

## HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OF THE CITY OF VINKOVCI COMMUNICATION AS A KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL MOTIVATION OF EMPLOYEES

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### INTRODUCTION

The motivation of employee is constantly being influenced, not only by particular activities, but also unconsciously, by constant communication. To reveal the totality of others and to show himself to others a man uses **symbols**. This exchange of symbols in a wider sense we call **communication**.

In order to successfully manage human resources with the help of motivation and to find a right 'key' to motivate every employee we have to provide the quality communication basis.

The importance of formal as well as informal communication in the field of successful motivation of employees is the reason I chose this topic. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the writing of this paper, especially my friend Zrinka Terzin and the Mayor of the City of Vinkovci, Mladen Klarić, Ph.D., who let me do the survey.

### 1. WHY SHOULD THERE BE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

#### 1.1. Time of change

In the last decade, apart from economic and demographic changes, which influenced the cities as local government units, there are also changes in the way economy operates.

Competition among cities, regions and local governments that cover certain areas is getting bigger and bigger.

The cities are becoming more important in the political, economical and social sense. They are engaged in the foreign as well as domestic politics, they form alliances; compete with other cities in Croatia as well as in the EU.

The cities are trying to increase their role of managing, guiding, and controlling of economic and territorial processes in the scope of their activities in order to strengthen their economic basis and decrease the government budget dependence.

The city budget should be concentrated on attracting new investments, business organisations and entrepreneurs and it should rely on employed people who would find some kind of interest to stay in town instead of going elsewhere.

In order to successfully carry out all of these tasks a local government unit should improve human resource utilisation. It should be oriented towards making of such an administration that would qualitatively and quantitatively meet the needs of its citizens and have long-term objectives of insuring better life in the local community. The conducted research<sup>473</sup> shows that people generally do not

trust local governments: only 23% of examinees have confidence in local governments.

The cities (local government units) can hire professionals and consultants to implement their objectives but for a long-term solution the spirit of administration and its inner system should be changed. Therefore, an introduction of management and human resources management into local government units is essential.

It is important to say that in order to succeed in implementing of this objective each individual has to change his/her way of thinking and acting. The bosses and the employees are in this case equal. The bosses have to set an example decisively and firmly and the employees should follow. Otherwise, there would be no long-term results and the trust of the citizens would be gambled away.

Such kind of actions in the local government units should be a reflection of their sense of obligation towards the sources of their financing: citizens, voters, clients and taxpayers.

#### 1.2. The motivation of employees

Human motives are based on needs: conscious, unconscious or subconscious. Some needs such as need for water, air, food, sleep, and housing are considered primary. Some other needs like need for self-respect, love, power, freedom and entertainment can be considered secondary. Different people have different secondary needs. They may vary in intensity and time.

**Motivation** is general concept that refers to a group of instincts, wants, needs, wishes and demands. To say that the human resource management aspires after successful motivation of employees means that it does things to satisfy their wishes and demands to stimulate them to act in the spirit of the organisation.

People and their knowledge, their creative and developmental potential hold the place that once in the business world was held by the capital. People are becoming the main tools of competitiveness and the battle for the quality employees is getting stronger.

The indicator of how big an issue motivation is are many research papers and theories that deal with motivation: Maslow's, Aderfer's, Herzberger's, McClelland's, Atkinson's, Miner's and many others.

"This great interest in the problem of motivation basically has three reasons:

- improvement of labour productivity, efficiency and creativity
- improvement of quality of working hours spent in the organisations

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<sup>473</sup> SEE Public agenda Survey, Januar-February 2002, Institute for democracy and electoral assistance, 14.3.2002., str.43., Uzorak za Hrvatsku N=1010, PULS Split.

- strengthening of competitive ability and business efficiency of the organisation<sup>474</sup>

Different authors mention different factors of motivation: a challenging job, a possibility of success, responsibility, professional growth, promotion, recognition, salary, working conditions, job security, interpersonal relations, possibility of education, stimulation for the job good done, awards.

The same factors do not apply to each and every employee. Each employee has his/her own individual expectations and perception of the situation. Different people have different needs, wishes and desires and therefore act differently in the same situation. In order to secure the implementation of the right motivation model and approach one has to know the individual characteristics and expectations of the employee. This can be done by the means of well-placed formal and informal communication. Informal communication reveals the other side of the individual: his/her dreams, desires and aspirations. Everybody has a life outside their job: families, friends, hobbies, memories and dreams. What we need to remember is that they bring that life with them when they come to work, and it affects how they do their job.

Numerous research done lately show that the organisational climate within the business system influences the working motivation of the employees and their contentment. Indirectly it also affects the labour productivity and business performance.

## 2. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION OF THE CITY OF VINKOVCI – LOCAL GOVERNMENTS -

The importance and the purpose of existence of local governments is to satisfy and fulfil the general social needs of their citizens.

In order to complete this 'mission' any local government is supposed to employ capable and competent professionals who would do their jobs efficiently and conscientiously.

Another very important asset any local government should be based upon is **trust** between public services and the citizens.

The trust is *Conditio sine qua non* when we talk about communication. We can notice that there is a great communication gap between citizens and local government as well as higher levels of government, which is filled with distrust and lack of comprehension.

In such a distrustful climate there is no way we can deal with the problems the way they should be dealt with. Therefore, one of the primary tasks of any local government is to **regain the trust of its citizens!**

The first contact the citizens have with the local government are its employees. They are very important part of the system.

Although it's been ten years since local governments were established, not much has been done in the sphere of

human resources, which also reflects the quality of work of public sector.

With this questionnaire we tried to find out what would motivate the employees and what the quality of communication in the City of Vinkovci is.

### 2.1. The questionnaire

#### 2.1.1. Something about the contents of the questionnaire

In the questionnaire we used two types of questions. The open type is used to give the respondent the freedom to make suggestions and evaluate certain areas and the closed type is used for the simplicity of data elaboration and quantification.

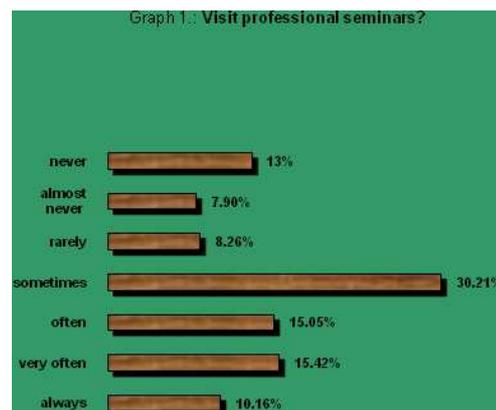
In order to avoid the negative halo-effect this questionnaire was done anonymously. The aim and the purpose were stated in the first part of the questionnaire.

#### 2.1.2. Let's view the results of the questionnaire

1. Do you visit professional seminars? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
always	very often	often	sometimes	rarely	almost never	never

Using marks 1 – 7 evaluate following issues

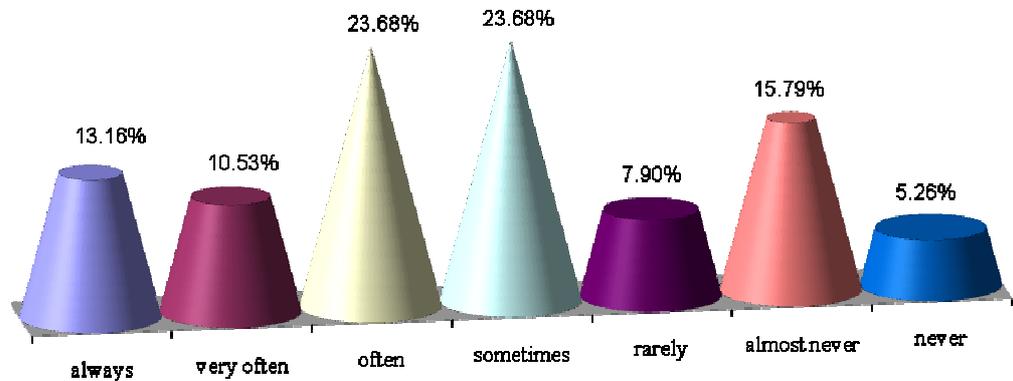


<sup>474</sup> Bahtjarević Šiber, F.: Management ljudskih potencijala, Golden marketing, Zagreb, 1999., str. 555-556.

The chart shows that 40, 63 % of the employees visit workshops on a regular basis while 59,37 % does it rarely.

2. Do you read trade magazines? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Graph 2.: Do you read trade magazines?



The answers to this question are alarming. Only 13,16 % of the employees always read trade magazines, 10,53% very often and 23, 68% often. It means that only 53,63% of the employees sometimes read magazines.

3. When dealing with a problem, whom do you consult?							
a) Books and journals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b) colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c) boss	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d) _____ (external experts)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Graph 3.: When dealing with a problem, whom do you consult?

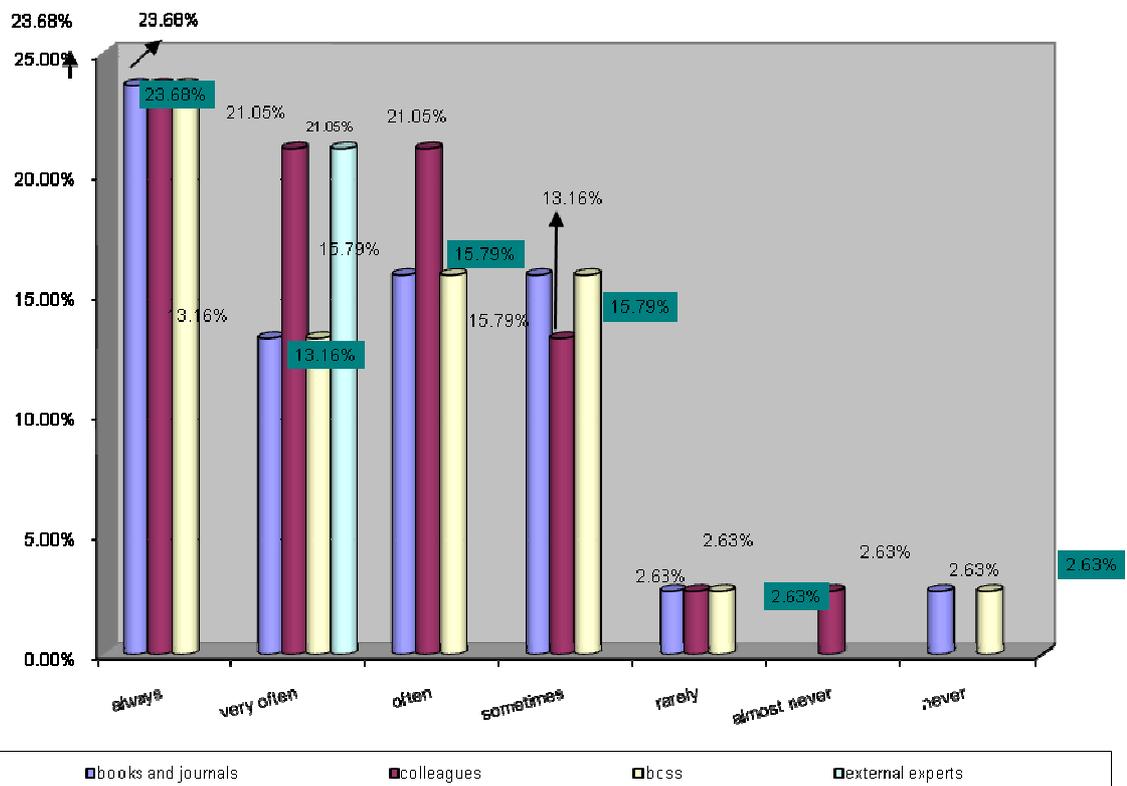


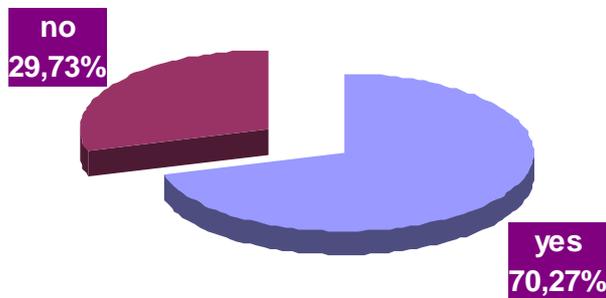
Table 1.: When dealing with a problem, whom do you consult?

<b>data in %</b>	<b>books and journals</b>	<b>colleagues</b>	<b>boss</b>	<b>external experts</b>
always	<b>23,68</b>	<b>23,68</b>	<b>23,68</b>	
very often	13,16	21,05	13,16	21,05
often	15,79	21,05	15,79	
sometimes	15,79	13,16	15,79	
rarely	2,63	2,63	2,63	
almost never	-	2,63	-	
never	<b>2,63</b>	-	<b>2,63</b>	
no answer	<b>26,32</b>	<b>15,08</b>	<b>26,32</b>	<b>78,95</b>

4. Would you like to work together with your colleagues to find some other solution to the problem?

yes                      no

Graph 4.: Work with others?

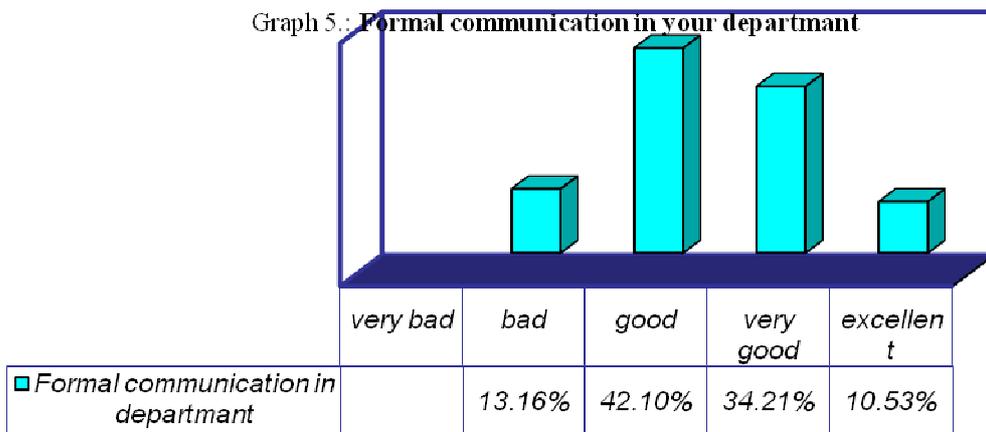


Using marks 1 – 5 evaluate following issues

1 – very bad      2 - bad      3 - good      4–very good      5– excellent

5. Formal (business) communication in your department      1 2 3 4 5

Graph 5.: Formal communication in your department

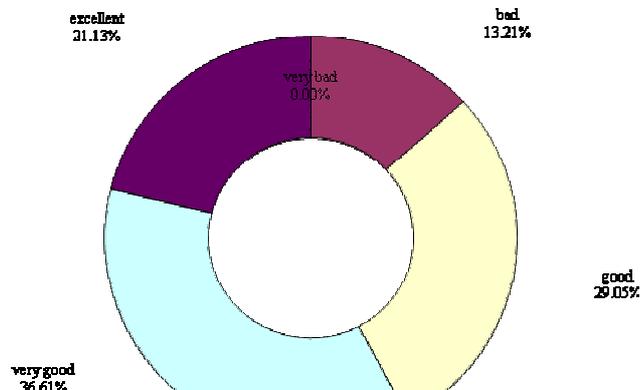


The chart shows that there is enough room for improvement of formal communication.

6. Informal (not connected to work) communication in your department.

1 2 3 4 5

Graph 6.: Informal communication in your department?



- What would you do to improve communication in your department?

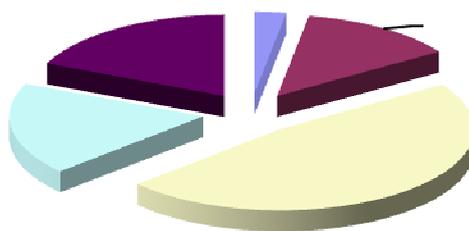
*Answer of employees:*

- equal division of labour (without protection of individual)
- better communication between the boss and the employees
- awaken the sense of belonging to the collective
- more sincere approach to one another
- a fair attitude of the bosses towards the employees, regarding the fact that not the same criteria are valid for every employee
- nothing, that's why nothing is changing

7. Formal (business) communication of your department with other departments

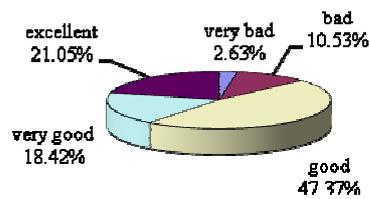
1 2 3 4 5

Graph 7.: Formal communication with other department?



8. Informal (not connected to work) communication of your department with other departments 1 2 3 4 5

Graph 8.: Informal communication with other department?



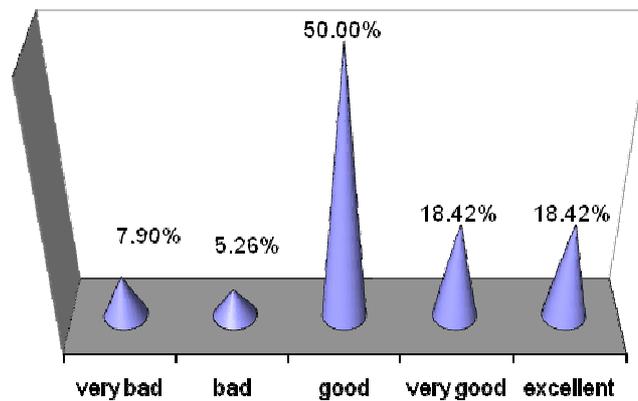
The thesis that informal communication influences the quality of formal communication a great deal is reflected in our survey.

Table 2.: Connection between formal and informal communication?

data in %	FORMAL COMMUNICATION	INFORMAL COMMUNICATION
1	18	21
2	18	18
3	48	47
4	13	11
5	3	3

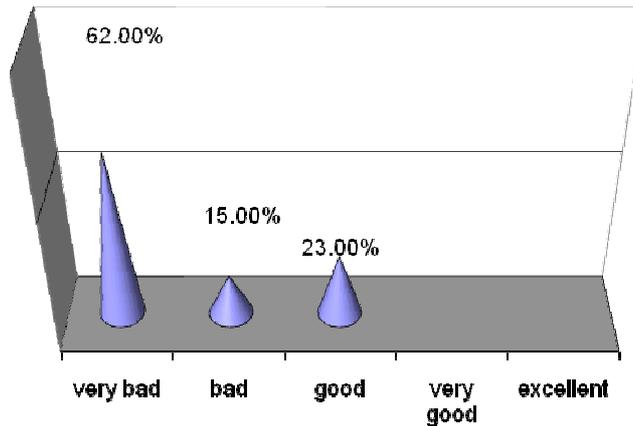
9. The relation subordinate – boss (regarding the position the employee holds) 1 2 3 4 5

Graph 9.: The relation subordinate – boss?



10. How do you like the policy of stimulation of the employees? 1 2 3 4 5

Graph 10.: The policy of stimulation of the employees?



- If you had the opportunity to influence the issues 5-7 what would be your suggestion to improve them?

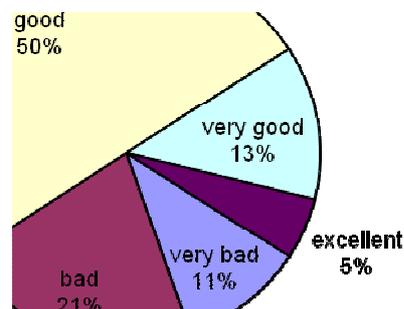
Answer of employees:

- equal division of labour
- open approach – in any situation you can say what you think and ask questions about anything that interests you
- break the vision of bad intentions
- staff meetings – exchange of information needed for the business organisation to function successfully and possibility of introducing some problems to the bosses
- team work
- more time spent together outside the organisation
- improve the communication among the bosses in order to prevent the employees be exposed to unpleasant situations
- introduce the policy of stimulation and fines
- do away with the motto 'It's not my job', 'do just what you have to do, nothing more and nothing less'

11. How would you rate the exchange of information needed for solving the problems?

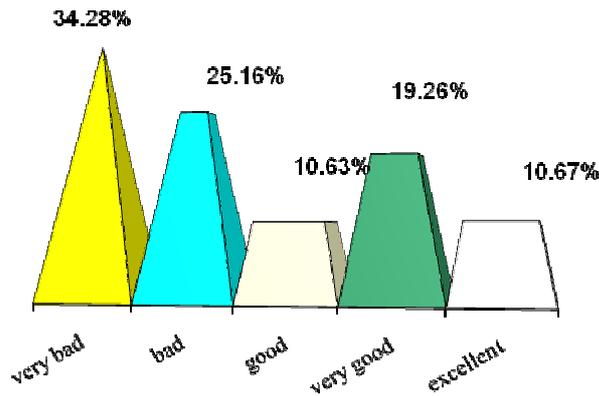
1	2	3	4	5
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Graph 11.: The exchange of information needed for solving the problems?



12. How would you rate the policy of methodical education of employees? 1 2 3 4 5

Graph 12.: The policy of methodical education of employees?



- Are there any positive shifts in the relation of the bosses towards the employees?

Answer of employees:

- some bosses try to introduce changes, but it is not easy to get rid of bad habits
- no, there are not because no one cares

### 3. WHAT TO DO?

The analysis of the present situation indicates that there are some elements that could influence the motivation of employees but not enough to achieve the desired result. One of the key problems is communication.

The existing motivation program should be extended through:

- systematic and continuous education through professional seminars and courses
- providing of trade journals
- encouraging of employees to learn by securing days off for preparation of exams, paying fees and giving scholarships
- setting goals, tasks and expectations loud and clear
- improve the communication among the bosses in order to prevent the employees be exposed to unpleasant situations
- team-work
- encouraging creativity
- acknowledgement for a work well done
- computer courses
- introduction of recompensations and fines
- introduction of obligatory staff-meetings (bosses and employees)
- equal division of labour
- trips and getting together

However, to be able to constantly effect the increase of motivation we have to know and analyse what the employees want because the needs and desires of people are dynamic category that continuously changes and develops. Another thing we should pay attention to is the improvement of attitude of managers towards the employees. They have to influence the motivation of employees not only when they are expected to (various activities), but also during everyday communication. In these daily contacts they have to show the employees that they appreciate them as individuals and workers; that they

are interested in what they do, the way they develop and the problems they might have, both, at work as well as in their personal lives. They have to value their abilities and knowledge. A good manager should: share his/her knowledge with the employees, notice their abilities and interests, harmonize individual potentials and business demands, demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills, appreciate and encourage new ideas and opinions, assign new and more challenging tasks. All of this is a constant process of motivation of people whom you work with. Therefore, the role of a manager is of crucial importance for the motivation of people they lead. They have to become aware of the need for some changes that have to start at the top and spread all the way to the bottom. Otherwise, there won't be any results in the long run and the effort and means invested would be wasted.

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