

# Methods of an effective employee motivation

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## Abstract

In the perspective of our modern economic reality, one of the key resources of any organization is the human capital. This situation stems from the fact that within the framework of high market competition, the human resources are the primary element that creates value for the customer and builds a competitive edge. Business entities focus on activities that will enable them to acquire adequate human resources, as well as make employees display an appropriate level of work commitment, thus contributing to the achievement of the business goals assumed by a given entity. In order to achieve adequate work efficiency, institutions use incentive systems that constitute a set of elements designed to have a positive impact on the level of employee motivation. The indicated action is particularly important for the functioning of the contemporary organizations, because it affects the quality and efficiency of the work of an already acquired human capital.

This study presents the concept and essence of motivation, methods of motivating employees and the effectiveness of said methods. It also addresses an interesting aspect, namely the changes that have taken place on the labour market as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The objective of the article is to analyse the effectiveness of the impact of individual elements of the employee motivation system in contemporary organizations. The analysis conducted below compares the elements of the motivation system, taking into account the aspects of both financial and non-financial motivation, to determine which of these elements have the greatest impact on the increase in the level of employee motivation. The study also presents the methods of financial and non-financial motivation of employees that are currently used by employers in the face of changes taking place on the labour market, as well as the effectiveness of such methods. To achieve the assumed objective, an analysis of literature and secondary research were used.

**Keywords:** motivation, financial motivation, non-financial motivation, incentive system.

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## Introduction

Contemporary organizations are entities within which employees (human resources) co-function with each other to achieve the goals set by a given entity, that are most often specified as a part of the mission and vision of a given company<sup>1</sup>. The indicated assumptions are to be implemented within a specified period of time. This is possible when the institution has a plan containing specific elements, the use and implementation of which is aimed at achieving specific effects. Taking into account the specificity of the functioning of business entities, in order for the objectives to be achieved, it is necessary to make appropriate use of the human resources possessed by the organization, which in practice are the causative element of all activities undertaken by economic entities<sup>2</sup>.

The presented structure assumes that the ability of the organization to achieve strategic goals depends on the activities of a person who, as practice shows, generally does not take any challenges up unless directly obliged to implement them. Therefore, contemporary organizations have to use incentives that will make a given person (in this case an employee) effectively use their qualifications and professional skills. Such actions taken by employees allow the outcomes desired by a given organization to be achieved<sup>3</sup>.

A prerequisite for achieving the indicated situation is coexistence and mutual intertwining of incentives and motivation. Their occurrence determines the possibility of receiving stimuli by both parties, and thus building an agreement acceptable by either party (the organization and the employees) what allows to obtain the desired behaviours. The indicated stimuli are referred to as motivations aimed at satisfying needs that have their strictly defined order. In the case of human resources management that addresses the needs of employees, the indicated process is referred to as motivation. Possessing knowledge about the hierarchy of employees' needs, companies have the opportunity to create an effective incentive strategy, thanks to which the activities performed by employees contribute to the achievement of measurable success by a given entity<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, it can be concluded that in the context of the possibility of achieving the assumed business goals, it is necessary for the organization to take action aimed at the effective motivation of the employees.

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1. A. Andrzejczak, *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi*, Poznań, Wydawnictwo AE w Poznaniu, 1998, p. 5.
  2. A. Kościelniak, *Skuteczne motywowanie – klucz do sukcesu przedsiębiorstwa*, "Roczniki Ekonomiczne Kujawsko-Pomorskiej Szkoły Wyższej w Bydgoszczy" 2010, nr 3, p. 57.
  3. *Ibidem*, p. 58.
  4. *Ibidem*, p. 58.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the issues related to the methods of employees motivation, with particular emphasis on motivating during a pandemic, when there was a significant increase in the number of people performing their professional duties in a remote or hybrid form.

## The concept and essence of motivation

Among the processes related to the management of human resources in contemporary organizations, a key aspect is the transformation of the institution's resources into capital. This stems from the fact that the real value of a given company is dependent on human capital. As business practice shows, people are the most valuable component of any organization, determining the possibility of their market success. For such a situation to occur, a motivation process is necessary<sup>5</sup>.

Motivation has always had a significant impact on each individual, and made their actions meaningful. This situation has also not changed significantly in the modern, highly dynamic and competitive economy, in which the objectives are achieved by organizing an appropriate and effective influence over the employees. Therefore, it can be noted that the human factor is the most important, and at the same time the most valuable component of each organization, while in practice it is also an essential factor contributing to the possibility of market success of a given entity. For this purpose, it is necessary to adequately influence employees by motivating them, which contributes to the development of a level of motivation affecting the effective implementation of tasks and appropriate involvement in the tasks performed<sup>6</sup>.

In general, motivation is defined as a process of psychological regulation. It influences the dynamics of a person's behaviour, and also allows them to focus on achieving the selected goal. The process of motivation itself can be both conscious and unconscious<sup>7</sup>. In the literature on the subject, motivation is also referred to as a factor or group of factors and forces (which influence the triggering of the reaction chain), which begin with the sense of need that is felt by a given individual and

5. A. Miszczak, J. Walasek, *Wybrane czynniki motywujące pracowników do pracy w organizacji*, "Obronność – Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Zarządzania i Dowodzenia Akademii Obrony Narodowej" 2015, nr 1, p. 52.

6. *Ibidem*, p. 52.

7. PWN, *Motywacja*, [www.encyklopedia.pwn.pl](http://www.encyklopedia.pwn.pl), access 1.04.2022.

shapes selected goals and demands. This situation leads to specific actions taken to achieve the indicated objectives<sup>8</sup>.

According to M. Armstrong, motivation is linked to the motive. It is also the reason due to which a given individual decides to initiate selected actions. In effect, the motivation constitutes a process that includes the identification of factors that influence the individuals so that they behave in a specific way. Thus, it can be said that the essence of motivation is to use selected stimuli that prompt people to take actions aimed at certain goals that are determined by e.g., an organization, and facilitate achievement of strategic objectives<sup>9</sup>.

According to T. Pszczołkowski, motivation means influencing a behaviour of a given individual via stimuli that are subsequently transformed into the motives. S. Borkowska states that motivation is a process of conscious and also intentional influence over the motives of human action via creation of the circumstances and opportunities for said individuals to implement their value systems and expectations that are defined as the action goals. The goal of this process is to achieve the motivational objective, which can be compared to e.g., motivation of the employees. Z. Jacukowicz associates motivation with the issues related to the professional work. In this approach, motivation is understood as a process of creation of the incentives for the employees that will allow the latter to increase their efficiency and performance, and also to cooperate with the management of the institution, so that they can get acquainted with the objectives of the organization, and strive to meet them<sup>10</sup>.

Motivation is also defined as the totality of the motives, or causes of a particular behaviour of an individual. Therefore it can be said, that it is a state in which a given individual is ready to undertake a specific action. In effect, people exhibit different motivations for different activities. Some people can be motivated towards work, others towards sport, and yet others towards academic development. In the management theory, motivation is defined as a factor that determines the level, direction and consistency of the efforts taken by an individual in the scope of their professional work. According to J. A. F. Stoner and C. Wenkel, motivation is what causes, directs and supports certain human behaviours<sup>11</sup>.

Motivation is an unquenched thirst. It is related to a situation, in which ambition and motivation exist concurrently and are equally as powerful. In the case of employee motivation, it can be divided into three levels:

- 1) subordination,

8. A. Miszczak, J. Walasek, op. cit., p. 53.

9. M. Armstrong, *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi*, Kraków, Oficyna Ekonomiczna, 2001, p. 106.

10. A. Stabryła, *Podstawy zarządzania firmą*, Warszawa-Kraków, PWN, 1995, p. 113.

11. J.A.F. Stoner, Ch. Wankel, *Zasady zarządzania organizacjami*, Warszawa, PWE, 1997, p. 358.

- 2) objective identification,
- 3) involvement<sup>12</sup>.

On the subordination level, employees of a given organization perform tasks assigned to them by their superiors. On the second level, the individual starts to display a wish to achieve certain objectives. In such case, it is necessary to show the employee the benefits of their work. On the involvement level, the employee treats the objective as their personal goal. To reach this level, the employee must understand that they are the only individual assigned this particular task, and feel that it is in their best interest to work well<sup>13</sup>.

As practice shows, motivation influences the achievement of significant results in the performed work. The employees are stimulated to take action by their needs and the wish to satisfy them. Motivation occurs when an individual feels that the actions undertaken by them allows them to achieve the objective and a valued reward aligned with their needs.

Along with the development of modern organizations, the evolution of the way human resources are perceived can be observed. Initially, the employees of an institution were perceived as a social subsystem, but with time their role morphed into that of the most important capital of an organization, i.e., the human capital.

Nowadays, it is assumed that the employees are the most valuable potential of the organization, which also means that without their personal involvement and support, the organization won't be able to achieve its goals. This is why the problem of employee motivation is progressively more important, as it determines the quality and effectiveness of their work, what in turn influences the ability of their organization to achieve assumed business goals<sup>14</sup>.

The way human resources are perceived has been transformed in the recent years. It was caused by the changes within the human resources management process that stresses the increased importance of a given resource for an organization. Modern organization management means, first and foremost, human resource management, and the issue of employee motivation is the key aspect here. Employees find both the financial and non-financial motivators to be essential. Their concurrent usage by modern organizations quickly lose their mobilising power for the employees of said organization<sup>15</sup>.

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12. M.W. Kopertyńska, *Motywowanie pracowników – teoria i praktyka*, Warszawa, Placet, 2008, p. 17.

13. *Ibidem*, p. 17.

14. J. Snopko, *Nowoczesne systemy motywacyjne pracodawców i pracobiorców*, "Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie" 2014, z. VIII, p. 307.

15. *Ibidem*, p. 308.

In this case, modern organizations that want to “stimulate” employees to work, use the non-material motivational tools<sup>16</sup>. This practice is necessary to achieve a desired level of employee motivation in the long run, what can ensure the effective performance of their professional duties.

For the motivational system adapted by a given institution to be effective, i.e., to motivate the employee to work efficiently, while also fulfilling their needs and expectations, it must meet several conditions, including but not limited to:

- appreciation of the individual goals, aspirations and value hierarchy of the employees in the development of the motivational system, what allows to achieve the compliance with the goals of a given organization as a whole;
- individualization of the means and methods of influencing the employees;
- diversity of the concurrent methods of employee inspiration and wider usage of the internal motivational mechanisms;
- making the employees to function in the capacity of the co-owner of the company rather than a hired workforce<sup>17</sup>.

Meeting the conditions presented above allows the organization to create an effective and practical motivation system, which includes elements of both financial and non-financial motivation. Proper functioning of the indicated elements in the organization allows not only to provide appropriate incentive conditions for employees, but also increases the company’s competitiveness on the market. Therefore, a well thought-out incentive system poses an opportunity for the institution thanks to the possibility of building human resources that will constitute the added value for the company. It is also the basis for acquiring the human resources (employees) sought after on the market and maintaining an appropriate level of motivation, which is necessary for the implementation of their tasks, which in turn are related to the organization’s objectives.

The importance of human resources for organizations results from the fact that it is human individuals who e.g., create the image of the institution, are creative, have the ability to learn, improve their potential, and are entrepreneurial. Employees are a strategic resource of the organization, and thus they are a source of both opportunities and risks. Actions taken by the employer should therefore aim to take advantage of the indicated opportunities, while concurrently also reducing the risks<sup>18</sup>.

In general, human resource management involves all activities related to the management of human resources by an organization. These activities are undertaken

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16. Ibidem, p. 308.

17. B. Koluch (red.), *Wstęp do teorii zarządzania*, Warszawa, Nauka-Edukacja, 1999, p. 113.

18. A. Pocztowski, *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi. Strategie – procesy – metody*, Warszawa, PWE, 2003, p. 36.

to achieve the strategic objectives of an institution. The origins of the concept of human resource management date back to the 1970s. From the moment it appeared in the literature for the first time, it began to displace other, more popular terms, such as staff management or personnel management. The change in terminology resulted chiefly from the changing approach of the organizations to their employees. As opposed to personnel management that focused predominantly on the administrative approach to the employees<sup>19</sup>, human resource management is based on perceiving the employees as valuable strategic assets.

According to M. Armstrong, the analysed issue is a strategic, coherent, and also a comprehensive look at the problems that are related to the management and development of human resources in a specific organization. In this context, it should be noted that every element of the human resources management process is relevant to the management of the institution as a whole. According to the cited author, human resource management means a peculiar ideology that is based on the belief that organizational structures exist in order to provide customers with specific goods and values. Human resource management itself sees employees as a valuable source of the company's success and treats them as special fixed assets. This begets an assumption that the company should provide the employees with optimal leaders, and give them an opportunity to fully develop their skills<sup>20</sup>.

Based on the information that has already been presented, it can be stated that the human resources management is a strategic concept, within which the organizational assets, i.e., the employees, are treated as subjects. This approach takes into account their expectations, needs, and the possibility of optimal utilization of human resources at the right time and place, taking into account the qualitative and quantitative considerations in accordance with the mission and goals of the organization. Among all factors that affect the effectiveness of employees and their involvement in the activities of the organization, and therefore also the implementation of the institution's goals, motivation should get a special mention.

Motivation has been shown to be a set of motives, while motives are the reason why a person behaves in a specific, determined way. Motivation is crucial for the performance achieved by an individual at work. Thus, motivating the employees influences the ability of an organization to achieve its business goals.

In the context of motivation and professional work, it should be noted that work is the activity of an individual, aimed at production of certain utility goods. Through the work performed, the individual has the opportunity to satisfy most of their life

19. W. Golnau (red.), *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi*, Warszawa, CeDeWu Wydawnictwa Fachowe, 2004, p. 11.

20. M. Armstrong, op. cit., p. 9.

needs. In addition, work gives satisfaction and self-esteem, while at the same time mobilizing an individual to take various types of actions for further development. As a result, work can be treated as both a source of income, and a vocation and a chance for self-realization. The results a person will achieve at work are primarily dependent on the motivation of the individual to act<sup>21</sup>.

On the basis of the information presented, it can be concluded that motivation and motivating of employees currently play a crucial role in the context of the functioning of the organization. Proper motivation of employees determines the possibility of using their resources, which benefits both the organization itself and the employees. It is therefore necessary for the institutions to use appropriate means of motivation.

## Ways to motivate employees

Proper motivation of employees is crucial for the implementation of business goals by individual units, which makes it common for the employers to use incentive systems. In practice, they constitute a set of instruments, among which it is possible to indicate factors, actions and principles that lead to the formation of stimuli shaping the behaviour of human resources in the organization. The purpose of incentive systems is to encourage employees to engage in their work in such a way as to benefit both the entity and the employees themselves<sup>22</sup>.

As practice shows, development and implementation of a motivational system within an organization does not always bring the expected results. The system itself does not always satisfy all employees. Such a situation may be influenced by e.g., faulty focus, limited only to the technical aspects of the system functioning, without simultaneous attention paid to the effects caused by the individual elements of the incentive system, or the creation of an incentive system without learning the expectations of employees themselves, making them absent in the system. Employers may also use wrong methods of motivating, in which case the tools for influencing employees tend to be inconsistent and selected in a way that is not fully conscious. Therefore, a particularly important element of incentive systems is to adapt the tools

21. M. Mazur, *Motywowanie pracowników jako istotny element zarządzania organizacją*, "Nauki Społeczne" 2013, nr 2, p. 157.

22. J. Snopko, *Nowoczesne systemy motywacyjne pracodawców i pracobiorców*, "Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie" 2014, z. VIII, p. 314.



used by a given entity to the expectations and needs of employees, as well as to utilize them in an appropriate manner<sup>23</sup>.

In practice, the goals and expectations of employees are a function of their skills, personality traits, and value systems. At the same time, gender, age, education and the position that a given employee occupies in the environment are factors determining their aspirations. An important aspect is also the background of any individual, especially their immediate environment. All the elements mentioned above affect the diversity of human resources. The level of differentiation additionally increases with the diversification among the individual employees, especially one related to values. The indicated specificity means that as part of the used motivation tools, organizations must take into account the differences occurring among employees. Employee motivation tools used by modern organizations can be divided into:

- coercion tools,
- persuasion tools,
- incentive tools<sup>24</sup>.

The coercive instruments may take form of prohibitions, orders or sanctions. Their essence is to make and keep the employees compliant with the standards adopted in a given organization. Tools of persuasion may include various means of propaganda, advice, referendums, consultations or negotiations. Incentives include ways to motivate through rewards, wages, benefits, and to provide opportunities for professional development or good employment relationships<sup>25</sup>.

As practice shows, the most effective way to motivate an employee is through economic incentives. They constitute a means of material encouragement and force human resources to be ready to make an appropriate effort at work. The key method of material motivation is wages. This is due to the fact that it is the money (remuneration) received by the employee that ensures material existence and at the same time provides an incentive for individuals to meet higher-order needs. The main functions of wages include:

- income function,
- incentive function,
- cost function,
- social function<sup>26</sup>.

23. W.J. Karna, *Motywowanie pracowników jako wyzwanie w zarządzaniu zasobami ludzkimi*, "Studia i Prace WNEiZ US" 2017, nr 2, p. 164.

24. S. Borkowska, *Motywowanie i motywacje* [in:] *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi. Tworzenie kapitału ludzkiego organizacji*, red. H. Król, A. Ludwiczynski, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2006, p. 336.

25. Z. Jasiński, *Motywowanie w przedsiębiorstwie*, Warszawa, Agencja Wydawnicza Placet, 2007, p. 22.

26. A. Pochtowski, *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi*, Warszawa, PWE, 2007, p. 330.

From the employees' point of view, the most important one is the income function. Opportunity to receive income is the main motive for taking up work. Income allows one to meet the necessary needs of the employee, as well as to support oneself and one's family. The incentive function of remuneration, on the other hand, is an instrument aimed at shaping employees' behaviour in such a way that it is consistent with the objectives adopted by the organization. The indicated dependence makes the degree of employee involvement dependent on the remuneration received by them in accordance with the principle that higher remuneration influences the formation of a greater personal motivation to act<sup>27</sup>.

According to the definition of the cost function, the institution should consider the income earned by employees as separate production and sales costs. The decision to increase remuneration means an increase of the entity's own costs. In addition, personnel costs are not limited only to the cost of wages, but also include their workload. As a result, the sum of expenditures related to remuneration is an important part of production costs for the organization. The last function, being the social function, shows that as part of the work process, wages have a significant impact on the interpersonal relationships prevailing at work. Institutions are therefore able to form cooperative, helpful and benevolent relationships through remuneration. Inappropriate remuneration systems can negatively affect the relationships in the organization and thus contribute to reduction of the employees' motivation. Employees do not perform their professional duties best if they work in an environment dominated by an atmosphere of distrust and when there are conflicts between colleagues who think that e.g., their remuneration is unfair in comparison with that of others<sup>28</sup>.

Besides material ways of motivating employees, contemporary organizations also use intangible incentives, i.e., non-economic incentives. The indicated activities include ways of influencing the motivation of employees, such as praise, approval for a joint decision-making, expressing recognition for the activities performed, assigning systematically more difficult tasks, as well as good relations with other colleagues and superiors. In the case of presented ways of motivating employees, it is particularly important to create good relations between the employees and management. This type of action contributes to increased effectiveness of solving problems faced by the employees. An important aspect of the motivation is also the systematic assignment of increasingly difficult tasks, tasks what makes the employee more independent in their work, what in effect contributes to greater satisfaction with the

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27. *Ibidem*, p. 330.

28. *Ibidem*, p. 330.

tasks performed, thus affecting the quality of their performance. As part of conducting activities in the field of intangible motivation, superiors should also provide their subordinates with a sense of security.

Today's economic reality is characterized by high market competitiveness. Therefore, the ability to achieve set business goals requires properly motivated human resources. In this situation, each organization carries out actions to apply incentives that will affect the level of employees' motivation. In addition to the impact of motivation on the efficiency and quality of work, a well-designed motivation system also contributes to staff turnover limitation, which is particularly important due to the costs associated with the necessity to on-board new employees. As a result, the institutions work to provide the means and working conditions to encourage employees to make an effort, which in turn will enable the organization to achieve its objectives, while at the same time keeping human resources satisfied with performed work. Since a person's job satisfaction depends on their own ability, the motivation and methods used for its purpose should be considered individually and take into account the personality, feelings, interests, as well as the views and values held by the employee. This is caused by the fact that all the indicated elements affect the employee's goals and determine the effectiveness of individual motivation methods<sup>29</sup>.

At the same time, when using individual motivation methods, organizations must take into account the fact that the problem is not only the lack of sufficient impact on the employee, but also the possibility of an excessive motivation. As practice shows, an excessive motivation increases the emotional tension and therefore may lead to a decrease of the effectiveness and efficiency of the employee's actions. Too much motivation causes anxiety, which makes an anxious individual less efficient. Additionally, in such a situation, the employee focuses too much on tracking the results achieved and the factors that determine them. In such situation, the employee's awareness of elements that interact in a long-term is weakened, what ultimately leads to a decrease in his efficiency. The anxiety and tension felt by an overly motivated employee also cause them to lose the ability to solve problems, and activates defensive mechanisms<sup>30</sup>.

Negative aspects of excessive motivation mean that the methods used to motivate employees should aim for a moderate level of motivation. This reflects Birch's law, according to which employees achieve the best results with moderate motivation. However, the effects of their work are much worse both in case of weaker and

29. M. Skoczylas, *Systemy motywacji pracowników*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Częstochowskiej. Zarządzanie" 2013, nr 9, p. 67.

30. Z. Ciekankowski, Z. Szymański, *Metody motywowania pracowników we współczesnej organizacji*, "Nowoczesne Systemy Zarządzania" 2017, nr 4, p. 51.

stronger motivation. It is thanks to medium motivation<sup>31</sup> that one solves problems most efficiently and achieves the best results, especially when dealing with difficult and complex issues. Therefore, the key aspect is to properly understand the motivation process by the organization and to use the right methods to stimulate it and ensure its moderate level. It is very important for the management as well as for the governance of human resources, and also contributes to the achievement of the assumed business goals by the organization.

### The effectiveness of incentive systems within the organization

In the case of organizations in Poland, remuneration is considered the most effective way of motivating employees. At the same time, as Z. Ciekankowski and M. Szymański point out, non-wage bonuses play an increasingly important role. Such a situation is influenced, among others, by the implementation of practices commonly used in Western companies, where the elements of non-wage motivation are of great importance<sup>32</sup>.

In Poland, despite changing trends, the motivation process is still based primarily on elements of financial motivation. This type of motivation, combined with the usage of selected tools brings the best benefits. It is the financial motivators that are most effective, as they allow to satisfy the life necessities, which is not possible, for example, in the case of motivators such as gym passes or tickets to the cinema or theatre. As a result, according to statistics, the ratio of remuneration to non-financial bonuses in Polish companies ranges from about 95% to 5%, while in the countries of the so-called "old" European Union (i.e., Germany, Great Britain, Spain, Belgium) it ranges from 50% to 50% in selected cases. Therefore, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of the influence of individual motivators is determined not only by the personality traits, education or beliefs and values of the employees, but also by the economic situation in a given country and the level of wealth of the society<sup>33</sup>.

The usage of wage motivators by Polish companies is also influenced by the widespread belief that adequate remuneration is sufficient to achieve such employee motivation that is beneficial for the company. Cafeteria systems, popular in United

31. A. Pietroń-Pyszczek, *Motywowanie pracowników – wskazówki dla menadżerów*, Wrocław, Marina, 2007, p.16

32. Z. Ciekankowski, Z. Szymański, op. cit., p. 51.

33. Ibidem, p. 52.

States or United Kingdom, allow employees to choose certain components of remuneration from the list of benefits offered by a given organization.

Among the elements of non-financial motivation that are used within cafeteria systems and can be chosen by employees, we can indicate e.g., (1) flexible working hours and flexible forms of employment, (2) possibility of buying shares or bonds in the case of senior and middle managers, (3) specialized advice (e.g., legal, medical, psychological), (4) training opportunities to develop professional competences or specific soft skills, (5) memberships and coupons for various services, (6) additional insurance, (7) preferential loans, (8) integration events. The idea is to allow the employee to choose a specific reward. It is important that the list of awards is varied so that each person can choose a solution that will positively affect their motivation to work<sup>34</sup>.

Polish organizations can be divided into two groups: (1) organizations with a rich incentive package, including both financial and non-financial motivation elements covering all employees, regardless of their positions, as well as (2) entities that motivate their employees only through remuneration. This situation leads to a significant variation in the level of motivation among employees of institutions operating in Poland<sup>35</sup>.

In practice, it is pointed out that motivating employees only through remuneration brings short-term benefits. Money as a motivator acts in an appropriate way only until a certain moment, after which its motivational function loses its importance<sup>36</sup>. In this situation, methods of non-financial motivation are developed. In addition, an incentive system based only on financial instruments is very expensive for the organization in the long term.

The indicated situation is confirmed by the results of the research, according to which the elements of non-financial motivation are of great importance for employees. According to the research conducted by the Gallup Institute on a group of over a million employees from around the world, the most important factors that have a positive impact on motivation were: (1) maintaining good relations with the supervisor, (2) having the tools that are necessary in the context of the ability to perform work, (3) knowing the expectations that the supervisors regarding a given person, (4) the everyday work that includes tasks a given person does best. The importance of non-financial elements of motivation is corroborated by the surveys conducted in Polish organizations. Research conducted among over 1,500 employees

34. Ibidem, p. 52.

35. Ibidem, p. 53.

36. M. Gołębski, *Rozwiązania w zakresie czasu pracy jako narzędzie motywowania pracowników*, "Zarządzanie Zasobami Ludzkimi" 2009, nr 1, p. 96.

by A. Niemczyk and J. Mądry showed that the most important motivators include e.g., a good atmosphere in the workplace, a sense of appreciation of successes and employee involvement, employment security, clearly and specifically defined tasks and goals, as well as the possibility of improving professional qualifications<sup>37</sup>.

The importance of non-financial motivators is also confirmed by the results of research conducted by M. Pęcek and J. Walas-Trębacz. They showed that the employees highly value not only the sense of financial security, heavily influenced by the remuneration itself, but also factors such as stability of employment, a good atmosphere at work, clearly defined goals and tasks, the possibility of self-development or, eventually, the possibility of promotion, as well as the social benefits and a management style based on partnership. Therefore, it can be concluded that, despite the crucial importance of financial motivation methods, non-financial motivation factors should also be taken into account by employers in the context of searching for a method to obtain appropriate employee motivation<sup>38</sup>.

In the context of contemporary organizations and activities belonging to the scope of employee motivation, attention should also be paid to the need to adapt the implemented activities to the increased popularity of remote work. The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the growth of the above-mentioned issues, which caused a significant part of the employees to start and continue working remotely or in a hybrid form. This change resulted in the emergence of issues related to the motivation in employees who rarely have a practical opportunity to contact their superiors or co-workers directly. A confirmation of the problem related to the motivation of employees as part of remote work is e.g., the opinion of M. Fedorczyk from the Lewiatan Confederation, who points out that among people who started remote work during the pandemic, a significant part exhibits symptoms of fatigue. The reason for this situation is the need to work from homes that were not prepared for this form of work. As a result, some remote workers feel overloaded with professional duties, which is related to the blurring of the existing borders between work and home<sup>39</sup>.

As indicated by A. Tymoszyk representing the Antal recruitment organization, remote work during the pandemic has ceased to be perceived by many employees as it was before, i.e., as a desirable benefit, chiefly because it has become a necessity. This situation applies to e.g., many international institutions, where despite the

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37. J. Borucka, *Motywowanie pracowników w praktyce Część 1: Magiczna formuła na motywację pracowników*, [www.hrbusinesspartner.pl](http://www.hrbusinesspartner.pl), access 3.05.2022.

38. M. Pęcek, J. Walas-Trębacz, *Ocena skuteczności systemów motywacyjnych stosowanych w organizacjach*, "Journal of Modern Management Process" 2018, nr 1, p. 23.

39. Money.pl, *Na pracy zdalnej jest 10 proc. Polaków. Ich motywacja siada*, [www.money.pl](http://www.money.pl), access 3.05.2022.

opportunity of returning to the office, the remote working model was decided to be continued. According to A. Tymoszek, this group of people includes employees who are most dissatisfied with the need to work remotely. At the same time, it should be noted that in the labour market there are more and more people for whom the lack of remote work disqualifies the job offer<sup>40</sup>.

According to research conducted among a group of more than 300 employees by Antal, most organizations are satisfied with the work of people who perform their duties remotely. In addition to satisfactory efficiency, the greatest advantages pointed out by the study included e.g., the possibility of reducing the costs associated with business trips and maintaining the current level of salaries. Among the negative aspects, the respondents pointed primarily to problems with integration and cooperation within employee teams. An additional problem was the increased turnover of employees resulting from the diminished relationship between human resources and the institution they started to visit very rarely. Other indicated problems with the remote work also included the difficulties with proper motivation of employees<sup>41</sup>.

According to M. Fedorczyk, the experience of organizations that implemented remote work during the pandemic period shows that benefit systems, which enjoyed significant popularity among employees and, as a result, performed their role well, lost their importance during the pandemic. Elements of the incentive system, such as gym passes or free lunches on Thursdays, ceased to matter when gyms and canteens were closed and employees were performing their duties at home<sup>42</sup>.

The problem of motivation during remote work is indicated, among others, by the research conducted among employees of non-governmental organizations. Its results have shown that every third person participating in the study (32%) felt a decrease in motivation to work during the pandemic. In addition, 43% of respondents reported that they also experienced a reduction in the level of satisfaction with their work. Such a state of affairs may be influenced by, among others, an increase of stress related to remote work, as indicated by over 60% of respondents, as well as an increased number of duties and tasks in the analysed period (54% of indications)<sup>43</sup>. Considering the data above, it can be concluded that the decrease in motivation during remote work is felt both by employees of enterprises and people working in non-governmental organizations.

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40. Ibidem.

41. Ibidem.

42. Ibidem.

43. B. Charycka, M. Gumkowska, *Praca w pandemii. Raport z badań organizacji pozarządowych 2020/2021*, [www.api.ngo.pl](http://www.api.ngo.pl), access 4.05.2022.

The drop in the level of motivation among some of the employees who were posted to work remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic was also shown by the research conducted by A. Dolot and published in the “E-mentor” journal. According to their results, lower motivation to work during the pandemic and to perform duties remotely was visible primarily among employees with underage children. This group has also shown the largest increase in the number of people who felt less satisfaction with their professional duties during the pandemic<sup>44</sup>. As indicated by employees of IT departments, in the case of employees who have already worked remotely on regular basis before the pandemic, the decrease in motivation may be influenced by the specific character of performing professional duties in this particular form<sup>45</sup>.

Remote work is associated with specific difficulties that are not encountered in the case of stationary work. These difficulties include the burdens associated with excessive isolation and lack of direct contacts with other employees, what may result in a lack of motivation or creative ideas, and eventually, decreasing efficiency. All the elements mentioned above are related to professional burnout, which may also be a result of remote work<sup>46</sup>.

It should be noted that the problem of motivation of employees performing their duties remotely is also encountered in other countries. According to research conducted in the United Kingdom, 28% of remote workers felt less motivated to work during the pandemic. The indicated problem mainly concerned younger employees. According to the results of the research, 44% of people under 35 were less motivated to work<sup>47</sup>.

The information presented above shows that remote work may negatively affect the motivation of employees in the long term. The causes of this state of affairs are varied, and may include isolation and lack of contact with others, what is particularly important in the context of people living alone, poor working conditions (lack of adaptation of the apartment to the requirements of the remote work, especially when the apartment is inhabited by more people, including children) or, finally, lack of division between professional and personal life, which in many cases contributes to an increased amount of time spent working. Such a situation forces us to look for new solutions that will contribute to the increased motivation of remote workers.

44. A. Dolot, *Wpływ pandemii COVID-19 na pracę zdalną – perspektywa pracownika*, “E-mentor” 2020, nr 1, p. 41.

45. M. Fryczyńska, *Co nas stresuje w pracy zdalnej?*, [www.gazeta.sgh.waw.pl](http://www.gazeta.sgh.waw.pl), access 4.05.2022.

46. Ibidem.

47. P. Hendstrom, M.G. Munoz, *Remote Work's Effect on Motivation*, [www.diva-portal.org](http://www.diva-portal.org), access 4.05.2022.



As a result, the problem of motivation of employees as part of remote work became one of the challenges contemporary organizations face today. Due to the pandemic, previous forms of non-financial motivation, adapted to the expectations of employees reported as a part of the “pre-pandemic” social reality, became less important for employees. At the same time, the increase in the popularity of remote work among employers and the benefits perceived by them and resulting from the change in the mode of work of human resources (including lower labour costs compared to similarly effective stationary work and the possibility of limiting the rented office space) meant that despite the systematic lifting of restrictions on interpersonal contacts determined by the specific character of the pandemic, many organizations decided to maintain this mode of work or switched to hybrid work. Regardless of the end of the pandemic, organizations must therefore carry out activities aimed at maintenance of an appropriate level of motivation among employees, as well as apply altered non-financial motivation factors that will be adjusted to the current expectations of employees.

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## Conclusions

On the basis of the information presented above, it can be concluded that the effective motivation of employees is one of the most important challenges faced by contemporary organizations. This is related to the role human resources play in the organization. In practice, their effectiveness determines the possibility of the entity's business goals being achieved.

In order to increase the level of motivation of employees, institutions use elements of financial and non-financial motivation. As the analysis showed, in order for the indicated activities to bring the expected effect, it is necessary to take into account the individual characteristics of human resources and adapt the motivation system in a given institution to them.

This analysis showed that the elements of financial motivation have the greatest impact on the level of employee motivation. Aspects related to the remuneration received for the performed work are a key element affecting the activity and involvement of human resources. The remuneration itself may consist of both the basic and bonus parts, the specificity of which depends on the policy of the organization. As a result, the amount of total remuneration received by employees may affect the efficiency of their work. A classic example is a sales representative, whose final

remuneration depends on the achieved sales results. Such remuneration system is designed to motivate such employees to be more effective in their actions.

At the same time, when planning an incentive system, organizations must also take into account issues related to the elements of non-financial motivation. Financial motivation has a limited effect and may at some point cease to be an incentive sufficient to develop an appropriate level of motivation in an employee. Elements of non-financial motivation are particularly important in the case of employees offered a long-term employment by the organization, when financial motivation factors have a smaller impact, and the possibility of professional development or influencing the implementation of individual tasks by the organization begins to matter.

The objective of the article has been achieved, and the conducted analysis showed which elements of the motivation system have the greatest impact on the increase in the employees' motivation level.

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