

## FREE MOVEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ROLES AS A WAY OF MANAGEMENT CAREER

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**Abstract:** Technological advances, challenges and economic change, in particular changes of the structure of industry and market, demography, values, moreover, increasingly shorter economic cycles, resulting in a consequent increase of unemployment - make many people being forced to seek work in the industry other than that in which they are. The free movement of professional roles, inter alia, understood as retraining, may be a way to maintain the continuity of work. What is more the function of the free movement of roles is flexibility, seen as a key competence, a condition for survival in the new economic reality, functioning on the basis of the Knowledge Based Economy (KBE).

**Key words:** knowledge-based economy, free movement of professional roles, flexibility, human capital

### Introduction

Dreams of a career model - one profession and one job during whole life - is nowadays the past. In today's turbulent and uncertain times, people entering the labor market, are increasingly being forced to frequently take new professional challenges, including multiple change of jobs and professions. For Polish people it is a relatively new trend, whereas in the U.S., statistics have been showing for many years, that Americans reclassify on average every 5 years (several times during their careers). Currently in Europe, it is estimated that today's thirty year old people will have to get used to the fact, that in the course of their career they will change their profession seven or eight times. The labor market situation makes it necessary to be more and more mobile, flexible, and as a result willing to change [1]. The labor market situation makes it necessary to be more and more mobile, flexible, and consequently ready to change. There is no chance for a young man to work like his grandparents or even parents, for 30 years in one place.

### Economic conditions of free movement of professional roles

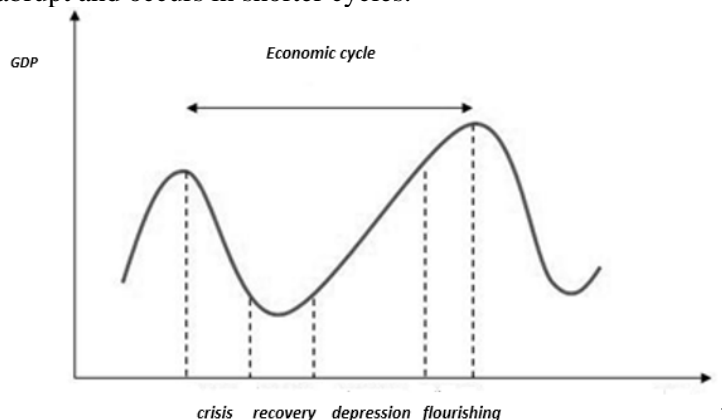
Challenges in the field of free movement of professional roles should be perceived in the context of the specific needs of enterprises in the knowledge-based economy (KBE). A characteristic feature of KBE is change, and with it - the dynamic flow of information and knowledge, which results in the acceleration of business processes and, consequently, increase of the geographical coverage of companies. Wizards of changes are such factors as globalization, global economic crisis, increased competition, innovation, sustainable development, dynamic

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development of modern technologies, the development of the digital economy, demographic changes in society. Therefore, to succeed in the market, flexibility is required, as is the ability to continuously change the areas and ways of doing business. These changes are of course combined with the wider business environment. In addition, for businesses, this flexibility also manifests as the ability to adapt (conditioned by the continuous learning) becomes the measure of their effectiveness [2].

The need for a change must be also seen in the context of the fluctuations in economic activity, referred to as business cycles. Over the years, a number of theories have been created, explaining the essence of this phenomenon. Without a doubt, fluctuations in economic activity refer to all aspects of socio-economic life. In addition, some experts discern the factor in especially technological and technical changes, that determines, among others, processes of fluctuations in economic activity. It is important that for the current economy growth is characterized by certain transitions in technological advances. In other words, the change is abrupt and occurs in shorter cycles.



**Figure 1. The phases of the economic cycle**

Source: H. Pałaszewski, *Cykl koniunkturalny we współczesnym świecie*, *Studia i Materiały. Miscellanea Oeconomicae Rok 13, Nr 1/2009*

Change as the immanent feature of KBE, having a direct impact on the operation of enterprises - is not without significance for the personal sphere. Thus KBE is gaining importance in human capital management including its improvement and development[3]. In this context, the key competences are easy to change, multigrade resources of knowledge, skills and attitude enabling their use in different contexts and situations [4].

These competences enable more flexible labor resources, allowing for rapid adaptation to constant changes through the process of continuous learning. The free movement of professional roles as the ability and disposition to retraining - may provide a way to manage a career in KBE. The free movement of professional roles is not necessarily a radical change of profession. The free

movement of roles is primarily active identification and exploitation of opportunities, willingness and openness to change competences (acquisition of new skills, qualifications within the occupation, position, etc.).

This situation occurs more often in professional life of employees. Active attitude to the movement of professional roles may also give great satisfaction to all those who are bored in current position or even feel burnt out. Besides such change might be a great opportunity for development. The free movement of roles in the social scale is a highly desirable phenomenon, however it requires new system solutions on the basis of training and education. In other words – it needs to adapt the education to the outlined career paths of individual employee.

No adaptation of education to real social needs and small business participation in the creation of educational offer is unfortunately a reality today. In addition, the gap between demand and supply of labor means that high unemployment maintains, especially among young people. The fundamental causes of these phenomena are:

- **weakening of the position of vocational schools in the Polish educational system and efforts to increase the number of people with higher education**, which led to a situation where on one hand the local labor market is lacking skilled workers and on the other - a group of people has appeared in the labor force without professional qualifications and without major opportunities in the labor market. The result of this imbalance is the appearance of relatively high unemployment among university graduates and disappointment of many young people by lack of development opportunities in the labor market. The study of BAEL economic activity published by the Central Statistical Office indicates that the unemployment rate among young Poles between 15 and 24 years of age is 26.7%. We are dealing with a situation in which firms are lacking of specific specialists, engineers, and the young people are trained in fields, after which they cannot find work and as a result they become unemployed or go abroad.
- **inefficient process of adult education**. Results of "Social Diagnosis" from 2005, 2007 and 2009 indicate that the education of people in the age of over 24 in Poland has still a marginal range. In the age range of 25 to 29 years, 18.4% of Poles use some form of education, in the age range of 30 to 39 years there is only 6.2%, and among those over 39, educational activity almost disappears (1.5%). Especially the last data concern in the context of the need to keep the older people in the labor market. Poland still has the lowest employment rate in the EU among people in the age range of 55 to 64 years. According to the study by Eurostat, in 2009 people in the age range of 25 to 64 years participating in education or training was 4.7% of all respondents, while in countries such as Finland and Sweden, the percentage was over 22% (the average for the EU-27 - 9 , 3%). Therefore, activating this group will require special efforts aimed at increasing their employability;
- **mismatch of education to the requirements of the business**, which is a consequence of difficulties in communication between business and scientific

communities. It results from a mutual misunderstanding of the specific nature of the other side and the lack of ability to formulate needs and expectations of terms mutually acceptable, the lack of openness and trust in the relationship. There is also low awareness of the possibilities of establishment of such mutually beneficial cooperation among small and medium-sized enterprises. No business cooperation with scientific institutions leads to weakening of innovation, slowing technological development and inhibit the process of expanding the knowledge and skills of employees [6].

Today, young Poles understand the importance of investing in their own development as can be observed by the number of universities and graduates. The fact is that more and more Polish companies understand the role of human capital for business success and economic growth of the country and sees its tangible benefits. It is however often stated that the weak point of the current labor market and enterprises is the lack of staff who would be taught practical skills needed in the labor market (for example teamwork), professionals trained adequately to the needs of the labor market, workers who have the skills resulting from the study of sciences, adaptation of education to the market needs closer cooperation between science and business, the creation of an institutional framework for such actions. The change in this matter requires the creation of a platform for cooperation and stimulation of business cooperation with stakeholders such as government, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations in formulating and a long-term communication of business demand for skills. This should result in better alignment of the education system to labor market needs and thus better utilization of labor resources.

If nothing is going to change in the future business awaits the deficit of personnel, particularly specialists, slower development of many lines of business, limited access to resources (intellectual capital), loss of competitiveness, increased costs, loss of prospective markets and opportunities for development, regional disparities, However consolidation of unfavorable phenomena threatens actions towards sustainable development.

### **Directions of changes**

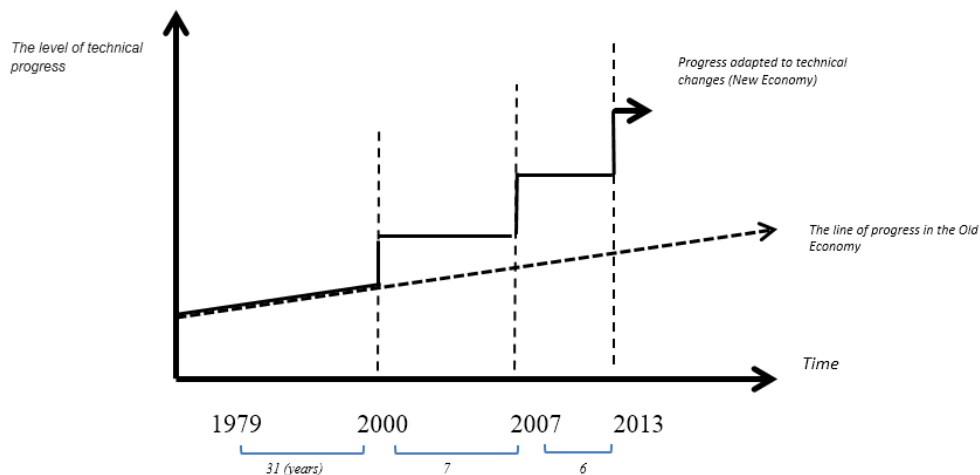
There is no denying that human capital is the foundation of success in business. Therefore, only for these good, the high efficiency corresponding to the current needs of business, education, and consequently in the field of free movement of professionals can contribute to better management of labor resources (increase of the efficiency of enterprises), and thus indicate the directions of individual career management.

Often one hears that the focus on employees and the ability to exploit their potential represents to an increase of commitment and loyalty of staff, lesser turnover and greater ability to attract talents. Business representatives are aware that the vision of the optimal number of employed people qualified in accordance with the needs of the labor market is not easy to implement. In accordance with the

concept of free movement of professionals is that the employee should be active and demonstrate self-motivation to take on new tasks, professional challenges, seeing this as an opportunity for growth, survival. Such an attitude will bring better results if it results from an act of inspiration rather than desperation, therefore it should be a permanent process.

In this context, system solutions should on one hand enable workers to respond flexibly to changes in the business environment in which they operate, on the other hand - increase the availability of labor resources. So system organized on new principles of education that would take into account the need for adaptability and flexibility of graduates to turbulent labor market. It seems that the answer to these needs is a modular system of education, based on a block of general education. This section should provide a solid educational base, enabling training in specific disciplines, but implemented in a modular formula (for example 1 -2 semesters) and not in separate fields of study - how it functions as of now. Today's education in specific disciplines takes too much time. In contrast, if education is to be effective, it must be multipath. There is an extremely valuable practical component - in other words, the ability to verify the acquired knowledge with practical experience. It is best if this happens in parallel. Today, many workplaces head new employees for training and further education aiming for requirements and needs of the organization. And this should be seen as a niche in higher education, that is that within the framework of the modular education it should support the enterprises in maintaining the availability of workers in the turbulently changing business environment. At the same time to meet the expectations of the labor market halfway, because the employee who has the ability (to assimilate new knowledge dedicated to a specific company(bespoke modules) in relatively short periods of time (1-2 semesters) can react flexibly to market requirements and effectively manage his career.

The considerations described in this article have been referred to the demand for labor competencies in Wastewater Treatment "Warta" SA in Czestochowa. This process has been investigated in the context of technical change. Central Wastewater Treatment Plant in Czestochowa was built at the turn of the 60s and 70s of the twentieth century as the most modern facility of this kind in the country, based on modern technical and technological solutions in the field of wastewater treatment. The construction was fully completed at the end of the 70s of the previous century. In subsequent years, treatment was modernized due to environmental requirements and technological progress (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Development Trends on the example of Wastewater Treatment Plant "Warta" JSC (Joint Stock Company)**

*Source: Author's elaboration*

Since around the year 2000 economy has entered a new stage of development, characterized by rapid technological progress (New Economy). In the Figure 2 you can see how Wastewater Treatment "Warta" (WTP) Plant reacted to these changes in the operation of the facility. Technological progress of Plant forced abrupt adaptation to the new needs and challenges. Successive cycles of modernization steadily reduce as shown in the example of WTP. Although the observation of changes covers the last 14 years, which is a relatively short perspective to determine how on average shortening of cycles adjusts, but you can tell that this is a trend that will follow, and which is noticed in all areas of the economy. Abrupt technical and technological progress, causing very serious consequences in the preparation of human resources for operational activities of enterprises, particularly in periods after the modernization. The change occurred in the relationship between the employee and the employee freshly-employed. Master-student relationship has been replaced by the type of mentor - a worker. While in the master-student relationship, a master has led the student "by the hand" for a long period of time, giving him a ready prepared knowledge, mentor today provides support and assistance, but does not transmit knowledge continuously and systematically. Freshly-employed must earn the required competencies by himself, while in the Old Economy the time of the education was not limited, the master decided when the worker would be allowed to work independently. Today approval for an employee to work followed by a period of relatively independent study under the guidance of a mentor. Therefore, today's employee in the school is not able to acquire specific skills that can be gained only at the specific workplace. For such cycle of education, it is necessary to have a basic directional education.

## Summary

Career management, should be strictly related to the business environment and its conditions. With the transformation of the socio-economic growth and development of the knowledge-based economy, building human capital quality is increasingly important for business. It is also essential due to the demographic problems and the related extension of time activity. In this context – the pressure to increase labor productivity and the acquisition of new skills by employees will be more noticeable. The fact is that there is lack of system solutions that would meet the above-mentioned challenges of reconciling the interests of both business and labor market in the field of human capital management. However, this type of system solutions can be developed only on the basis of the education system, as it is a plane connecting the two areas. System solutions should support the free movement of professional roles, because this process is in the interest of the employers and the workers themselves. In conclusion:

- participation of workers in modern technological processes at Industrial Plants requires competence supplemented and developed in shorter time,
- it would be desirable to prepare young people for future employees within the school giving a well-established universal knowledge at a basic level in a few selected fields of study,
- acquisition of new competencies in fast-changing environment should be given to the industry with the support of a well-developed post-graduate education (training modules).

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### SWOBODNY PRZEPIY W RÓL ZAWODOWYCH SPOSOBEM NA EFEKTYWNE ZARZĄDZANIE KARIERĄ

**Streszczenie:** Postęp technologiczny, wyzwania i przemiany gospodarcze, w szczególności zmiany w strukturze przemysłu i rynku, demografii, wartościach, ponadto coraz krótsze cykle koniunkturalne, powodujące w konsekwencji wzrost bezrobocia sprawiają, że wiele osób jest zmuszonych do poszukiwania pracy w branży innej, niż tej w której dotychczas



się znajdują. Swobodny przepływ ról zawodowych rozumiany jako przekwalifikowywanie się, może być sposobem na utrzymanie ciągłości pracy. Co więcej funkcją swobodnego przepływu ról jest elastyczność, postrzegana jako kluczowa kompetencja, warunkująca przetrwanie w nowej rzeczywistości gospodarczej, funkcjonującej na zasadach Gospodarki Opartej na Wiedzy (GOW).

**Słowa kluczowe:** gospodarka oparta na wiedzy, swobodny przepływ ról, elastyczność, kapitał ludzki

#### 自由流动的专业角色作为管理职业生涯的一种方式

**摘要:** 技术进步、挑战和经济变化，在结构的行业和市场，人口统计学，值的特定更改，此外，经济周期越来越短，造成的失业问题——使许多人被迫寻求激增的工作以外，他们在行业中。除其他外的自由流动的专业角色，理解为再培训，可能是一种维护工作的连续性。什么是更多的自由流动的角色功能是灵活性，视为关键的能力，在新的经济现实，运作的基础上的知识基础经济 (KBE) 生存的条件。

**关键词:** 知识为基础的经济的角色、灵活性、人力资本的自由流动。