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1. How important is nowadays the managing of human resources in a company. What world experiences show?

Human resource management (HRM) is of critical importance because of its strategic contribution to competitive advantage of companies, from small businesses to large conglomerates. This shows in customer service, productivity and overall brand superiority. It is well documented nowadays that organizations investing in HRM coherently and consistently enable employees to perform at full potential. The reason behind this is simple: when organizations take care of their human resources, these in turn, improve their performance. The resulting efficient and effective production processes and services have a positive impact on customers and, ultimately, financial results. The world's most admired and successful organizations obtain the best return from investing in their intangible assets by being committed to the systematic application of HRM.

2. In regards to the upcoming HR Conference in Skopje, what are your first impressions, how much the Macedonian companies are interested in implementing modern HR standards?

The issue is not being 'interested' in implementing contemporary HRM, but rather the context in which a business operates. Since the local dynamic economy is open and attractive to foreign investments, national companies need to realize that they are competing against foreign multinationals in enlisting most suitable candidates in the country. The danger for a local company ignoring the strategic value of HRM is to see their most skilled and motivated workforce rushing to seek employment, for example, in a new subsidiary of a global organization starting operations in the country. This is a real threat because educated and qualified employees are interested to work for organizations that enable them to develop further.

3. Is there any optimal number of employees before the company must have an HR manager?

There is no optimal number since each unique organizational circumstance is affected by the company size, business philosophy, industrial sector and workforce characteristics. However, practice shows that generally companies feature an HR professional once they reach 50 employees.

4. Can you reveal one secret to us - will be your main message of this year's conference?

Since companies experience unique circumstances, management needs to realize that the implementation of HRM requires adaptation to fit their specific context. If a practice works for an organization, it does not mean it works for the next. Thus, once businesses define their HRM approach based on organizational strategy, there is the need to secure the firm support of the leadership from the very top of the hierarchy. The resulting involvement of line managers with HRM is the 'secret' that enables the coherent application of HRM best practices. In fact, a recurring challenge businesses encounter is how to bring their HRM practices into life.

5. Is there any Macedonian company that presents a special challenge where you would like to work on establishing HR standards?

All industrial sectors, from heavy industry to services and retail, present special demands and exciting opportunities for HRM application, especially if businesses consider competing on a global scale. In fact, as we teach at University of Sheffield International Faculty, CITY College, research points to a considerable body of evidence on how HRM implementation impacts, for example, on plant performance, reduction of employee turnover and absenteeism as well as time and cost saving. However, there are two fundamental requirements before proceeding to consider the establishment of HR standards. First, the leadership of the company must be willing and committed to invest in its human asset with a medium- to long-term view. Second, employees must experience positively the organizational culture of their business.