Effective Remote Work in Human Resource Management

Jekaterina Pankova, MSc., lecturer, Riga Stradiņš University

Henrijs Kalkis, Ph.D., professor University of Latvia

Corresponding author:
jekaterina.pankova@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Companies have to adopt and introduce new management approaches which allow them to develop products faster at the same time eliminating waste in product development processes. Methods such as Kanban (considered as Lean method), Scrum (considered as Agile method) offer approaches and tools for human resource management (HRM) with aim to achieve short and long term goals, keep continuous and stable workflow for product development, develop competence and increase motivation of the team members. These methods require close cooperation, teams must be good at self-organization, as they are responsible for the result which they are producing. It takes full involvement from each team member and their presence in the same working space. However, latest changes in work content and job market has required companies to switch to remote work more intensively and the constant presence of team members in one physical working space was lost. As a result, many questions arose regarding the opportunity to use these methods fully and achieve previously expected working results. Purpose of the research is to analyze the use of Kanban and Scrum methods in HRM for effective remote work.

RESULTS

Scrum and Kanban methods have similar goals - to minimize work in progress, unfinished work and increase output or product deliveries. Both methods can be used for distributed teams, however, physical cooperation and task boards are better for the team. In comparison with Kanban, Scrum is a clearly defined, highly disciplined framework. The Kanban method can be applied more easily than Scrum, as it is a "start-where-you-are" approach.

It is concluded that remote work requires easy communication opportunities. It is vital to have discussions about difficult work situations and have a feeling of solidarity. Teams need to communicate not only about work-related topics, but employees' wellbeing issues and collaboration as well. It is important to give power to the team to solve problems without management involvement.

Several essential needs for remote HRM were identified: KPIs need to clearly show employees' working results; communication in a team is essential for team's productivity and helps team members develop a sense of belonging; HR needs to care more about motivation issues, engagement and wellbeing; structured working process is essential for productive remote work.

METHODOLOGY

The following research methods were used: literature review was done to compare the tools and approaches for human resource management. Qualitative research method - expert interviews - was conducted to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of effective remote work and employees engagement issues during remote work.

Main criteria for engagement of experts were: more than 15 years' experience in human resource management; experience working in 3 and more companies; experience working in companies that have introduced Scrum or Kanban methods. The main questions in the expert interview were: "What do you think are the main challenges of remote human resource management?", "What are the advantages of remote human resource management?", "How do you keep employees engaged during remote work?". All answers were analyzed and summarized jointly.

CONCLUSION, CONTRIBUTION AND NOVELTY

Authors of the research believe that team's communication and structured ways of working in case of remote work become critically important.

It is concluded that the main challenges of remote HRM are: fewer control opportunities; work/private life balance issues; engagement and wellbeing issues; fewer opportunities for informal communication; structured working process organization. The main advantages of remote HRM are: higher productivity at the management level; decrease in the number of business trips and costs.

BIONOTE

Jekaterina Pankova, Mg.sc.soc., lecturer for Riga Stradins University, has developed and conduct Business Process Improvement and Project Management courses. Jekaterina has 15 years' experience in project and program management of business change processes for strategic profit and efficiency improvement in banking sector: internal process reengineering and automatization, development of new process workflows, employee's capacity evaluation and identification of wastes, development of new work organizational approaches.

Henrijs Kalkis, Ph.D. in Management Sciences. Henrijs hold professor position at the University of Latvia, as well as he is co-founder and board member of Latvian Ergonomics Society. Henrijs is certified European ergonomist (Eur.Erg.), council member of International Ergonomics Association (IEA), council member of Federation of the European Ergonomics Societies (FEES), council member of Centre for Registration of European Ergonomists (CREE). He has more than 50 publications in Ergonomics and Business Management journals, 5 books related to research topics. Henrijs Kalkis was Fulbright visiting Scholar at the PennState university, USA.

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