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**CAREER OF „IAN STATISTIC”
BASED ON THE NEW HRM STRATEGY OF THE
HUNGARIAN CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE**

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I. INTRODUCTION

A new HRM strategy for 2014-2020 has been compiled in the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO). It takes into account the national and international environment, foreseen challenges of the following years and the current status of HRM in the office. As a top-down approach, institutional strategic goals and principles of practice related to human resources have been taken into consideration, and as a bottom-up approach the results of institutional workshops on organisational development have been included. The document is in search of answers to the question: how should HRM work more successfully, more cost-effectively, in a modern way, with less resources available and satisfying organisational needs at the same time.

This paper follows the career path of „Ian Statistic” - a fictional newcomer who enters HCSO at an early stage of his career - explaining strategic HRM goals and actions on the way.

Ian first meets HCSO at a competition organised for college students, or at a university career event, since we manage cooperation agreements with universities and high schools, organise educational competitions, lectures and participate at career days. We also offer an internship in HCSO, while he is mentored and a few orientation programs are organised for newcomers. In case his performance is positively assessed by his mentor and he applies for a job, we register him in our recruitment database, from which we select potential candidates for vacant positions. After passing a two-stage interview and an application test - which contains both practical and motivational questions – he is employed for a job. During probation period Ian participates in a career-orientational program, which includes trainings, mentoring system and possibly job rotation. Every half-a-year his performance is assessed, the results of which provides basis for a few HRM actions like motivation, training and development. After passing the obligatory basic public service exam, an individual training plan is compiled for him every year and he collects credit points for participation at compulsory trainings. Along his career we motivate in different ways the talented Ian in order to retain him at HCSO. If he still decides to leave, we take an exit interview with him to find out his reasons for leaving and we use the results to develop HRM functions further.

This paper does not present all development ideas of our new strategic document and does not even cover all HRM functions either. Only those few HRM actions are described here that are closely related to managing the career path of our fictional character: Ian Statistic.

II. HRM STRATEGY OF HCSO 2014-2020

Human resource management (HRM) is gaining more importance worldwide while IT development is getting faster and faster, including IT infrastructure of HRM. In Hungary, government organisations are still facing budget cuts, therefore importance of cost-efficiency is increasing and there is also a tendency of deregulation and simplification of procedures. Besides we have an increasing external determination of HRM, which means more collective government rules and regulations for public service, but less independent institutional HRM. However, in the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) we have to face increasing internal expectations from both managers and staff members, while our resources are decreasing and responsibilities are expanding.

Consequently, top management of HCSO approved a new human resource management strategy in July, 2014. The new strategic document is in search of answers to the question: **during the next few years, how should HRM work in the statistical office more successfully, more cost-effectively, in a modern way, with less resources available and satisfying organisational needs at the same time?**

The structure of the strategic document is the following.

- I. Analysis of the environment (national and international overview, best practices, SWOT)
- II. Our vision for 2020 and HRM strategic goals
- III. Status analysis, expectable challenges and development ideas for each HRM functions
 1. Recruitment system
 2. Selection system
 3. Job system
 4. Career development
 5. Performance appraisal system
 6. Motivation system
 7. Work environment and CSR
 8. Outplacement
 9. Training system
 10. HR administration and communication
- IV. Summary

The following main factors determine our new HRM strategy.



Our vision for 2020 - from the aspect of human resource management - is the following.

- HCSO becomes an attractive workplace among public service institutions;
- Clear managerial and professional career paths are defined, which are also supported by an orientational program for newcomers, mentoring system and possibility of job rotation, practice-based performance appraisal and efficient motivation system in order to retain valuable staff members;
- In a knowledge-based organisational culture an efficient in-house training system supports the development of competences of staff members and we successfully co-operate with universities for example in running a master program and a doctorate school in official statistics;
- The HRM section works as an internal service, offering more efficient support for staff members and co-operation with other departments;
- Community awareness is increased and administrative HRM work is significantly reduced.

III. WHO IS IAN STATISTIC?

Ian Statistic (with Hungarian name order: Statistic Ian) is a 18-year-old fictional character, who is studying in an economics-oriented high school in Hungary. He is interested either in economics, mathematics, sociology, IT or all of them. Potentially he plans to continue studying at a university and later maybe working as a StatisticIan as well.

He and his career path are the subjects of this paper: how our statistical office tries to attract and retain him in its staff and what actions are planned to be undertaken during his career, based on our new HRM strategy. The paper follows his 6 main career stages as a statistician and describes the HRM actions, which may influence his career in the HCSO.

IV. CAREER STAGES

1. High school and university studies

It is both a governmental and our institutional human resource management principle that potential future staff members need to be reached at an early stage of their professional career. We find it important, to appear even in high schools, this way young „Ian Statistic” may first meet official statistics and the national statistical institute at a **statistics competition** organised for high school students. HRM section of the office needs to provide support in organising such events, as well as **institutional open-days, or student information days in HCSO**, which include programs like guided tour in the building and presentations on history of national statistics and so on.

HCSO has also signed **co-operation agreements with 14 universities** in Hungary. Thanks to these official statistics receives more publicity at universities and Ian can get informed about HCSO career possibilities at **university career events**, learn official statistics at **lectures of HCSO staff members**, or he may also join statistical **research programs**. It is also a possibility for him to write **publications** in HCSO’s journals or appear with research results on a forum provided for young talents inside the office.

Still during his studies, Ian may become an **intern** in HCSO, which is probably the best way to get a potential new staff member engaged to us. At first, based on his interest we try to find the most suitable department for him and our capacities at an interview and then we provide him a mentor, who’s responsibilities include giving support for his thesis if needed. During his stay, we organise a few introductory programs for the group of interns staying at HCSO, like a visit to the Research Room, Library, etc. At the end of the internship, Ian’s performance is

assessed by his mentor and we also ask for Ian's feedback to further develop the system of internship. Depending on the results of his evaluation and his intentions regarding the future, we may even register him in our recruitment database.

2. Finding a job

After finishing university Ian is probably looking for a suitable job. Hopefully he is thinking about a career in HCSO, nevertheless, he needs to understand that we can not really offer a competitive salary for young graduates. Unfortunately - compared to private sector corporations - **we have limited possibilities on the field of attracting Y and Z generations** on the labour market, due to governmental regulations (eg. we cannot offer flexible working hours etc.) and budget cuts. We are definitely not attractive enough for the youngs, and we could not invent the „panacea” just yet, but we still have a few means of motivation, which are described later in this paper.

In our **recruitment database** Ian may register (if he has not done so far, after his internship) even if we do not have vacant positions. He may also find our **job advertisements** online and apply for one of them. When he comes to a job interview he is **evaluated** by both the line manager and the HR staff member present and he also needs to pass an **entry test**, that contains both professional (practical) and career motivational questions.

3. Socialization and career orientation

After being successfully chosen Ian starts his **probation period** in HCSO, which takes generally 6 months. During that period he participates in a **career-orientational program**, which practically includes a **training for newcomers** and a **mentoring system**, possibly **job rotation** as well, all in order to support his socialization in the office. At the end of probation period (later after every half-a-year) his **performance is evaluated** and based on the results of that, his manager may decide to keep him as permanent staff in the office.

Throughout his socialization period he is provided an **HR-contact person**, who follows his integration (together with other newcomers) and gives him any support if needed.

4. Moving up the ladder

After probation time Ian starts his professional career at HCSO. Currently, we have a quite centralised system in the Hungarian public service regarding career paths of government

officials, which means rules and regulations for classification and salaries of public servants. Therefore, Ian can only step upwards in the system, though the **results of his objective performance appraisal** provides a basis for a few of our HRM actions like **motivation, training and development**. For example receiving lower points on analytic skills will result in delegation of Ian to a vocational training on statistical analysis. Later if he improves those skills and composes outstanding publications he may receive salary bonus for a year.

Depending on those results he may be registered in a „second-line” supply database of future experts or future managers so we can offer **professional or managerial career paths** for him.

5. Professional development and motivation

We conscientiously care for professional development of our staff members. After passing the basic public service exam (maximum 1 year after becoming a staff member) Ian enters the **compulsory training system**. It means that an **individual training plan** is compiled for him every year and he needs to collect a compulsory amount of credit points for participation at both public service and professional, statistical trainings.

After all these obligations (however, the possibility of learning gratis should also be considered a motivational factor) it is self-evidently very important to value Ian Statistic’s performance and motivate him by both **financial and non-financial incentives, bonuses, and provide different ways of compensation** and support. Just to mention a few of those that Ian may receive:

- Educational support (eg. for EMOS studies: study contract including extra holiday and financial support)
- Qualification bonus (eg. after gaining PhD. degree)
- International studies (eg. participation on ESTP trainings)
- Professional expert title – rewarded for long-time outstanding performance
- Salary bonus (up to +50% of basic salary) depending on performance evaluation results
- Housing loan contract, etc.

Most of these motivation methods are closely connected to professional performance or knowledge, which is very important. Also our contracts include a kind of „retainment clause” meaning that in return for certain financial support, Ian is required to stay as a staff member in HCSO for a few years.

We also organise active **social life in the office, as well as family-friendly measures** in order to make Ian feel comfortable and content at his workplace. We provide him sporting discounts and organise cultural events, family events, and so on.

6. Passing the baton

No matter how successfully we motivate Ian, one day he will decide to resign and leave the office. It also depends on us though, when it is going to happen. Anyhow, if he is not leaving for pension at an old age, we take an **exit interview** with him in order to find out his reasons for leaving. We **use the results** of that to develop our HRM actions further and pass the useful information to managers, to see where we may have some problems that make people leave.

We also find it important to give Ian **mentoring tasks before he leaves**, in order to retain his useful knowledge in our office, since we can not retain the person himself.

And even after leaving for pension, we may also offer him a **lecturing contract** to have him as an expert lecturer **at in-house statistical training programs** and this way let him pass his knowledge and experiences to our younger staff members.

V. SUMMARY

We imagine the above described career as a kind of ideal statistician career path, based on actions of our new HRM strategy in the HCSO. In this paper only those points of the career path were emphasized, where the HRM section can actually interfere with any actions. But these are very important points, where I think we not just can, but have to interfere, in order to support careers of statisticians. And that is the reason why HRM staff is employed: to support.

Of course, not all staff members may be working in a national statistical institute all along their lives. Certainly, it is possible that someone enters HCSO at any stage of this visioned career path – then we can continue with actions relevant after that point. But if we manage to realise our development ideas, I'm sure our fictional character may even come to reality: we can make a young Ian Statistic become a real dedicated and satisfied statistician expert, who spends his career in the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. And that's what I call successful HR management in a statistical institution!

Budapest, 25th September 2014.