

# Interim Management as a New Approach to the Company Management

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## Abstract

The article presented the importance of employing interim managers in the conditions of rapid changes in the business environment. The significance of interim management as a modern approach to management was highlighted. The author also pondered on how the companies of the future should be managed. Furthermore, the author presented his own experiences and findings acquired from projects he had carried out as an interim manager. The readers' attention was drawn to the impact of the interim management on the organisational entrepreneurship.

*Keywords:* interim management; interim managers; knowledge management system; paradigms of awareness and intelligence

JEL Classification: M12, M14, M52

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## Introduction

What management style, approach or system should be applied in order to adjust to dynamic changes in the business environment?

The interim management is a new phenomenon, frequently interpreted in different ways by potential clients as well as by interim managers themselves. The matter is getting even more complex owing to deeply rooted standards of work and management, employed in the organisations where many-year commitment to one company is regarded as an asset<sup>1</sup>. Nowadays, working within the scope of project management is becoming more and more popular. Interim management involves employing a highly skilled manager for a determined period to solve a complicated problem in the company. The interim management was established in the 1970s in the Netherlands where managers, being self-confident about their value in the labour market, agreed to work for higher salaries during determined periods, resigning at the same time from the employee protection as outlined in the

provisions of law. They obtained greater salaries for their high competencies and participation in the business risk which their employer had to face<sup>2</sup>.

The author can boast his many-year experience in managing large and medium-sized companies. He received a prize at the Polish Nationwide Competition for the best-managed companies in Poland. The author's scientific interests focus on management- and reorganisation-related issues, and particularly those problems and aspects of the reorganisation process, whose extrapolation, in the broad sense, allows to improve the organisations' performance. The author highlighted herein the significance of employing interim managers under the conditions of change in the business environment. In the article, the author also tried to present his own experiences and findings acquired from projects he had carried out as an interim manager.

## Managing Companies of the Future

Designing an organisational model of the company of the future requires from each employee,

<sup>1</sup> Buchajska-Wróbel M., Wendt R., Rytka E., Gasparski J., Gajda K. Menedżer do zadań specjalnych. Czasowe zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem. Helion, Gliwice, 2011, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Buchajska-Wróbel M., Wendt R., Rytka E., Gasparski J., Gajda K. Menedżer do zadań specjalnych. Czasowe zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem. Helion, Gliwice, 2011, p. 21.

task-related teams or the entire organisation to be able to re-create themselves. Companies of the future should change their approach and ways of thinking about the future, both rooted in the reality of the previous century. The activity of the company should be based on short-term undertakings, often arising in a new form from accumulated capitals, and making use of external resources and tasks performed preferably by external entities than by the company's employees<sup>3</sup>.

The emergence of a new economic reality triggers the creation of a model organisation of the future, boasting its abilities to learn, think creatively and manage to utilize lean organisational structures. The ability to cope with changes brought about by the future depends on one's willingness to attempt to develop new ways of perceiving the future of management<sup>4</sup>.

It should be highlighted that transformations in the management science occurred as a result of the application of certain paradigms, namely:

- **process thinking:** it refers to resigning from structural thinking, which used to be traditionally employed throughout decades, and shifting to process thinking which resulted in the development of a new management philosophy manifesting itself, in particular, in the ability to change<sup>5</sup>,

- **creative processes of the mind:** in this aspect, creativity refers to a single employee, a team or the entire organisation, viewed as a collective mind. Within the scope of the human mind, the role of these corresponding similarities — creating the homogeneous entirety along with the creative mind — is played by **paradigms of awareness and intelligence**<sup>6</sup>.

The integration of intelligence and awareness does not just mean achieving new opportunities; it also refers to implementing them into a new context of the mind's creative processes. Their development can be an essential element of trans-

formations related to this modern philosophy of company management. In this context, one can regard the knowledge management as a set of "processes which allow to create, disseminate and use knowledge to meet the organisation's goals"<sup>7</sup>. The knowledge management system should be viewed as a systematic process of creating, organising and disseminating the enterprise's intellectual capital<sup>8</sup>.

The knowledge area within the organisation cannot be overburdened with information of little usefulness. Thus, the main tasks of the executives involve assessing qualitative knowledge. An intelligent, i.e. learning organisation is an idea of the knowledge-based management, while the knowledge in question is enriched and made available to the enterprise<sup>9</sup>. The model of integrated common imagination process also reflects the already mentioned concept of the organisation of the future perceived as an integrated mind, involving creative processes of minds of individual employees and entire teams. The phenomenon of transferring and integrating individual processes of the mind into collective processes of the higher level brings about the creation of informative fields of the team and the entire organisation. This model of organisation is characterised by interactions between teams and the environment in the form of informative processes. In this case, particular process channels will connect information flows, giving thus rise to the evolution of specific teams and forms of the whole organisation. Information flows in the systems in question develop informative fields which are created and organised by task-related teams at specific levels of the management<sup>10</sup>.

Modern management should take into account a proprietary and organisational nature of the enterprise and its market-related behaviour. It should determine current conditions in which the enterprise is forced to operate within a given period. Selecting a manager and his/her manage-

<sup>3</sup> Dźwigoł H., Unternehmensmanagement im 21. Jahrhundert. Edition Winterwork Borsdorf, Niemcy 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Brzeziński M. Innowacyjne dylematy przyszłości, [in:] Idem (eds.): Zarządzanie innowacjami technicznymi i organizacyjnymi. Difin, Warszawa 2001, p. 221; Grudzewski W.M., Hejduk I.K. (eds.): Przedsiębiorstwo przyszłości..., p. 137.

<sup>5</sup> Durlik I. Reengineering i technologia informatyczna w restrykturyzacji procesów gospodarczych. WNT, Warszawa 2002, p. 78.

<sup>6</sup> Brzeziński M. Kreatywność w nowoczesnej organizacji. *Ekonomika i Organizacja Przedsiębiorstwa*, no. 8, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Murray P., Meyers A. The Facts about Knowledge. Special report, [www.info-strategy.com](http://www.info-strategy.com). Accessed 31.11.1997].

<sup>8</sup> Grudzewski W.M., Hejduk I.K. Dlaczego należy zarządzać wiedzą? In Hejduk I.K., (Eds.). *Teoria i praktyka modelowania systemów logistycznych*. Politechnika Koszalińska, Koszalin 2004, p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Grudzewski W.M., Hejduk I.K. *Przedsiębiorstwo wirtualne*. Difin, Warszawa 2002, p. 59.

<sup>10</sup> Dźwigoł H. *Business Management*. Alpha Science International Ltd. Oxford, U.K., 2015.

ment style is one of the fundamental problems of the companies' owners<sup>11</sup>.

### **Managers of Modern Companies**

Due to changes currently taking place in the business environment, managers have to face new challenges. Thus, it is necessary to find an answer to fundamental questions about a new way of working and thinking.

A. Grove, the President of Intel and one of the top managers, says that both directors and managers of the enterprises should currently devote most of their attention to what the future holds for them. He believes that this is the highest time to activate one element of human nature — people's tendency to become paranoid. This feature has already been and will be the best motivational drive. Managers need some hazard (e.g. of losing their key employees or customers) more than having optimistic plans on becoming successful. K. Droń, A. Jacaszek, S. Kolarz and K. Nowakowski describe the company of the future using the following words: apprehensive, afraid of disasters, but also decisive and ready to make use of a given opportunity. Owing to the said paranoid behaviour, the line responsible for alertness is always as tight as possible. The enterprise whose underlying essence embraces fear can feel safe<sup>12</sup>, provided that it maintains its ordinary sense and ability not to be panic-stricken. Thus, quick adaptation is enhanced. Concerning the preceding, the contemporary manager is obliged to relentlessly put into practice new concepts and management methods, e.g., the transformation of the enterprise from functions into processes, or development of key skills for knowledge management. New concepts and management methods allow the manager to help his/her enterprise to achieve competition edge, mainly because the concepts arrange and facilitate the execution of the business activity<sup>13</sup>.

Nowadays, there occurs the necessity to develop a new dynamic approach to strategic and operational management, which approach would allow shifting from the industrial era into the knowledge

era where strategies are formulated in line with opportunities and innovations<sup>14</sup>. The current concept of strategic planning needs to be supplemented by processes to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage. Effective fulfilment of the adopted strategy requires to unite three main elements: the organisation's strategy, its employees and management systems. It is possible to reach complete harmonisation as a result of strong leadership. Each of the elements mentioned above is a necessary but insufficient condition which determines whether a given strategy is fulfilled effectively. Combined, they form a kind of a basis which enables to create an effective management process<sup>15</sup>.

New development and the organisational trend is to be created, covering the rules shared by scientists and managers. The rules are to pertain to recognising and defining the organisational reality, to formulating cognitive and pragmatic methods and principles designed to shape managers' competencies.

However, it does not change the fact that in the worldwide economy, one may find respected concepts connected with the management of the company, among which one can distinguish<sup>16</sup>:

- Sustainable development and sustainable enterprise
- Responsible business
- Partnership
- Flexibility, adaptability of behaviours and organisational solutions
- Intellectual capital and knowledge
- Entrepreneurship.

Continuous changes occurring in the environment, the fixed and hierarchical management system oblige us to create a new paradigm based on new guidelines, principles and operating rules of the enterprise. To construct an enterprise of the future, one needs to remodel the management structure, principles of data gathering, and more

<sup>11</sup> Dźwigoł H. *Unternehmensmanagement im 21. Jahrhundert*. Edition Winterwork Borsdorf, Germany 2014.

<sup>12</sup> Płoszajski P., (Ed.). *Przerażony kameleon. Eseje o przyszłości zarządzania*. Fundacja Rozwoju Edukacji Menedżerskiej SGH, Warszawa 2005, pp. 12–18.

<sup>13</sup> Morawski M. *Metody zarządzania*. In Morawski M., Niemczyk J., Perechuda K., Stańczyk-Hugiet E., (Eds.). *Zarządzanie. Kanony i trendy*. C.H. Beck, Warszawa, 2010, p. 229.

<sup>14</sup> Rokita J. Dylematy stojące przed zarządzaniem strategicznym. In Rokita J., Grudzewski W.M., (Eds.). *Strategie korporacji działających w skali ponadnarodowej*. Górnośląska Wyższa Szkoła Handlowa, Katowice 2006, pp. 93–103.

<sup>15</sup> Kaplan R.S., Norton D.P. *Dopasowanie w biznesie. Jak stosować strategiczną kartę wyników. ALIGNMENT*. Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2011, p. 343.

<sup>16</sup> Nogalski B., Rutka R. *Kluczowe kwestie współczesnego rozwoju nauk o zarządzaniu w Polsce. Współczesne kierunki nauk o zarządzaniu*. Księga jubileuszowa z okazji 50-lecia pracy naukowej i dydaktycznej profesora Jerzego Rokity. Górnośląska Wyższa Szkoła Handlowa, Katowice 2007, pp. 47–48.

and more effective use of resources<sup>17</sup>. It is also necessary to employ managers having defined competencies and explicitly determined tasks in order to meet the set targets. Nowadays, enterprises' survival and development are determined by<sup>18</sup>:

- Ability to stay ahead of changes
- Focus on function processes
- Adjustment of management methods to new fulfilment conditions
- Effective management of the process of change, focus on creating effective attitudes or behaviours of employees
- Focus on creating effective processes.

Enjoying the status of the modern enterprise equals achieving skills to operate in the world of uncertainty and continuous, dynamic, and leap changes. What does the notion of a 'modern enterprise' means nowadays? What is now perceived as a tradition, used to be viewed as a novelty<sup>19</sup>. The management of the enterprise, some techniques, methods or concepts are subject, within the scope of 'modernity', to certain popular trends. By yielding to them, both scientists and practitioners give proof of their lack of foresight<sup>20</sup>.

### **Interim Management as a New Concept of the Company Management**

Interim management is an answer to changes taking place in the business environment. The following are the reasons underlying the occurrence of the said approach or concept<sup>21</sup>:

- More and more cut-throat competition, arising from the globalisation of markets, combined with the removal of entry barriers — e.g. in the European Union, to name just one
- An aggravating uncertainty of tomorrow, being a consequence of the increased risks: operational, financial, political risks, etc. A loss of economic security in the business
- Growing influence and role of consumers — access to information employing the internet

- A more and more essential role of innovativeness and flexibility of economic processes
- Dynamic changes occurring in the companies' economic and business environments.

The interim management is a notion having numerous interpretations and definitions, e.g.<sup>22</sup>..

- It is to make use of the top executives to achieve considerable results in particular areas or within the scope of the fulfilment of defined goals, for fixed remunerations and based on a fixed-term contract

• It is a temporary provision of the management-related resources and skills. The management is also treated as supporting an experienced interim manager in managing during a transition period, crisis or a change inside the company

- It is a form of the application of managerial competencies; it involves the permanent employment of top managers to deal with a particular problem

• It is temporary management of the company or its part by a selected interim manager

- It is a temporary activity within the company, defined as to its purpose and scope, carried out by a natural person, destined to achieve defined and determined business results, and based on the co-operation and participation in risks and profits concerning the achievement of desired results<sup>23</sup>

- It is a temporary handing-over of the company or its part to be managed by a selected interim manager, to introduce changes in particular or all areas of its activity — Henryk Dźwigoł.

The interim management makes use of the tools elaborated within the scope of the project management, i.e. the project's duration and budget, as well as the company's resources.

That is why the entrepreneurs have more and more frequent recourse to the solution in question. One can enumerate some factors, namely:<sup>24</sup>

- Focus on key competencies

<sup>17</sup> Malara Z. Przedsiębiorstwo w globalnej gospodarce. Wyzwania współczesności. PWN, Warszawa 2006, p. 11.

<sup>18</sup> Nogalski B., Rutka R. Kluczowe..., pp. 43–44.

<sup>19</sup> Zieniewicz K. Od Taylora do postmodernizmu. „Współczesne Zarządzanie”, no. 1, 2007, p. 25.

<sup>20</sup> Dźwigoł H. Zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem w warunkach XXI wieku. Wydawnictwo Politechniki Śląskiej. Gliwice 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Rytka E. Nowość w zarządzaniu. In Buchajska-Wróbel M., Wendt R., Rytka E., Gasparski J., Gajda K., Menedżer do zadań specjalnych. Czasowe zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem. Helion, Gliwice, 2011, p. 22.

<sup>22</sup> Buchajska-Wróbel M., Wendt R., Rytka E., Gasparski J., Gajda K., Menedżer do zadań specjalnych. Czasowe zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem. Helion, Gliwice, 2011, pp. 18–19.

<sup>23</sup> Wendt R. Zrozumieć interim management. In Buchajska-Wróbel M., Wendt R., Rytka E., Gasparski J., Gajda K., Menedżer do zadań specjalnych. Czasowe zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem. Helion, Gliwice, 2011, p. 19.

<sup>24</sup> Buchajska-Wróbel M., Wendt R., Rytka E., Gasparski J., Gajda K., Menedżer do zadań specjalnych. Czasowe zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem. Helion, Gliwice, 2011, p. 22.



- Growing demand for efficiency and effectiveness of actions being taken
- A drive to reduce risks connected to the achieved profits
- An emphasis on innovativeness.

The interim managers can boast their many-year, proven experience in the chosen sector and selected area of their professional activity. The company hires an interim manager to conclude a given project in a given time. The interim managers are held accountable for a potential success or failure of the project, as well as the achievement of anticipated results. The interim management is a solution found useful in critical situations where difficult decisions, mainly about the reorganisation of the company, need to be made.

It should be highlighted that interim managers assume direct responsibility for the effects of works being carried out. Furthermore, they take risk related to the fulfilment of the anticipated goals, as their remuneration depends on the goal achievement.

However, there may occur some factors on which the interim manager will have no influence. Therefore, his/her agreement with the employer has to provide for some flexibility in that respect.

Experience has shown that a lack of co-operation or incoherent actions taken by the company's management board is the greatest threat to the successful completion of the project by the interim manager. This problem may be solved by providing the interim manager with respective authorisations as to the management of the company. Indeed, it is not a sheer consultancy service provided by a hired entity; it is but purchasing a person and his/her knowledge and experience to obtain an added value.

It needs to be highlighted that to operate as an interim manager; one should not focus only on carrying out management-related projects. One should re-evaluate one's approach to a professional career, conducted tasks and one's employer who, from now on, play the role of one's client. It is also necessary to be financially independent, to be able to support one's family and oneself. Not everyone can act as an interim manager, due to, at least, the risks to be taken. Everyone knows that the profit made on risk avoidance is often smaller than the profit that might be achieved, provided that a person is willing to accept the risks. Bear

in mind: it is better not to achieve your goal than never leave your home<sup>25</sup>.

The interim managers should be characterised by the following features and achievements:<sup>26</sup>

- Have relevant experience, which allows them to make use of proven methods when dealing with clients
- Lead a stable life, which guarantees that they are less prone to be influenced by various behaviours
- Seek challenges since interim managers are hired where competences of an ordinary manager do not suffice
- Are open to new tasks and goals, which allows improving their performance
- Are proud of achieved effects, hold positions not just because they seek power
- Have been successful in their professional life.

Desired qualities of interim managers (the Author's enumerated the qualities according to their importance):<sup>27</sup>

- Communication skills
- Belief in themselves and their abilities
- Resistance to stress
- Ability to embrace changes
- Self-discipline
- Project-based approach
- Knowledge and expertise
- Effectiveness in action.

It needs to be underlined that the market of interim management in Poland has been developing slowly. This situation has been caused, in particular, by:<sup>28</sup>

- Potential clients are unaware that such a service exists
- A lack of standards determining the principles for co-operation, as well as expectations of both the interim manager and the principal

<sup>25</sup> Rytka E. Nowość w zarządzaniu. In Buchajska-Wróbel M., Wendt R., Rytka E., Gasparski J., Gajda K., Menedżer do zadań specjalnych. Czasowe zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem. Helion, Gliwice, 2011, p. 23.

<sup>26</sup> Wendt R. Zrozumieć interim management. In Buchajska-Wróbel M., Wendt R., Rytka E., Gasparski J., Gajda K., Menedżer do zadań specjalnych. Czasowe zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem. Helion, Gliwice, 2011, pp. 32–35.

<sup>27</sup> Opracowanie własne na podstawie: Wendt R. Zrozumieć interim management. In Buchajska-Wróbel M., Wendt R., Rytka E., Gasparski J., Gajda K., Menedżer do zadań specjalnych. Czasowe zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem. Helion, Gliwice, 2011, p. 36.

<sup>28</sup> Wendt R. Zrozumieć interim management. In Buchajska-Wróbel M., Wendt R., Rytka E., Gasparski J., Gajda K., Menedżer do zadań specjalnych. Czasowe zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem. Helion, Gliwice, 2011, pp. 39–40.

- A lack of interim managers offering high-quality services.

Due to the economic development of the country, the said type of service has started to develop, mainly as a result of:<sup>29</sup>

- Structural economic changes
- Strict labour law
- Heavy fiscal burdens
- A growing interest in project-based work among employees and employers.

The following are some factors that hinder the development of the interim management: lack of information and lack of awareness that such a service exists, lack of readiness to accept an innovative product, a complex legal system, unclear tax provisions, high risk that needs to be accepted by both sides.

The experience and knowledge of the interim managers allow them to evaluate the employees' competencies, and chances whether the company can complete the project on its own. The interim manager's wide competencies as to project management, controlling, cost budgeting, finances and cash flows allow to adopt a more flexible approach and guarantee that needs arising from new tasks will be anticipated more quickly. The project management is strictly connected with the management of an interim project. A permanent monitoring of the performance of the project is an important part of interim management.

Will the interim managers be appreciated in the company? They will, provided that they are duly authorised, regarding the nature of a given project. Interim managers are usually employed based on civil-law agreements, i.e. mandate contracts. An interim manager is a person who does the "dirty work"; thus, the company's management board can shift on him/her some responsibility for unpopular decisions, such as, for instance, staff reduction. It is extremely important, within the scope of projects being executed, to train a successor. Training the

successor guarantees that the chosen direction will be maintained; especially because the successor poses no threat to the interim manager, since the latter's role is but temporary. Hence, the interim manager may simultaneously bridge a competence gap in the company<sup>30</sup>.

## Conclusion

Interim management focuses on innovativeness. It creates *value innovation* — a strategy that encompasses the entire system of companies' activities, whereas any improvements might also be introduced in particular areas of the activity.

The interim management of the company is based on the project management method that involves perceiving the company as a set of "autonomous" projects, enjoying full effectiveness.

A modern approach to the company management should be based on short-term enterprises, recreating themselves in other forms from accumulated capitals, making use of external resources and activities performed by persons from the company's environment and not from the inside of the company in question.

It is becoming necessary to seek a sort of more dynamic management. Present circumstances, laid with factors of highly uncertain character, result in the fact that strategic planning, especially in its scenario version, has become of significant importance<sup>31</sup>.

Achieving a competitive edge will be dependent on sound knowledge management and a selection of information critical for a company. The success of a company is nowadays determined by outstanding individuals, able to make use of opportunities, and skilled at managing resources.

<sup>29</sup> Rytka E. Nowość w zarządzaniu. In Buchajska-Wróbel M., Wendt R., Rytka E., Gasparski J., Gajda K., Menedżer do zadań specjalnych. Czasowe zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem. Helion, Gliwice, 2011, pp. 40–42.

<sup>30</sup> Rytka E., Nowość w zarządzaniu. In Buchajska-Wróbel M., Wendt R., Rytka E., Gasparski J., Gajda K., Menedżer do zadań specjalnych. Czasowe zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem. Helion, Gliwice, 2011, pp. 46–55.

<sup>31</sup> Falshaw J.R., Glaister K.W., Tatoglu E. Evidence on Formal Strategic Planning and Company Performance. *Management Decision*, vol. 44, 2006, pp. 9–30; Leggio K.B., Bodde D.L., Taylor M.L., (eds.). *Managing Enterprise Risk. What the Electric Industry Experience Implies for Contemporary Business*. Elsevier, Oxford, Amsterdam 2006, pp. 16–32.

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## Промежуточное управление как новый подход к управлению компанией

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**Аннотация.** В статье представлена важность привлечения временных менеджеров в условиях быстрых изменений бизнес-среды. Было подчеркнуто значение промежуточного управления как современного подхода к управлению. Автор также размышляет о том, как следует управлять компаниями будущего. Кроме того, автор изложил свой собственный опыт и выводы, полученные в ходе реализации проектов, которые он осуществлял в качестве временного управляющего. Акцентируется внимание читателей на влияние временного управления на организационное предпринимательство.

**Ключевые слова:** промежуточное управление; промежуточные менеджеры; система управления знаниями; парадигмы осознания и интеллекта