

CHALLENGES OF EMPLOYEE SELECTION IN THE MINING INDUSTRY

Boryana Trifonova¹

¹University of Mining and Geology "St. Ivan Rilski", 1700 Sofia, e-mail: boriana_trifonova@abv.bg

ABSTRACT. Bulgarian raw-mineral industry has expectations for price increasing of basic raw materials. This guarantees sustainable development of the mining industry which is related to technological and staff investments. Good decisions at staff selection create basis for more effective company performance. Some of the problems of staff selection in the mining industry are explored in this report. The aim is to establish what worries the jobseekers in this branch. The paper explores some opportunities how the mining companies can become more attractive for qualified staff.

Key words: mining industry, staff selection.

ПРОБЛЕМИ ПРИ ПОДБОРА НА КАДРИ В МИННО-ДОБИВНАТА ПРОМИШЛЕНОСТ

Боряна Трифонова¹

¹Минно-геоложки университет "Св. Иван Рилски", 1700 София, e-mail: boriana_trifonova@abv.bg

РЕЗЮМЕ. Българската суровинно-минерална индустрия има очаквания за повишение на цените на основните суровини. Това гарантира устойчивото развитие на бранша, което е свързано с технологични и кадрови инвестиции. Добрите решения при подбора на кадри създават основата за по-ефективно функциониране на предприятията.

В доклада се изследват някои от проблемите при подбора на кадри в минно-добивната промишленост. Целта е да се установи от какво естество са притесненията на кандидатите за работа в тази промишленост. Посочени са възможности, как предприятията от минно-добивната промишленост да станат привлекателни за квалифицираните кадри.

Ключови думи: минно-добивна промишленост, подбор на кадри

Introduction

Employee selection is an important issue in Bulgaria, especially nowadays. Contemporary economics is characterized by new techniques and technology, permanent changes in normative basis, worsening labor market, negative demographic trend and fast growing old knowledge and skills of job applicants. Unlike material resources, which can easily be bought, human talent and "know-how" are hard to find. The most important and responsible management decisions are those related to staff selection. Without appropriate people in their right places, neither companies, nor industry or society as whole, could prosper and develop.

Problems at staff selection

Over the last years, there has been an imbalance between deficiency of qualified staff and registered unemployed in labor offices in Bulgaria. This problem is especially significant in industrial companies, where lack of competent specialists makes manufacturing processes far more difficult. That's why companies are obliged to hire young people currently graduating from their higher and secondary education and to rely on their professional preparation. At the same time, "fast technological developments give rise to the need of fast update

of existing competences and new professions with new skills, synchronized with the progress" (BMGK, 2013, p.5). All this predetermines the increasing cooperation between business, secondary professional and higher engineering educational institutions in solving problems. The Bulgarian Chamber of Mining and Geology trusts in good practices of creation and usage of active tools for collaboration between educational institutions and business. Some of these tools are: participation in development of material base at practices, paid internships and trainings for newcomers and periodic ones for already employed.

Another problem of staff selection in the mining industry is the low motivation for working in manufacturing companies. Motivating factors in bigger mining companies are high salaries, improved work conditions, periodic improvements of work methods, care for the people and environment. However, these are not announced to the wide audience. Media constantly focuses only on the occurring problems in the industry. All this creates the impression of persistent risk for health and environment, low salaries and bad work conditions. No attention is paid to main incentives for young people such as opportunities for development and career growth. A new concept is needed. A concept that will represent mining companies and will make them attractive for young people and will meet their needs.

Analisis of the survey

51 questionnaires were filled in by students in the 2nd and 3rd years of study from all majors at the University of Mining and Geology "St. Ivan Rilski" (UMG). Ten questions were distributed as follows:

- Personal questions – age, permanent place of work, tendency of moving to another place to work;
- Questions about reasons for choosing a job – attitudes to work in the industry, choice between the following motives: high salary, provided benefits, not physical labor, team work, good work conditions, other motives given by the respondents;
- Knowledge of mining sub-sector – whether respondents have ever worked in such a company, their preparation for that kind of profession, specifying actual company from the branch and what it is attractive with;
- Recommendations from respondents to companies.

Based on the analysis of the survey, some conclusions of the deficiency of work force in the mining industry can be made. The aim is to establish what worries jobseekers in this sub-sector and to expose some opportunities for mining companies to be more attractive to qualified staff.

Personal questions

- Age – 63% up to 25 years old, 20% between 25 and 30, 17% over 30 years old;
- Permanent place of work – 61% over 25 years old and less for up to 25. The same percentage of answers as in the first question;
- Tendency of moving to another place to work – 61% YES, 39% NO. Reasons for "YES" are better payment, better work conditions, and opportunities for realization and perspectives for professional development. The main reason for "NO" is family engagement.

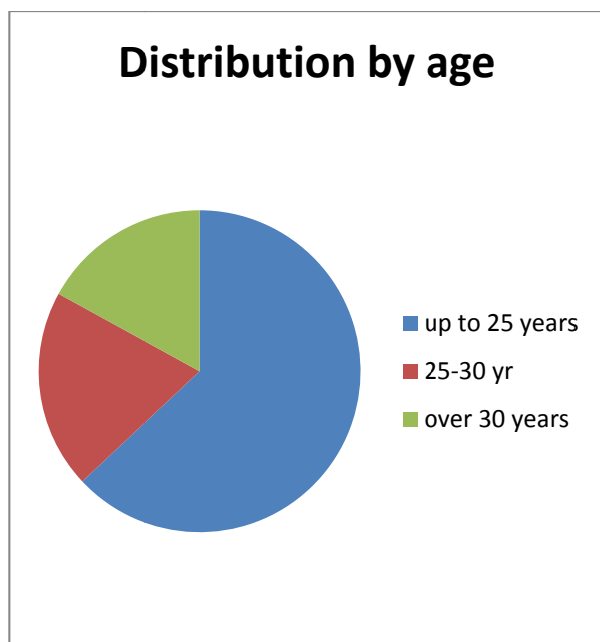


Fig.1. Distribution by age



Fig.2. Would I move to another job

REASONS FOR CHOOSING A JOB

- Are you willing to work in a mining company? – 70% YES (makes good impression), 30% NO. Motives for "YES" are: useful, interesting, profitable, good conditions, perspective, development opportunities, dream job, main livelihood in the living place of the student. Motives for "NO" are high health risk, polluted air, and physical difficulty.
- Reasons for choosing a job – 78% high salary and good work conditions, 48% team work, 29% provided benefits (accommodation, car, canteen) Other given motives are opportunities for trainings and developments, pleasure.

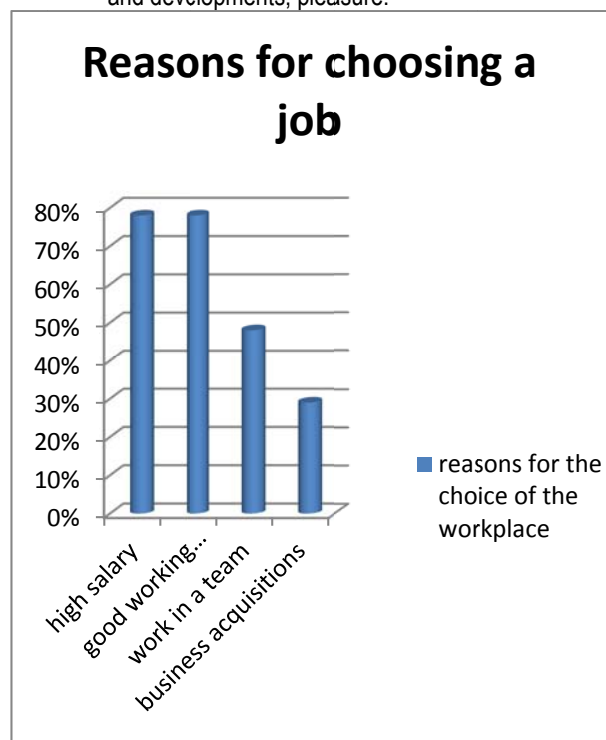


Fig.3. Reasons for choosing a job

Knowledge of the mining sub-sector

- Have you ever worked in a mining company? – 86% Never, 6% Several months (probably internship), 8% YES;

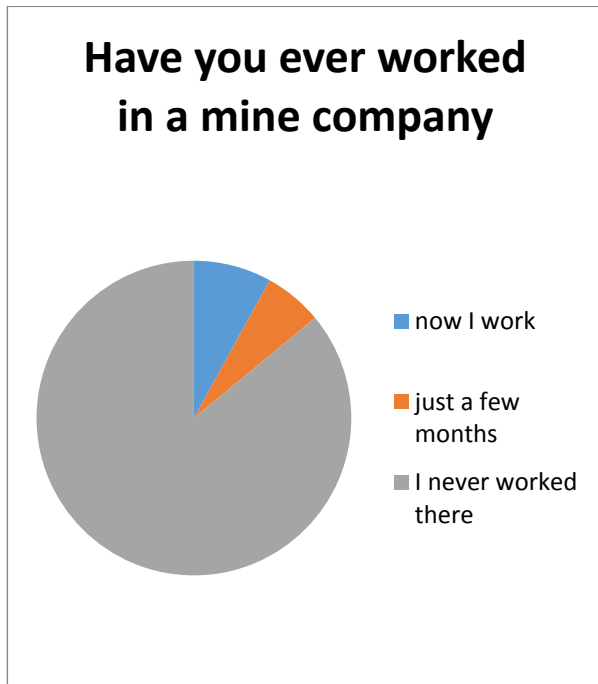


Fig.4. Have you ever worked in a mining company

- Do you feel ready to start working? – 65% NO, 35% YES. Main reasons for “NO” are limited practical trainings and short practices at the university;
- Specify a mine company, which according to you, responds most to the requirements of job applicants? More than 50% are blank answers. Asarel Medet has 12 remarks, Dundee Precious Metals – 9, Zlatna Panega Cement – 7, Mini Maritsa Iztok – 6, Elatzite Med – 4, Kaolin – 1, Aurubis – 1, Vagledobiv Bobov Dol – 1. They are attractive with good salaries and work conditions, modern techniques and technology, development opportunities, care for human safety and environment.

Recommendations to companies in the mining industry

Recommendations, that students give are: more accessible internships, care for the environment, trainings before starting work, advertising the professions, activity awareness campaigns, stimulating employees, attention to newcomers, hire without requiring previous experience. Important conclusion from the survey is that students do not know the real situation in the mining industry. Most of the companies in the branch organize permanent internships and “open doors” to introduce their main activities. However, that kind of information does not reach the students.

The main recommendation for companies is to give publicity to their initiatives such as internships, “open doors”

and events for corporate social responsibility. They should also consider students’ requirements for them.

Conclusion

Knowledge, skills and competences of work force are extremely important for the establishment of quality work places. There are good practices of collaboration between mining companies and professional educational institutions. The range of initiatives should be expanded by including participation in career guidance, in planning of admission of certain professions, in approval of university programs, in ensuring professional realization after graduation. Business should be active participant in the training process of qualified staff. Thus it can rely on employees’ skills long-term.

Another important thing is the establishment of positive presentation of companies in the mining industry through promotion events for corporate social responsibility. Changing public attitudes towards this branch will lead to influx of people willing to work and to develop in the mining industry.

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