

ZN WSH Zarządzanie 2014 (2), s. 167-179

Oryginalny artykuł naukowy
Original Article

Źródła finansowania publikacji: środki własne Autora

Authors' Contribution:

- (A) Study Design (projekt badania)
- (B) Data Collection (zbieranie danych)
- (C) Statistical Analysis (analiza statystyczna)
- (D) Data Interpretation (interpretacja danych)
- (E) Manuscript Preparation (redagowanie opracowania)
- (F) Literature Search (badania literaturowe)

mgr Magdalena Kot-Radojewska ^{DF}
Wyższa Szkoła Biznesu w Dąbrowie Górniczej

**FLEXIBLE FORMS OF EMPLOYMENT AS A FACTOR
OF INCREASE IN ENTERPRISE COMPETITIVENESS**

**ELASTYCZNE FORMY ZATRUDNIENIA
JAKO CZYNNIK WZROSTU KONKURENCYJNOŚCI
PRZEDSIĘBIORSTWA**

Summary: The common phenomenon of contemporary world is the continuous competition between enterprises in a constantly changing global economy. Hence, the proper formulation of competitive strategy is of a significant importance for the enterprise not only to grow but also to remain on the market. Being competitive in these days means to be flexible in adapting to a constantly changing environment. One of the most popular examples of enterprise flexibility on the Polish market is the flexibility of employment which provides enterprises with numerous and measurable benefits. The purpose of this article is to present the potential of application of flexible forms of employment and working time, as well as to focus on benefits these instruments provide for in building enterprise competitiveness.

Key words: competitiveness, global economy, flexible forms of employment, flexible working hours, staff employment, other forms of employment, knowledge, intellectual capacity

Streszczenie: Specyfiką współczesnych czasów jest ciągle konkurowanie przedsiębiorstw w warunkach stale zmieniającej się gospodarki globalnej. Stąd właściwe formułowanie strategii konkurencyjnej jest niezwykle istotne nie tylko dla rozwoju, ale i przetrwania przedsiębiorstw. Konkurujące na współczesnym rynku przedsiębiorstwo musi się cechować elastycznością w adaptowaniu się do ciągle zmieniającego się otoczenia. Jednym z coraz bardziej popularnych na polskim rynku przejawów elastyczności organizacji jest elastyczność zatrudnienia, która przynosi przedsiębiorstwom liczne, mierzalne korzyści. Celem artykułu jest zaprezentowanie możliwych do wykorzystania elastycznych form zatrudnienia oraz czasu pracy, a także wskazanie korzyści, jakie one przynoszą w budowaniu przewagi konkurencyjnej przedsiębiorstw.

Słowa kluczowe: konkurencyjność, gospodarka globalna, elastyczne formy zatrudnienia, elastyczny czas pracy, zatrudnienie pracownicze, zatrudnienie niepracownicze, wiedza, kapitał intelektualny

Introduction

For modern enterprises, functioning in the conditions of global economy is connected with a number of difficulties and complications, that significantly affect their activities, prospects for their development and their evaluation. One of the key characteristics of market economy is turbulence of enterprises, i.e. changeability and complexity of the environment in which enterprises function. It is expressed in, among other things, increasing mutual dependence between an enterprise and its environment, increased complexity of this environment, increasingly fast introduction of innovations in enterprises' products and services, and growing number and diversity of the elements of an enterprise, which makes prediction of their impact on effects of activity increasingly difficult.¹ Functioning of organisations is also affected by the huge dynamics of globalisation processes and very fast technological progress. Economy all over the world is now subject to drastic changes, and companies - in order to operate effectively - have to understand these changes and adapt themselves to them.

One of the most important factors influencing the functioning of enterprises in a changing economy is competitiveness. An enterprise has a competitive advantage if it has a better position on the market compared to its competitors. Thanks to competitive advantage, an enterprise operates better and achieves better results.²

There are a number of factors influencing increase in an enterprise's competitiveness. They include material and financial resources possessed by an organisation. A company's competitive advantage is also built by using employees' key competences and knowledge, creating intellectual capital and organisational culture, appropriate management style and creating products, services and innovations that stand out on the market. Of huge importance is also flexibility and adaptability to changing conditions of functioning of an enterprise, to customers' needs and requirements, as well as analysis of activities taken by the competition and proper reaction to them.

One of significant elements of building competitive advantage is increasing work effectiveness, which is expressed, among other things, in greater flexibility in choosing forms of employment and organisation of working time. Thus, more and more companies decide to

¹ L. Witek, J. Adamczyk, *Marketing międzynarodowy*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Rzeszowskiej, Rzeszów 2008, p. 27.

² B. Godziszewski, *Zasobowe uwarunkowania strategii przedsiębiorstwa*, UMK, Toruń 2001, p. 59.

reduce the number of permanent employees and use temporary workers. The aim of this paper is to present flexible forms of employment and working time as important factors in increasing enterprises' competitiveness in the modern economy.

1. Meaning and importance of flexibility in an enterprise

One of sources of an enterprise's competitiveness is appropriate management of time, i.e. ability to react to market changes faster than competitors, ability to act in a company in a longer time horizon.³ Competitive potential of an enterprise includes many elements of its structure, such as: human capital, i.e. quality of the staff, qualifications and knowledge of employees, their creativity, enterprise, work productivity, as well as organisational resources. i.e. decision-making system, size of an enterprise, organisational structure.⁴ Of key importance is here flexibility of the elements mentioned. Flexibility of an organisation is a characteristic that to a significant extent determines its adaptability to changing external and internal conditions of functioning and is considered to be one of the main elements of competitiveness of economic systems.

Flexibility can be defined as ability to adapt to changing conditions, to quickly react to changes, initiate and make changes to adapt to new situations. It opposes rigidity and thereby allows for improvement of functionality of a system.⁵ Thus, flexibility of an enterprise impacts effectiveness of functioning of that enterprise, refers to its ability to quickly respond to changes of market, technological, economic, political and other conditions, etc.

The concept of flexibility has for a long time been examined by economists. In 1990s, determinants of higher unemployment in European countries compared to the United States were analysed. It was then that a relationship between flexibility and unemployment rate was identified.⁶ It was pointed out that the bigger flexibility of enterprises in a country, the lower unemployment rate in a given area.

On the one hand, flexibility is determined economically, on the other hand - socially. Apart from increasing competitiveness of functioning of an enterprise, flexibility is also conducive to reconciling varied interests of employees.

When examining the concept of flexibility, we should distinguish its several basic dimensions.⁷ The first dimension is multi-sidedness - this dimension refers to the scope and capabilities of an enterprise, and is measured by diversity of performed or possible to be performed tasks as well as ways of performing these tasks. Another dimension is temporal aspect, which refers to the pace of reacting to changing requirements of the environment and internal elements of an enterprise. The last dimension - economic constituent - refers to effectiveness of adaptation to performing changing tasks.

³ W. Szymański (red.), *Przedsiębiorstwo, rynek, konkurencja*, Wydawnictwo SGH, Warszawa 1995, p. 156.

⁴ E. Skawińska, *Konkurencyjność przedsiębiorstw-nowe podejście*, PWN, Warszawa - Poznań 2002, p. 65.

⁵ M. Gableta, *Człowiek i praca w zmieniającym się przedsiębiorstwie*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej im. Oskara Langego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2003, p. 17.

⁶ B. Skowron-Mielnik, *Formy organizacji pracy jako czynnik kreowania zatrudnienia*, [in:] *Rynek pracy w Polsce na progu XXI wieku*, red. R. Horodeński, C. Sadowska-Snarska, Instytut Pracy i Praw Socjalnych i Wyższa Szkoła Ekonomiczna w Białymstoku, Warszawa - Białystok 2003, p. 218.

⁷ S. Lis, K. Santarek, S. Strzelczak, *Organizacja elastycznych systemów produkcyjnych*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 1994, p. 19.

Academic literature usually distinguishes four types of flexibility:⁸

- employment flexibility (numerical),
- flexibility of working time,
- flexibility of salary (financial),
- flexibility of labour supply.

Flexibility of employment can be defined as ability to quickly adjust the number and qualifications profile of the staff employed in an enterprise to changing conditions and needs, such as volume of output, demand for services, salaries, work productivity and situation on the labour market. What is most important for flexibility of employment is the degree of implementation of untypical forms of employment, which allow the staff employed to be more effectively used in a situation of changing conditions and requirements of an organisation's activity. Introduction of flexible forms of employment is the result of, among other things, unstable economic conditions and competitive pressure. Therefore, employers more and more often go away from the traditional model of employment - working based on an employment agreement for an indefinite period of time, with established working hours, according to common standards of work – and instead introduce cheaper and more flexible models.

Flexibility of working time means varied forms of its organisation which meet work requirements in an enterprise and employees' expectations. Making working time flexible is expressed in going away from typical labour standards, i.e. working hours evenly distributed throughout a week. Thus, it may refer to variable working hours, individual distribution of working time, irregular working hours, etc.

Flexibility of salaries refers to adaptation of salary level and differentials to the current situation on the labour market, use of changeable ways of remuneration for work, remuneration for completed tasks and individualized remuneration.

Flexibility of labour supply is both susceptibility of the level of labour supply to a change in its determinants, e.g. salaries, and adaptability of labour supply to the changing structure of labour demand. The second dimension refers to mobility of labour force: professional, qualifications-related, spatial and across organisations. Professional and qualifications-related mobility is employees' ability to improve their qualifications, develop professionally or gain different qualifications. Spatial mobility refers to employees' ability to „follow the job”, i.e. move out from areas of higher unemployment rate to those with lower unemployment. Mobility across organisations is expressed in employees' ability to change jobs.

Of these four types of flexibility, the first two are key to increasing competitiveness of an enterprise, i.e. employment flexibility and flexibility of working time.

2. Flexible forms of employment

In recent years, the traditional forms of employment have been abandoned for more flexible ones. Due to rapid processes of globalisation, also on the labour market, the most important challenge for an enterprise is to increase work productivity. Flexibility, including employment flexibility, is thus a key characteristic of the labour market and a strategy of managing human resources. A flexible model of employment is reflected in the fact that em-

⁸ E. Kwiatkowski, *Elastyczność popytu na pracę w teoriach rynku pracy*, [in:] *Elastyczne formy zatrudnienia i organizacji pracy a popyt na pracę w Polsce*, Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, Warszawa 2003, p. 20.

ployment is not based on an employment contract for indefinite period of time. Also working time may be different than in the case of full time employment, and the place of work may be other than the head office of an employer (e.g. work at home). The place of work may be indicated by an employee himself. In a flexible model of employment, subordination of employees to an employer is replaced by respect of autonomy and responsibility for independent work (employees do not work under constant control of an employer).

Flexible forms of employment can be divided into: employee employment, work not based on an employment relationship, and other employment outside the above mentioned categories.⁹

Employee employment is the classical employment relationship regulated by the labour code. It includes: work on the basis of contracts for a specified period of time, such as: contract for a probation period, contract for a determined period of time, substitution contract, contract for the period of performing a specified work, part-time employment, making an employee available for another employer free of charge - employee leasing, temporary work, on-call duty and telework. Work not based on an employment relationship refers to hiring natural persons, who are not entrepreneurs, on the basis on a civil contract for services. The most common forms include: mandate contract, contract to perform a specified work or task, agency agreement, management contract and outwork. The other forms of employment include: outsourcing (permanent contracting out of provision of services), self-employment and job rotation.

The first type of the contracts listed above - contract for a probation period - is intended to allow an employer to check whether the competences of an employee are appropriate for a given post. An employee, in turn, has a chance to check working conditions in practice, learn about the character of work, get to know the team, find out what the organisational climate in the company is - he/she can thus decide whether the conditions offered by the employer are favourable to him/her. Such a contract is concluded for a pre-defined period of time, however not longer than 3 months. One employer may conclude only one contract for a probation period with a specific employee. It can be dissolved by mutual agreement of the parties or upon prior notice.¹⁰ A contract for a determined period of time means that it specifies the date on which the contract terminates. The use of contracts for a determined period of time is restricted by a provision that prohibits an employer from concluding more than two such contracts with the same employee, as the third contract automatically obtains the status of a contract for indefinite period of time, if the interval between terminating the previous contract and concluding the next one is not longer than 1 month.¹¹ A special case of such a contract is a substitution contract, which can be concluded for a period of excused absence of an employee. Such a contract is terminated when the employee being substituted returns to work.¹²

Another type of contracts - contract for the period of performing a specified work is terminated at the moment such work or task is completed (e.g. finishing construction works). Thus, the moment of contract termination is not precisely established. Such a contract may be concluded repeatedly, and the third contract does not become by operation of law a con-

⁹ Z. Hajn, *Elastyczność popytu na pracę w Polsce. Aspekty prawne*, [in:] *Elastyczne formy zatrudnienia i organizacji pracy a popyt na pracę w Polsce*, Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, Warszawa 2003, pp. 59-80.

¹⁰ Z. Niedbała (red.), *Prawo pracy*, Wydawnictwo Prawnicze LexisNexis, Warszawa 2007, p. 87.

¹¹ Ustawa z dnia 26 czerwca 1974 r. Kodeks pracy, Dz.U. z 1998 r. Nr 21, poz. 94; ost. zm. w Dz.U. z 2013 r. poz. 1028; Kodeks pracy, stan prawny na 1 stycznia 2014 r., *Ubezpieczenia i prawo pracy*, nr 2 (356), 2014, p. 11.

¹² Z. Hajn, *Elastyczność popytu na pracę...*, op. cit., p. 62.

tract for an indefinite period of time.¹³ It may be thus used repeatedly without the necessity of employing an employee on a permanent basis.

Part-time employment refers to work for 30%, 50%, 60%, 75% or 90% of the full-time unit.¹⁴

Part-time work is especially attractive for people who have to reconcile career with family - it allows an employee to adjust the length of working time to his/her individual preferences. Special forms of part-time work include: job sharing (the same position is shared by two or more people), work sharing (sharing work, usually in a situation of economic slowdown, as an alternative for employment reduction) and weekend job.

Another non-standard form of employment is employee leasing, i.e. leasing employees. It involves concluding a sub-contract between an employer, employee and an institution that leases an employee. Such contracts are concluded for full-time or part-time jobs for the period of completing a specified task (e.g. expert evaluation) Once the task has been completed, the employee that has been leased returns to the state of "waiting."¹⁵ This is a perfect way to limit costs of a business - it allows a company to borrow an expert to perform a specific task without the necessity of conducting costly, often long recruitment, or employing an employee for a longer period.

One of most popular flexible forms of employment is temporary work. It has a trilateral character - a temporary work agency hires a candidate for work, and then - based on a contract for appointment - makes him/her available to another entity, i.e. an enterprise that controls the work of such a worker. A worker usually performs work that is seasonal or temporary in character. Over a period of 3 years, a temporary worker may be employed by one employer for a period of up to 12 months. The only possibility of prolonging this period to 36 months is when a temporary worker on a continuous basis performs the tasks of a full-time employee who, for various justified reasons (e.g. paternal leave) is absent.¹⁶ A temporary worker employed based on an employment contract has the same rights as other employees. i.e. right to holiday leave, sick leave, free medical care, period of notice, or salary that is not lower than that of an employee at a similar post. By making the employment structure more flexible, temporary work allows a company to optimise the costs of creating jobs (especially seasonal and short-term ones) and to increase its competitiveness and concentration on pursuing its main objectives. A flexible form of employment is also on-call duty, where a worker can be called at any moment to do work.¹⁷ As this form of employment involves large uncertainty for a worker, there is a tendency to define minimum and maximum dependence and obligations of an employer and an employee in a contract. For an employer, this form is very convenient, as he/she can call an employee to work only when he/she really needs the employee.

Telework is performed outside a company by means of modern information and telecommunication technologies. It may be full-time or part-time work and be based on various legal bases. In this case, it is an employee that decides where and when he/she will perform his/her work duties. A source of development of telework was widespread use of the Internet

¹³ Z. Niedbała (red.), *Prawo pracy...*, op. cit., p. 83.

¹⁴ E. Kryńska, *Wykorzystanie niestandardowych form zatrudnienia i organizacji pracy w przedsiębiorstwach polskich*, [in:] *Rynek pracy w Polsce na progu XXI wieku. Aspekty makroekonomiczne i regionalne*, red. R. Horodeński, C. Sadowska-Snarska, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych oraz Wyższej Szkoły Ekonomicznej w Białym Stoku, Białystok – Warszawa 2003, p. 144.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 145.

¹⁶ J. Wiśniewski, *Prawne aspekty pracy tymczasowej*, Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Naukowego Organizacji i Kierownictwa oraz Stowarzyszenia Wyższej Użyteczności „Dom Organizatora”, Bydgoszcz – Toruń 2007, p. 43-44.

¹⁷ A. Chobot, *Nowe formy zatrudnienia. Kierunki rozwoju i nowelizacji*, PWN, Warszawa 1997, p. 150.

and development of information and communication technologies.¹⁸ Telework significantly reduces costs of functioning of an enterprise. An employer saves, among other things, on office space, office equipment, office supplies, and utilities. He can also optimise wages costs by introducing remuneration for a completed task, not hours spent in a company. Moreover, an enterprise is less affected by employee absence, e.g. due to illness, as an employee is often able, despite temporary indisposition, to work at home. Employers also spend less on recruiting and training new workers due to the fact that teleworkers are often better organised, more focused and more effective.

One of forms of work not based on employment relationship is a mandate contract in which an ordering party orders performance of a specified activity by a performer. It may be performed against payment or not. This contract relies on due diligence, meaning that it doesn't have to lead to a specified result. Concluding contracts of this type allows lowering labour costs incurred by an employer - he/she is only obliged to pay health insurance contributions, sickness insurance is not obligatory. Tax deductible costs in the case of such contracts are 20%, or 50%, and the tax is 18% of the basic salary.¹⁹ A contract to perform a specified work or task is a contract based on a result; the performer undertakes to produce and deliver a specified work by himself. Remuneration is usually paid after the work is performed, although the contract may provide otherwise. Such a contract is advantageous for both the parties, as it is not burdened with social insurance and health insurance contributions (unless the performer provides work for his/her employer). Moreover, when the work has the character of creative activity, high tax deductible costs may be used - 20% or 50%.²⁰

In an agency agreement an agent undertakes to constantly act as an agent within the scope of his/her business activity (it is thus a form of self-employment) or to conclude contracts with customers for and on behalf of the principal. An agent receives remuneration (commission) for his/her activities. Thus, this agreement refers to provision of agency services.²¹ A management contract is "(...) unanimous declaration of will by two parties where one party - the person employed based on a management contract - undertakes to manage an enterprise, whereas the second party - owner of the employing company - undertakes to pay fee for the provided work."²²

Outwork (cottage industry) is on the one hand similar to work on the basis of a contract for specified work or task, and on the other hand - employment contract. A worker is not subject to instructions of an employer. On the other hand, he/she has a range of employee's rights (social security, health insurance, sickness benefit, holiday leave, and paternal leave), but remuneration is received for the work performed.²³

Flexibility of employment is also expressed in such forms of employment as outsourcing, self-employment and job rotation.

¹⁸ T. Galewski, *Szanse i zagrożenia rozwoju rynku telepracy w Polsce*, [in:] *Rynek pracy w Polsce. W dobie integracji europejskiej i globalizacji*, red. M. Noga, M.K. Stawicka, CeDeWu Sp. z o.o., Warszawa 2009, p. 93.

¹⁹ Z. Niedbała (red.), *Prawo pracy...*, op. cit., p. 103-105.

²⁰ *Elastyczne formy zatrudnienia. Zapewnienie odpowiednich kompetencji konsultantów Punktów Konsultacyjnych Krajowego Systemu Usług (PK KSU) – szkolenia i działania pomocnicze*, Warszawa 2010, p. 27.

²¹ Z. Hajn, *Elastyczność popytu na pracę...*, op. cit., p. 77.

²² I. Karkus, P. Szulczewski, *Bankier.pl, Inne formy zatrudnienia*, 2011, <http://www.vat.pl/pracownicy-i-zus/inne-formy-zatrudnienia/kontrakt-menedzerski--inne-formy-zatrudnienia-7379/> [access: 25.02.2014].

²³ Z. Niedbała (red.), *Prawo pracy...*, op. cit., pp. 109-114.

In outsourcing, specified tasks of an enterprise are performed by other enterprises. Thus, an employer transfers certain tasks outside the parent company.²⁴ This most often refers to accounting, IT and training services. Outsourcing is one of popular activities taken by companies to improve their competitive position. On the one hand, it allows an enterprise to concentrate on its core business, and on the other hand - to lower business costs. An advantage of outsourcing some areas of functioning of an enterprise is undoubtedly possibility of using the experience of an outsourcing company, which has performed many similar operations, has necessary resources and very large know-how. The fundamental issue is to appropriately identify the processes that can be performed by an external company. Then an enterprise can count on actual reduction of the costs of operational activity, increased security and pace and quality of the processes performed.

Self-employment refers to performing work, providing services as part of own business activity. Provision of services to an employer by a self-employed is usually very advantageous for the former, as it relieves it from all typical obligations of an employer. Thus, both these forms are conducive to lowering of employment costs.²⁵

Flexible forms of employment are increasingly popular among employers, due to lower labour costs than in the case of full-time employment, greater freedom in adapting the level of employment to the conditions in which an enterprise is functioning and increased competitiveness of an enterprise. Among other advantages of using atypical forms of employment, we should mention their impact on reduction of unemployment, and more effective compatibility of work and family life. Naturally, there are also threats connected with using flexible forms of employment. First of all, some of these forms are perceived as worse due to the lack of benefits typical of full-time employment such as health care or paid holiday leaves. This, in turn, may lead to weaker loyalty of employees, motivation to perform tasks or involvement in fulfilling duties. On the other hand, however, employees who work on a flexible basis may show even greater motivation to work than permanent employees so as to be employed as long as possible or be offered a more stable form of employment. Thus, of importance is undoubtedly appropriate approach of managers to flexible workers and individual treatment of such workers. Among the threats to employees, there is concern about abuses of flexible workers on the part of an employer due to lack of effective protection from various types of abuses. Among employees there is still view that only full-time employment with a contract for indefinite period of time is secure. Despite widespread use of flexible forms of employment all over the world, full-time employment is still very popular in Polish enterprises, which makes it difficult for them to adapt to changing labour market and labour demand.

3. Flexible working time

Discussion about flexibility of working time should be started from the definition of the term of working time. The Labour Code defines working time as “the time when an employee is available to an employer at place of employment or other place designated to perform work.”²⁶

²⁴ Z. Jacukowicz, *Kompleksowe zarządzanie pracą*. Ośrodek Doradztwa i Doskonalenia Kadr sp. z o.o., Gdańsk 2004, pp. 58-59.

²⁵ Z. Hajn, *Elastyczność popytu na pracę...*, op. cit., p. 79-80.

²⁶ Z. Niedbała (red.), *Prawo pracy...*, op. cit., p. 215.

Making working time flexible means establishing it in such a way that allows the parties of employment relationship (employer and employees) to adapt it to their needs. Naturally, making working time more flexible has to be compliant with the existing provisions of the labour law.

Flexible working time is defined as such form and distribution of working time that is different from the standard working time. Standard working time is understood as time that corresponds with full-time employment, with 35-40 hours a week distributed over five days a week. This schedule is not changed and work is performed at day.²⁷

Flexibility of working time is expressed in such forms as: part-time work, changeable working time, changeability of the time of starting and finishing work, compressed working week, work in two-man teams, job sharing, work-sharing, work at home and telework.²⁸ Naturally, the choice of a specific form depends on an enterprise, its specificity, demand for its products or services.

On 23 August 2013, an amendment to the Labour Code came into force, introducing, among other things, changeable working time and 12-month reference periods in Poland. The aim of the changes introduced was to guarantee the parties of an employment relationship a wider margin of discretion with regard to the organisation of working time

The introduction of longer reference periods is particularly important for making working time more flexible. The reference period is time during which it is established whether the time worked is within the norm or the norm has been exceeded.²⁹ The longer the reference period, the greater possibilities of an employer in terms of using flexible working time. The changes in the labour law extended the reference period from 4 to 12 months, if such extension is justified for objective, technical or work organisation reasons. New principles of calculation and distribution of working time may be introduced in a company in a collective bargaining agreement or agreement with trade unions, or with representatives of employees. An employer has to report the introduction of these solutions to the National Labour Inspectorate within five days. The amendment also allows use of work schedules upon an individual request of an employee, regardless of the arrangements with trade unions or representation of workers.

The aim of the introduction of a longer reference period is better organisation of working time and increased effectiveness in employers' recording of the time actually worked by employees. This is another very important mechanism that allows an employer to react to changing economic situation in a flexible way.

Changeable working time, in turn, means that an employee chooses what time he/she starts and finishes work, respecting the general number of hours of work. He/she also should be available to an employer at workplace in pre-defined so-called contact hours. Employers have two possibilities of using changeable working time. They either set a time interval during which an employee has to arrive at work (e.g. between 7 and 9 a.m.) - then the time an employee finishes work depends on what time he/she started it, or they agree to establish work schedules according to which an employee will start work at different times on different days. It is however important to maintain the daily number of hours of work, which is 8 hours.

The previous provisions made it difficult to use changeable working time due to the necessity of paying for overtime in the case of exceeding the so-called daily working time limit.

²⁷ Z. Jacukowicz, *Kompleksowe zarządzanie pracą ...*, op. cit., p. 112.

²⁸ M. Gableta, *Człowiek i praca...*, op. cit., p. 122.

²⁹ Z. Hajn, *Elastyczność popytu na pracę...*, op. cit., p. 91.

Currently, the necessity of paying for overtime no longer exists, which may lead to lowering of costs of functioning of an enterprise. Changeable working time is intended to keep the Polish economy competitive, and allow companies to survive in difficult economic conditions.

Changeable times of starting and finishing work mean that different employees or employee groups start and finish work at different times. If an employee agrees the time of starting work with an employer, it cannot be changed during a certain time, e.g. a month.³⁰

In contrast, compressed working time refers to distribution of the normal, weekly number of hours of work over a smaller number of days. This system allows reduction of costs connected with paying for overtime, and gives employees more free time. For example, an employee may work 10 hours four days a week or 12 hours 3 days a week.³¹

An employer who applies flexible working time may avoid dismissals of employees during worse economic situation or in the period of difficulties in an enterprise's functioning. This lack of necessity to reduce employment allows a company to keep its key, independent employees. This in turn may lower costs of recruitment, selection and training of new employees in a situation when it is necessary to increase employment. What's also important, flexible working time allows employees to effectively reconcile work with private life, where by an enterprise is perceived as a socially responsible, stable employer.

Using flexible working time may lead to reduction of the costs of functioning of an enterprise and better adaptation of the state and structure of employment to its current needs. It also allows an enterprise to operate longer hours.

All forms of using flexible working time are not only conducive to an increase in the competitiveness of Polish enterprises, countering unemployment, but they also are an effective tool for managing human resources and improving working conditions as a response to employees' needs and expectations.

Summary

Organisations - in order to effectively function in the conditions of a global economy - have to be characterised by ability to quickly take decisions and introduce changes, in other words - they have to be flexible. Flexible organisational structures are those that can effectively function in the conditions of relative changeability of their constituents. In contrast to those static, they are characterised by the fact that a change, expressed by a reaction to external or internal factors, may also take place during taking operational activities, without necessity of withholding them.³²

Flexibility is undoubtedly one of the elements of building competitive edge of enterprises. Competitiveness reflects a company's potential, skills, and capabilities, ensuring advantage over other entities operating in the same sector or industry. Competitiveness is a multifaceted feature of an enterprise, which both results from external characteristics and is connected with ability to adapt to changes and transformations taking place in the environment. It is

³⁰ *Elastyczne formy pracy. Poradnik dla pracodawców*, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Ekonomicznej w Białymstoku, Białystok 2007, pp. 112-113.

³¹ A. Nehring, A. Francik, Z. Dacko-Pikiewicz, K. Szczepańska-Woszczyna, *Rynek pracy województwa śląskiego*, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Biznesu w Dąbrowie Górniczej, Dąbrowa Górnicza 2011, p. 12.

³² P. Grajewski, *Elastyczność i procesowość organizacji*, [in:] *Koncepcje zarządzania. Podręcznik akademicki*, red. M. Czerska, A.A. Szpitter, Wydawnictwo C.H. Beck Sp. z o. o., Warszawa 2010, p. 128.

a feature that refers to unique capabilities of an enterprise to take such activities that ensure stable and long-term development and contribute to building market value. A view that becomes popular is that more and more enterprises try to create competitive edge based on appropriate and effective use of the resources of knowledge and intellectual capital.³³ Flexibility of production (both material and non-material) forces cyclic, changeable availability and a more flexible approach to the issue of functioning of an enterprise, also in management of human resources. Here we can observe a phenomenon of moving away from the traditional model of work and employment. Full-time employment for an indefinite period of time reduces flexibility of a company and narrows down possibilities of management's reaction to changes occurring in the environment.

We should thus assume that the near future will see increasing process of flexible adaptation of the size and form of employment to changing market needs. This will lead to fast, simple and cheap conclusion and termination of employment relationship. Already today, many companies divide their employees into those that constitute the core of the company (strategic employees) and those that work on ad hoc basis based on flexible forms of employment and flexible working time. Using the so-called temporary labour force allows an enterprise to be more flexible and to create level of employment depending on the needs.³⁴ This makes it possible to relatively quickly form task forces and increase personnel mobility (ensure that the number and type of employees match employer's quantitative and qualitative demand for employees).

Undoubtedly, an enterprise that creates flexibility, also in the area of employment and working time, provides itself a chance to gain or strengthen its competitive position, and is thus likely to continue its activity and further develop. Flexibility of employment allows an enterprise to better cope with fluctuations of the economic situation and better respond to challenges of the market. It leads to faster adaptation to the market and has an influence on restructuring capabilities. Flexibility also makes an enterprise less susceptible to changes, especially rapid ones. Undoubtedly, employment flexibility increases effectiveness of attracting and maintaining valuable employees. It allows an enterprise to better adapt employment to its current needs and reduce costs of maintaining jobs. Moreover, flexibility of employment gives an employer much more freedom in defining and enforcing the rights and obligations of both employees and employer. It may also lead to greater motivation of employees to perform their tasks and lower absence, which is translated into higher productivity and effectiveness of work, and - as a consequence - building of a competitive edge of an enterprise.

Bibliography

Chobot A., *Nowe formy zatrudnienia. Kierunki rozwoju i nowelizacji*, PWN, Warszawa 1997.
Elastyczne formy pracy. Poradnik dla pracodawców, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Ekonomicznej w Białymstoku, Białystok 2007.

³³ W. Walczak, *Wiedza źródłem budowania przewag konkurencyjnych współczesnego przedsiębiorstwa*, [in:] E. Okoń-Horodyńska, R. Wisła (red.), *Kapitał intelektualny i jego ochrona*, Instytut Wiedzy i Innowacji, Warszawa 2009, pp. 219-229.

³⁴ S.P. Robbins, D.A. DeCenzo, *Podstawy zarządzania*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2002, pp. 114-115.

Elastyczne formy zatrudnienia. Zapewnienie odpowiednich kompetencji konsultantów Punktów Konsultacyjnych Krajowego Systemu Usług (PK KSU) – szkolenia i działania pomocnicze, Warszawa 2010.

Gableta M., *Człowiek i praca w zmieniającym się przedsiębiorstwie*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej im. Oskara Langego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2003.

Galewski T., *Szanse i zagrożenia rozwoju rynku telepracy w Polsce*, [w:] *Rynek pracy w Polsce. W dobie integracji europejskiej i globalizacji*, red. M. Noga, M.K. Stawicka, CeDeWu Sp. z o. o., Warszawa 2009.

Godziszewski B., *Zasobowe uwarunkowania strategii przedsiębiorstwa*, UMK, Toruń 2001.

Grajewski P., *Elastyczność i procesowość organizacji*, [w:] *Koncepcje zarządzania. Podręcznik akademicki*, red. M. Czernska, A.A. Szpitter, Wydawnictwo C.H. Beck Sp. z o.o., Warszawa 2010.

Hajn Z., *Elastyczność popytu na pracę w Polsce. Aspekty prawne*, [w:] *Elastyczne formy zatrudnienia i organizacji pracy a popyt na pracę w Polsce*, Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, Warszawa 2003.

Jacukowicz Z., *Kompleksowe zarządzanie pracą*, Ośrodek Doradztwa i Doskonalenia Kadr sp. z o.o., Gdańsk 2004.

Karkus I., Szulczewski P., *Bankier.pl, Inne formy zatrudnienia*, 2011, <http://www.vat.pl/pracownicy-i-zus/inne-formy-zatrudnienia/kontrakt-menedzerski--inne-formy-zatrudnienia-7379/> [dostęp: 25.02.2014].

Kryńska E., *Wykorzystanie niestandardowych form zatrudnienia i organizacji pracy w przedsiębiorstwach polskich*, [w:] *Rynek pracy w Polsce na progu XXI wieku. Aspekty makroekonomiczne i regionalne*, red. R. Horodeński, C. Sadowska-Snarska, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych oraz Wyższej Szkoły Ekonomicznej w Białym Stoku, Białystok – Warszawa 2003.

Kwiatkowski E., *Elastyczność popytu na pracę w teoriach rynku pracy*, [w:] *Elastyczne formy zatrudnienia i organizacji pracy a popyt na pracę w Polsce*, Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, Warszawa 2003.

Lis S., Santarek K., Strzelczak S., *Organizacja elastycznych systemów produkcyjnych*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 1994.

Nehring A., Francik A., Dacko-Pikiewicz Z., Szczepańska-Woszczyna K., *Rynek pracy województwa śląskiego*, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Biznesu w Dąbrowie Górniczej, Dąbrowa Górnicza 2011.

Niedbała Z. (red.), *Prawo pracy*, Wydawnictwo Prawnicze LexisNexis, Warszawa 2007.

Robbins S.P., DeCenzo D.A., *Podstawy zarządzania*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2002.

Skawińska E., *Konkurencyjność przedsiębiorstw – nowe podejście*, PWN, Warszawa – Poznań 2002.

Skowron-Mielnik B., *Formy organizacji pracy jako czynnik kreowania zatrudnienia*, [w:] *Rynek pracy w Polsce na progu XXI wieku*, red. R. Horodeński, C. Sadowska-Snarska, Instytut Pracy i Praw Socjalnych i Wyższa Szkoła Ekonomiczna w Białymstoku, Warszawa – Białystok 2003.

Szymański W. (red.), *Przedsiębiorstwo, rynek, konkurencja*, Wydawnictwo SGH, Warszawa 1995.

Ustawa z dnia 26 czerwca 1974 r. Kodeks pracy, Dz.U. z 1998 r. Nr 21, poz. 94; ost. zm. w Dz.U. z 2013 r., poz. 1028; Kodeks Pracy, stan prawny na 1 stycznia 2014 r., *Ubezpieczenia i prawo pracy*, Nr 2 (356)/2014.

Walczak W., *Wiedza źródłem budowania przewag konkurencyjnych współczesnego przedsiębiorstwa*, [w:] E. Okoń-Horodyńska, R. Wisła (red.), *Kapitał intelektualny i jego ochrona*, Instytut Wiedzy i Innowacji, Warszawa 2009.

Wiśniewski J., *Prawne aspekty pracy tymczasowej*, Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Naukowego Organizacji i Kierownictwa oraz Stowarzyszenia Wyższej Użyteczności „Dom Organizatora”, Bydgoszcz – Toruń 2007.

Witek L., Adamczyk J., *Marketing międzynarodowy*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Rzeszowskiej, Rzeszów 2008.

Nota o Autorze:

Magdalena Kot-Radojewska: socjolog, pedagog, absolwentka studiów podyplomowych w zakresie Zarządzania Kadrami i Doradztwa Zawodowego oraz studiów trenerskich, doktorantka w Wyższej Szkole Biznesu w Dąbrowie Górniczej, wykładowca, trener, Kierownik Akademickiego Biura Karier i Kształcenia Ustawicznego WSB, ekspert ds. ewaluacji w projektach unijnych, zastępca Redaktor Naczelnej wydawnictwa WSB „Nauka i Biznes”, autorka artykułów naukowych dotyczących zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi.

Information about the author:

Magdalena Kot-Radojewska, sociologist, teacher, graduate of the postgraduate studies in the field of human resource management and vocational counseling, graduate of coaching studies, PhD student in University of Dąbrowa Górnicza, lecturer, coach, manager of the Academic Career and Life-Long Learning Department, evaluation expert in EU projects, vice editor-in-chief in publishing "Nauka i Biznes", author of the scientific papers about human resource management.

Kontakt/Contact:

Magdalena Kot-Radojewska
Wyższa Szkoła Biznesu w Dąbrowie Górniczej
Ul. Cieplaka 1c
41-300 Dąbrowa Górnicza
mkot@wsb.edu.pl