TALENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES IN THE RETAIL INDUSTRY DESIGNED FOR UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

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INTRODUCTION

Organisations that must adapt to a changing environment are more and more often deciding to introduce talent management to work toward their objectives. There is a demand for gifted specialists and managers eager to realise company objectives and strategy arising both in response to the "talent war" companies wage against one another and to the organisation's development generally. To identify and choose the most gifted individuals means to invest in the company's capital. As Bogusz Mikuła insisted, the pursuit of talent needs to serve as the organisation's main strategy. Or, as Tadeusz Listwan has said, talent management is a set of actions concerning the most gifted people, taken to achieve the company's development, efficiency and goals [Listwan 2005].

From a market analysis perspective, organisations more often target university graduates as their source for talented people. Companies offer development programmes that prepare employees to move into the position of specialist or a manager.

The assumption that the candidate's developmental potential as well as the ability to quickly acquire knowledge serves as the basis for this kind of offer. Graduates are usually attracted by corporations that allow them to participate in interesting projects, often in an international environment, and career paths which allow for autonomy. Development programmes offered by an organisation enable one to choose a quick career path and gain access to people supporting the process of accumulating knowledge and experience. Development revolves not only around acquiring knowledge and experience but also around improving social skills. Concentrating on interpersonal skills makes it easier to communicate within the company and promotes the formation of effective relationships with the environment and, ultimately, improved company performance. This kind of situation provides a framework to build a brand based upon values, in particular the development of others.

The aim of this study is to establish a universal training programme for preparing graduates to hold their first specialist and managerial positions within an organisation.

This goal is realised through the analysis of a case study which looks at the key competencies required by an organisation. The paper also describes organisational factors and conditions which have an impact on the development of young people in the programme.

Based on data collected from in-depth interviews conducted among development programme participants, critical analysis has been provided. I achieve my goal in the paper thanks to a case study analysis of a corporation with a chain of stores across the country. The organisation employs a few thousand individuals in a variety of positions and locations. For the company to succeed and achieve its goals, employee succession has to be taken into account.

Insight gained from analysing the case study allows me to define key factors and tools essential to prepare graduates for new positions. The analysis follows the pattern elaborated by Agata Kaczmarska and Łukasz Sienkiewicz. The talent management programme is holistic and based on the correlation of many processes including planning, employing, selecting and keeping employees (together with motivational systems), potential development, results assessment and career planning [Kaczmarska, Sienkiewicz 2005]. As one personnel strategy states, it is important for organisations to employ proper people and to provide them conditions to develop in order to retain as many talented people as possible [Groysberg et al. 2008]. Furthermore, talent should be sought both within and outside the company. As Tadeusz Listwan (2005) proposes, talent management is "a collection of actions concerning talented people, taken in order to develop them and their abilities and to achieve the aims of the organisation". It can be divided into [Listwan 2005]:

– actions taken to come into the organisation (bringing talent into the organisation);
– transitioning employees (through career management processes, improving employee qualifications, developing employee competencies);
– quitting (talented people leaving the company as well as measures taken to retain them).

However, the company's action should concern not only an external search for talented people. It should also have a plan of action for all employees and define the criteria to become one of the most talented. It is highly important to use employee competencies for the organisation's needs [Kacprzak et al. 2012]. The identification of such people within the organisation should be based on definitive criteria that all employees are aware of. Based on the case study, such assumptions can be seen as the correlation between potential assessment, understood as a prediction, of how an employee will work out if he or she is moved into a more developed position, and the results he or she would achieve in the process of accomplishing the tasks and needs of the given position. Thus it is necessary to think of the factors and conditions which influence the competencies development in conjunction with defining the skills required by the organisation and preparation of a congeneric development plan.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES ADDRESSED TO UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

The process of employing talented candidates among graduates starts a long time before the recruitment process. There is a good deal of co-organising and co-financing of conferences and seminars as well as funding of scholarships for the best students. Further, many

measures are taken to improve a good employer's image through contacts and meetings with employees of job market institutions, government and non-governmental administration, media, and influential individuals from the business and non-business world. Companies invite students for meetings to visit and explore the organisation and observe technological processes with the use of modern equipment and software [Mikuła, Morawski 2008]. Internet communication through interactive company portals with fora to ask specialists about uncertain issues is important to the young generation. Another option is to create a website for organising competitions, exchanging ideas, and chatting with members of management [Morawski, Mikuła 2009]. This paper's case study analysis indicates that a successful step is to maintain permanent contact with universities and student scientific associations. The process is realised via lectures, meetings with potentially talented people and participation in job fairs where company representatives present their development programmes. A set of free training sessions where students can improve their social competences is one example of an innovative initiative. The programme is used in Poland and is often combined with academic curricula. There is also a number of examples of development programmes for graduates on the market. Some exemplary cases are presented in Table 1.

To identify the most talented candidates is to invest in the company's human capital. For employers that bear the costs of starting up, recruiting for and implementing development programmes, it is essential to find and choose the most talented people. Market analysis shows that organisations decide to conduct a multiphase recruitment process in

TABLE 1. Development programmes for university graduates

Name of company	Description of the development programme
Auchan	Development Programmes prepare individuals to hold a position in management
Jeronimo Martins	Management Trainee programme is arranged for MA graduates and last year students. It prepares individuals to move into responsible positions in the Jeronimo Martins group in the near future
Leroy Merlin	Kuźnia Talentów (Smithy of Talents) is an intensive development programme dedicated to university graduates interested in trade. They have an opportunity to develop in the company in specialist and manager positions, both in stores and the head office
Lidl sp. z o.o	There are dual studies offered within a programme dubbed "We believe in young people". A participant studies at one of two German universities and after preparation holds the position of Regional Trade Manager International Management Development Programme prepares individuals to take positions in management Lidl Brand Factory searches for talented young people and employs them in the head office to create new brands and introduce them on the European markets
PKN Orlen S.A	The Young Talents programme finds and trains talented individuals to become employees. There is also the Akademia Biznesu PKN (PKN Business Academy), "a mini--MBA", the graduates of which are offered individual development plans
Tesco Poland sp. z o.o.	Program Menadżerski Ekstraklasa (Top League manager programme) prepares individuals to hold the position of manager

Source: the author, based on promotional materials published in companies' websites.

order to minimise the risk of miscalculation. Identifying the best candidates is closely correlated with defining what talent means for the organisation. Talented individuals can be defined as those with a remarkable potential and a high level of required competences [Listwan 2005] but also "creative and enterprising employees with high development potential who will serve to lift the company's value" [Borkowska 2005]. After defining the appropriate model, it is advisable to think of the competencies needed to achieve this pattern and what can be done to implement the model.

KEY MANAGER COMPETENCIES

The attempt to describe the key manager competencies leads to many various decisions and possible ways of placing them in a hierarchy. Because it is difficult to improve all competencies, every company should identify the key ones for the organisation's performance according to the managers' orientation [Kacprzak, Król 2014]. Analysis of the market shows the consistency of defining interpersonal skills required by the organisation and the people investigated in the recruitment process within a given business. However, "the occurrence of a variety of management positions and people being managed causes difficulties in describing them in a universal way, and all attempts to normalise are considered illegitimate" [Kacprzak, Król 2014]. The organisation I studied for this paper concentrates on the ability to cooperate, understood as working with people in order to realise business goals effectively.

The awareness of a common goal can appear in various areas: in the organisation as a whole, in a team, or even a single conversation. Behaviours observed in collaboration revolve around employees sharing ideas and knowledge as well as giving feedback constructively. Understanding the other person's perspective and recognising his/her emotions are the key elements. Active listening allows one to work efficiently. The needs can be described in many contexts: from the point of view of employees, clients and local societies. The ability to see the needs of other people within the team leads to effective reactions. Understanding the needs of "clients" gives one the ability to offer them exactly what they want and in the way they expect it.

Another element is understanding the environment in which the organisation fulfils its business goals; that is, understanding the needs of local societies the company functions in. It can be said that empathy is the key to realise what matters both inside and outside the organisation. It provides perspective on what is important for others at the moment. A company also requires an employee's proactive attitude to be built on proper reactions to everyday challenges. Such activities can be also understood broadly, as flexibility in thinking, openness to change and efficient decision-making.

Other behaviours that should be highlighted include the ability to determine proper priorities, acting according to them and being goal-oriented, and being engaged and enthusiastic. Innovation understood as the ability to observe the environment in order to find inspiration to change and improve is a major factor for an organisation's activity. It is the capacity to not only follow market changes and see opportunities to develop business, initiate innovations and improvements but also to create an environment that approves ideas and new solutions. A precious competence is to balance all areas of life – to take

care of yourself, be in good shape and, thanks to this, achieve better results. Taking all of these competences into account, the factors that create an innovation-friendly environment are cooperation, empathy and proactive actions undertaken with a sense of harmony between all areas of life.

THE PROCESS OF RECRUITING CANDIDATES
AND ASSESSING THEIR POTENTIAL

The recruitment process in the organisation analysed here begins from the preliminary selection of applications. Here the candidates' foreign language ability, experience gained during internships or trips abroad and education are all verified. Candidates that qualify for the next step are invited to take part in competency tests. Finally, an assessment centre is organised. It is a popular and effective way of conducting evaluations. To underline the multidimensionality of the process, it can be stated that "a group of participants that takes part in various exercises is observed by a team of trained people who assess every participant, taking some previously established behaviours connected with the position into consideration. Next, using the collected data, the decisions are made" [Ballantyne, Povah 2000].

Every candidate undergoes an evaluation process conducted by a team of assessors observing particular behaviours. The assessors should hold different positions within the company. In many cases, external judges are included in the process. The key is to find a proper number of both practical exercises from among the many selection techniques that will simulate future work and tests to verify the candidates' ability to analyse data and do inductive reasoning. Such a set makes it possible to assess the candidate's potential on the basis of the observed behaviour. The assessment centre serves as the place competency levels can be diagnosed, especially social ones. Other tasks show the candidates' individual traits. Thus, the assessment centre resembles the future workplace. Tasks performed under the process of evaluation should reflect the real ones that could be encountered at work.

REALISATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES
IN THE ORGANISATION

In the organisation that have been considered, which has a chain of stores in Poland and other European countries, there is a long tradition of development programmes for university graduates. The possibility of exchanging experience and the wide scope of operations based on the multiple roles and positions available function as a training programme. When the selection stage ends, it is important to create good conditions for employee development. That is possible thanks to the company's congeneric training programme with the appropriate structure of improvement activities. A development programme can be understood in general as a training plan with appropriate timing. It covers all planned activities, such as trainings, workshops, meetings and the gaining of experience while working, with the support of people responsible for the employee's

development. The goal of the programme is to prepare the participant to hold the position of specialist or manager. It is realised according to a set schedule adjusted to the needs and abilities of the attendant. It is crucial to find a balance between gaining specialised knowledge concerning a given position, leadership skills and experience during the work itself. Moving forward, the specific amount of time to be spent on particular activities must be determined. The organisation uses the 70-20-10 chart (Fig.). According to this model, only 10% of one's time is devoted to formal learning (in workshops and trainings) while 20% is spent in meetings with people supporting the development. They give feedback and create their own solutions. The most important part of the approach is the process of gaining experience through work. It takes up 70% of the trainee's time and is dedicated to implementing the knowledge gained in trainings, workshops and meetings.
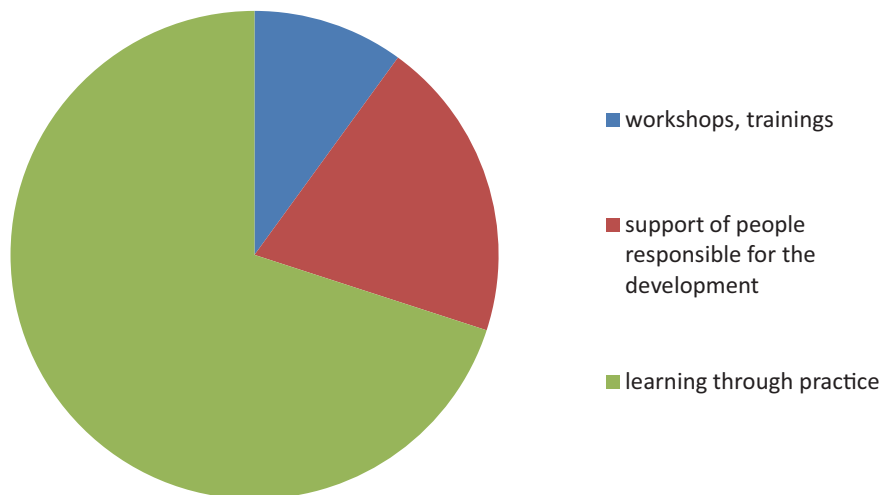

FIG. The learning model 70-20-10
Source: the author, based on international trade company internal materials.

Officially, the company's development programme can be divided into several successive phases that ought to be realised within 12 months. The phases that can be distinguished are:
– analysis of training needs;
– preparation of a development plan;
– implementation of the development plan;
– finalisation of the programme.

To match the programme with the candidate's needs, it is essential to introduce the analysis of training needs based on improving strengths and developing areas which minimise the competence gap. On this basis, the development plan is created. It includes tasks to be realised and supported through assessment meetings. It is highly important to systematically validate the given areas and ultimately to confirm the readiness for a new position. A regular and well-planned participation in assessment meetings provides full

insight into the participant's progress and helps to set goals and tasks for the following weeks. The assessment meetings, which consist of feedback sessions, enable reflection on what has been done properly and which areas require improvement. According to the company's activity analysis, it can be assumed that the most important parts of the meetings include the discussion of:
– completed tasks;
– areas of success;
– areas to be improved;
– tasks and next steps to be realised.

During the meetings, the manager assesses the candidate's readiness to hold a new role by verifying the knowledge and estimating his/her abilities to fulfil a given goal. The full feedback should serve to develop and improve results. An established training plan includes regular meetings and individual conversations on identifying development needs and specific activities to stimulate development. According to Baron and Amstrong [2008], "people departments introduce new policies and practices but there are line managers who are responsible for the implementation". The effectiveness of development programmes requires "monitoring if the general policy and particular solutions concerning HRD are in line with operational requirements and active support in training participants, especially in the area of implementing and applying acquired abilities" [Matthew et al. 2008]. The programme includes holding many positions one after another, complemented by training, meetings, academy (which is a combination of conferences and workshops) and unassisted projects.

During the programme's progressive stages, the graduates gain not only knowledge and experience but also business awareness. An essential point of the programme is the participation in training sessions that improve both specialist and leadership skills. The training sessions are intended to provide knowledge and experience and also to learn proper behaviours required of a given position. It is crucial that after the training an employee should improve his/her competences and use the acquired knowledge and abilities in practice. During meetings with managers, areas of business are presented and projects are described. This provides the opportunity to think about the training and the results it will have on the company's functioning as well as about the growth in business awareness. Training makes it possible to see the organisation in a broader context, without restricting individuals to one perspective only.

In order to improve trainees' abilities, the Academy is organised. A set of training sessions, workshops and presentations, the Academy allows for a lively exchange of attitudes that arise in particular situations as well as ways of approaching everyday task realisation. Crucially, after the event, the participant should better understand his/her role and find a way to implement it in work. Apart from presentations and discussions broadening the participant's perspective, understanding the nature of particular positions is essential. Gaining that knowledge is made possible thanks to internships that can be done in other areas of business within the organisation. Exchanges allow one to experience particular tasks and the role other employees play.

One of the best ways to develop one's abilities and independence in action is to complete an unassisted project. In order to improve the form of development programmes, feedback from participants is necessary as well. It can be collected via survey research

or discussion meetings with participants organised as focus group interviews at the end of the programme. During such meetings the host asks questions to several guests at the same time concerning a given topic. Participants have a chance to share their remarks and exchange views that can be further implemented in the company. At the end of the programme, the participant ought to be ready to hold a new manager position through specialised validation and experience. If a graduate completes the programme with positive results, he/she is ready to hold the position of unaided specialist or manager.

It is advisable for an organisation to follow the idea of strategic talent development described by W.J. Rothwell and H.C. Kazanas as a process of changing organisations, external partners, internal groups and employees through both planned and unplanned learning. This process enabless participants to gain the competences essential to help the company gain and maintain its competitive advantage [Rothwell, Kazanas 2003]. Rothwell and Kazanas talk about the process of learning, which can be planned or unplanned. Spontaneous learning is combined with the transfer of knowledge between groups while trying to solve the company's problems together or managing strategic projects. The most important aspect of successful development programmes is proper organisational culture, in which every group of people has a determined role, based on the notion that people are the most important factor and their attitude toward changes is the ultimate criterion for success [Tabor 2008]. It is essential to create assumptions and monitor them in order to prepare proper feedback for the participants, and at the same time to guarantee the success of money spent.

THE ROLE OF COMPANY-ORIENTED PEOPLE
SUPPORTING THE PARTICIPANTS OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES
ADDRESSED TO UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

In the process of educating young people to become experts, the education itself is of course essential, but so too is support from experienced employees. The process requires the roles of people supporting the development to be described and the role of motivation to be appreciated. According to the case study, we can establish the role of the tutor, the mentor, the coordinator and the participant. The tutor is a line manager that leads the process. "The manager improves people. It depends on how he or she deals with them whether it will be easier or harder for people to develop" [Drucker 2004]. The line manager establishes detailed training goals and sometimes helps participants to avoid the competence gap. He/she coordinates the work and training and shares his or her knowledge and experience on a given position. This individual also conducts meetings during which the assessment of participants takes place. Broadening perspectives cannot be underestimated. Mentoring sessions allow the manager to search for models and address and adjust the employee's way of thinking.

The role of mentor is often offered to a high level manager. During meetings, the trainee gains advice concerning current actions, basic knowledge about the organisation and roles to follow. An individual from the personnel department supports the process by monitoring the course of actions, informing the trainee of the rungs of the programme and the proceedings and supports both the trainee and the tutor. This individual is also

responsible for checking the participants' progress and other people involved in the learning process and laying out the ways to achieve the abilities the company requires. He/she furthermore presents the company as an one that improves employee qualifications, as well as creating holistic training processes and advising graduates on how to best go about gaining knowledge [Tabor 2008].

The role of the trainees is the other essential aspect in this process. They take responsibility for realising the goals established and fulfilling the obligations for their position at every stage of development. Their level of engagement needs to be constantly measured and supported by people dealing with the development process. Learning depends on the attitude, way of thinking, and perception of situations people bring to the process. The model can be found in Mikuła's "tetragon of learning". Each side of the tetragon has one element: knowledge, the ability to use the knowledge, motivation and the company's internal environment. It should be emphasised that an effective talent management programme cannot exist without support from the management group. Creating a proper culture ought to be based on development support, knowledge sharing and the best models presented by management.

SUMMARY

To conclude, the analysis of the above development programmes, which is based on a goals grid, seems effective since it allows one to see how the realisation of a goal reflects other areas. The information gathered with this tool makes it possible to reflect on the following areas (Table 2):
1. Defining goals and tasks to be performed;
2. Defining resources that need to be stored;
3. Determining the things to be done and problems that may appear;
4. Determining threats that should be eliminated.

Undoubtedly, the career path offered by an organisation seems attractive for young people without any experience. A training framework allows them to gain experience in various business areas, and to take part in training sessions and meetings while at the same time receiving support from people involved in the process. Those who finish the programme successfully have demonstrated that they are prepared to move into the position of specialist or manager. The training plan enables employees to achieve the level of competence required for the work on a specialist or managerial position but is also a source of new managers who are compatible with the company's requirements and needs. Thus, development programmes are useful for university graduates just embarking on careers, for the organisation and the whole society where the organisation functions. They also provide great brand marketing for the company. When a programme is completed successfully, it gives new specialists and managers as a resource to the organisation and prepares graduates for future careers. The aspects mentioned above serve as a means of promoting learning among employees. As a result, the company is perceived as one where employees can improve their abilities, as an organisation which cares about learning and sharing knowledge.

TABLE 2. The goals grid

Do you have it?	No	1. What you want and don't have – active involvement of people supporting the development – a lot of candidates with high potential – definite prospects for people who lack the potential to hold manager positions – more time to prepare for evaluation interviews and meetings	3. What you don't have and don't want – lack of trainee motivation – lack of financial resources for organising development programmes – lack of involvement from line managers – lack of opportunity to promote people after the development programme
	Yes	2. What you have and want – defining roles of people supporting development – a defined programme framework – preparation of tools supporting development – attractive career paths for people without experience – the given way of gaining and recruiting candidates e.g. training, workshop and meeting programmes – CSR activities for realising development programmes – new managers perceived as resources	4. What you have and don't want – high cost of gaining candidates – costly recruitment – costly organisation of training, workshops and meetings – risk of people leaving the company – lack of stable motivation of participants
		Yes	No
		Do you want it?	

Source: the author's own work on the basis of Fred Nickols and Ray Ledgerwood 2005' goals grid model.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be assumed that the proposed training programme is adjusted to the needs and expectations of university graduates who start their career. It is essential to obtain one's first specialist or manager role. It also builds business awareness and provokes thinking about social competences. It can be treated as a challenge for the young since it requires new social abilities to be developed. From the company's point of view, offering such programmes means not only preparing employees for promotion but is also seen by society as the creation of and work on the company's brand.

Perceiving a brand as unattractive creates barriers – for example, a lack of interest from the most talented graduates. To overcome the lack of interest, the organisation has to increase its activities while recruiting candidates, which leads to additional costs. Money now has to be spent on organising meetings at universities, participating in job and career fairs or other events e.g. conferences, and sharing the company's own development programmes free of charge for external entities. At least costly recruitment and conducting training programmes ought to minimise the chance of losing talented participants. All activities, such as proposing other positions appropriate to a candidate's abilities, need to be undertaken together with systematic assessment and feedback. It is crucial to present the business area and the new role for participants in detail and suggest the time they can

start. To ensure employees are constantly motivated, it should be clear that both candidates and current employees can participate in development programmes.

Employee rivalry may be a serious threat that results in the newly employed having difficulties adapting. Co-workers can stop communicating or sabotage cooperation because of jealousy about better working conditions, among other things. Therefore, providing equal access to programmes is important because of the sense of equality the training and engagement brings. It is crucial to ensure that all current employees are highly motivated. Many often perceive participants in development programmes as "a special treatment group" which they cannot participate in, and therefore also have no access to attractive development packages and fast promotions. It is essential to treat all employees equally and establish new criteria for creating career paths together with various programmes.

But there is a danger that a participant can feel frustrated if he or she is not able to use the knowledge when there are no plans in the organisation, such as a database of positions matched with the required abilities. After going to great lengths to learn and take part in workshops, graduates should not have to face their new prospects with no plans and no idea of how to use the additional competencies. To avoid such situations, an organisation should prepare strategic plans for programme graduates with high potential. After all, such programmes cannot be used only to upgrade the company's status and present it as a modern organisation.

Yet another concern is the risk that a trainee would be lured away by a competitor. The cost of training and the knowledge about the company he/she has obtained needs to be borne in mind in these situations. To prevent such exits, organisations often decide to create a plan for leaving process management and another for creating opportunities to keep the best graduates in the company. At the same time, establishing an organisational culture that supports constant development should be a way to limit trainees from moving on. The management team should consider development as a key issue to implement the programme successfully and instil in course participants a high level of motivation during trainings. Involvement through devoting time and reflecting upon the employee's development as well as preparing feedback are the key elements of the work of managers responsible for development.

However, the situation may become complicated if the training covers various areas and positions, possibly necessitating a change in trainers during the process. Some managers may perceive the trainings as having little practical value in guiding new team members. Such managers may see the process as obstructive because of a new, "special" member in the team who requires additional attention and involvement. That is why the engagement should be constantly monitored and the management's awareness needs to be expanded. Development programmes are attractive both for organisations and graduates. But the point is that their structure and implementation should be analysed and improved to build the required management team and create effective action. Introducing development programmes establishes strong learning processes in the company, which increases the organisation's status. Most importantly, it enables the organisation to create a mentality and culture of learning.

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Summary. The article systematises issues concerning managerial skills development programmes dedicated to university graduates. Conclusions and recommendations have been collected to define key competencies and roles of people supporting participants as well as to establish a training scheme which allows graduates to move into their first managerial position. Recommendations are based on commentary from a case study done on a trade company analysed to define a development and conditioning programme for potential future managers. An important result was that such programmes reach out to young people preparing to hold a specialist or managerial position while also helping

the organisation to provide good quality staff which realises the goals of the company. In other words, the analysis shows that the interests of both sides are consistent in career development. Moreover, the training programmes make it possible to realise the goals of the organisation.

Key words: development programmes, social competencies, manager competencies, trainings, mentoring, coaching

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