exports products worldwide, manufacturing explosives, secondary explosives, and ammunition. The company has a hundred year tradition. The sole owner of Company C is the state, i.e. it is a state-owned company. Nowadays, it employs about 700 people. Like the above companies, it has implemented the system of ISO standards (ISO 9000 and ISO 14,000).
- **Company D** – it is a subsidiary of a multinational company. The core business activity of this company is production and processing of plastics with an emphasis on their refining. It is a small unit employing about 50 workers in

the Czech Republic. As above with the previous companies, it applies the elements of ISO 9000 and ISO 14,000 standards into manufacturing practice, and it has also been awarded some other certificates.

- **Company E** – it focuses on the area of manufacturing automotive and industrial oils, including plastic lubricants, bitumen and bituminous products. The company's tradition is more than one hundred years long, and it is a part of a group associating companies from this industry. It is ISO 9000, ISO 14,000 and OHSAS 18,000 certified. The company has about 250 employees.

The questioning scenario has dealt with detailed assessment of the companies' approach to the modern trends in work with human resources. For an overview of the individual trends and their enforcement in practice by the assessed companies, see Table 1. Answer *Yes* symbolizes a significant implementation of this trend in the corporate practice, *Partially* means that some elements of the given trend have been implemented by the company, but application of the trend is limited, and *No* means that the company is not implementing the approach at all or that it has done so in a very limited extent.

**Table 1** Enforcement of individual trends in corporate practice

Type of trend	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D	Company E
Corporate social responsibility	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ethics and legislation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Holistic management	No	No	No	No	Yes
Work-life balance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially
Employee education and development	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alternatives to full-time employment	Yes	Partially	No	Yes	Yes
Talent management	Yes	Partially	Yes	Partially	Yes
Age management	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	No
Diversity management	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
HR assessment	Partially	Partially	Partially	Yes	No

All the surveyed companies pay significant attention to CSR; i.e., to all five CSR areas. The list of activities, particularly in the environmental, social, and philanthropic areas, is really extensive. All companies comply with the laws that provide the legislative framework for their business; i.e., the Labor Code, the Antidiscrimination Act, the Unemployment Act, and the Personal Data Protection Act. Each enterprise also has a set of norms, guidelines, and regulations maintaining the relations within the company, as well as relationships with external stakeholders. These norms are contained in a document called the Code of Ethics, which can be found in all the companies surveyed. Thanks to this, companies try to prevent discrimination and apply ethical values in their corporate cultures.

All the companies also take a thorough care of employee development and education, as they invest considerable means into the education beyond obligatory and mandatory training. The companies perceive education as a tool contributing not only to a good reputation of the company as the employer, but it is also of a large benefit for the process of increasing the labour productivity and effectiveness. It pays to invest into education of your own employees both from the point of view of the employees and of the company itself. The companies also invest into the development of regions in which they are located, supporting there also sports and cultural activities. As a result, they may obtain different awards for these activities, such as the Employer of the Year, the Safe Enterprise, or the Innovative Company.

A new generation called Generation Z, which has a different approach to the work and different habits, is now starting to enter labour market. A job is important for them, but what is also important is their private life, their hobbies, travelling, meeting friends, and family relations. Therefore, it is understandable that companies have to respond to this and take into consideration the work-life balance. To achieve this, employees do not hesitate to leave their employer if they do not have the right conditions for this balance and go over to another employer who will comply with their wishes.

However, this results in losing the already incorporated and often also high-quality employees. As the research has proved, the companies are very well aware of need to acquire and retain talented employees. They are creating up the career plans for them, they provide them with special forms of education and, at the same, they map the key positions they might occupy in the future. Company A runs a long-term training program called the Talent Academy, whereas Company B has a very well designed Trainee Program. Companies also identify and monitor key positions, for which they choose talented employees.

Companies monitor the level of employee age structure, as they can see that the average age of their employees is continuously rising. This is a result of the fact that a number of employees have spent all their lives at the company, and hence, they could not be replaced by younger employees. In contrast, younger generations tend to change their jobs much more often. Only Company E does not solve this issue. They are only interested in the employee quality at the time they

join the company. The other companies carefully monitor retirements, and they are trying to increase the intensity of cooperation with secondary schools and universities to attract the young generation to start in their company. Utilization of alternatives to the full-time employment in the chemical industry is, in view of the manufacturing character, rather problematic. In spite of that, the companies — with one exception — are trying to use this form of employment within the bounds of possibility and make it possible for their employees to work part-time or under another form of agreement, or to work in flexi-time regime. The companies also outsource some types of jobs.

The researched companies have not implemented holistic management. They do not see much difference between the guidance and management. In view of the organization of manufacturing at these companies, they rather use management than guidance; especially, with respect to safety at work. The proportion of creative or team work is at a lower level at these companies. Team work is mainly used within education, and they utilize the form of employee coaching.

Also, implementation of diversity management is not a typical issue for the surveyed companies. This is mainly given by the fact that they have a minimal number of foreign employees, so they do not have to solve the specifics of other social cultures, religions, etc. The only diversity that can be found at the researched companies is the gender dimension; i.e., the sex ratio at the company, and the age structure, which is monitored rather than systematically solved. The other dimensions of diversity are not monitored by the companies.

The last monitored trend was the HR assessment. Although employee assessment is a very important part of HR activities, the surveyed companies conduct it formally only, as its stimulation function is not clear yet. Company A rather evaluates the performance of work assignments, while assessment in the form of HR controlling on the company level is not conducted on a regular basis, and assessment is delegated to the individual managers. The reason is in the fact that this is time-consuming and its application difficult. The used HR controlling forms mainly include HR management audit and monitoring of HR statistics and HR costs. A qualitative survey of employee opinions is practised sporadically. The company does not use any other forms of HR assessment. Company B runs a formal HR assessment, and the assessment outcomes are used for allocation of bonuses. The assessment is performed using HR Standards, HR Statistics, and HR Cost Monitoring. The employees are compared with the other company departments. Due to the implementation of GDPR, this way of comparing is a very problematic stimulation factor. Company C does not have a guideline governing assessment. It is nowadays run without central control; i.e., only under the patronage of the manager. Only Company D has involved a high level HR assessment in place. The company conducts assessment after the probationary period, an interview at the time it expires, 360° assessment, and an assessment also within the central management. As for the forms of HR controlling, the company uses a qualitative survey of employee opinions, HR Costs, HR Statistics, and HR Indicators. The

company does not apply any other forms. The advantage of this company is, thanks to a smaller number of employees, that they keep track of the company more easily. This advantage is, at the same time, a disadvantage as they cannot draw general conclusions from such a small sample. As for the possibilities of how to assess human resources, Company E fully monitors the HR Costs. In addition, the company performs assessment of managers, who are assessed by the employees. Similarly to the area of HR assessment outside HR controlling, they use so-called High Level Services which enable comparison with other companies. The companies surveyed should elaborate their methods of HR assessment in more detail, particularly towards cooperation with the assessed employees.

## **Conclusions**

Our study has shown that all the companies pay attention to CSR, employee development and education. CSR is now a recognized trend in the society. It also enjoys formal attention in the form of obligation to publish CSR reports. Further, it is also an important factor in the confrontation with the competitors, an element of corporate attractiveness as an employer, and a tool supporting the sustainable development. Employee development and education are necessary conditions for stabilization of high-quality employees, who will help the company to achieve its targets.

All the companies also pay attention, or at least partial attention, to work-life balance and the talent management, and with one exception also to the alternatives to the full-time employment and age management. In view of the employees' life priorities, it is necessary to search for talented employees and ensure such working conditions that will keep them at the company and offer the possibilities of further development. At the same, the companies try to monitor their age structure and replenish staff numbers systematically.

What enjoys only marginal attention of the companies involved in the study is holistic management and diversity management. It is given, on one hand, by the companies' manufacturing focus and a large proportion of “blue-collar” workers at the companies compared to administrative staff. This means that the space for human guidance is very limited. The surveyed companies also employ few foreign workers, and so diversity is limited by the age and gender dimensions. What is absolutely surprising is the companies' hesitant approach to the HR assessment. This means only minimal or no provision of a feedback to the employees, low managers' awareness of work of individual employees, and neglecting the stimulation function of the assessment towards employees. At a high level, the assessment is performed by Company D only.

Despite sufficiently available information about new trends, it is possible to state that, in practice, the surveyed chemical companies in the Czech Republic only apply some of them. It is possible to recommend both more intensive utilization of talent management, holistic, diversity, or age management, and particularly more intensive HR assessment via mutual interaction with the employees.

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