

TRENDS IN HR: HOW TO KEEP THE JOB IN THE UNSTABLE VUCA-WORLD

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Abstract. The author analyzes a term “VUCA-world”, identifies its basic components and determines the ways of how to keep the job, internal balance and harmony in the modern unstable world.

Key words: VUCA-world, volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, HR-management, trend, vision, understanding, clarity, agility.

ТРЕНДЫ В HR: КАК СОХРАНИТЬ РАБОТУ В НЕСТАБИЛЬНОМ VUCA-МИРЕ

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Аннотация. Автор анализирует термин “VUCA-мир”, выделяет его основные составляющие и определяет способы сохранения работы, внутреннего равновесия и гармонии в современном нестабильном мире.

Ключевые слова: VUCA-мир, изменчивость, неопределенность, сложность, неоднозначность, управление персоналом, тренд, видение, понимание, ясность, гибкость.

The world has started to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and the news about the relaxation of quarantine measures forced people to return to our usual business with the hope that everything will quickly return to normal. However, the political and economic situation in the world is very far from being stable [1-6].

This type of world has acquired its own name – VUCA-world. The acronym is actually not so new as it may seem and penetrated the business vocabulary after the mortgage crisis of 2008. But COVID-19 pandemic made its own adjustments, and the concept began to spread far beyond business starting to affect the private life [7-11].

First of all, the author considers it necessary to spell the acronym out. VUCA is an acronym that combines four concepts that fully reveal the essence of the phenomena of the modern era that are beyond human control.

“V” is for “volatility” or impermanence. Changes in all spheres of life are developing with the unreal speed. The morning’s breaking news becomes a cliché in the evening. Markets fluctuate from constantly changing demand, some approaches and tools are immediately replaced by others. Technologies are permanently transforming.

“U” stands for “uncertainty”. Predicting the future is becoming more and more difficult every decade. If a couple of centuries ago it was possible to determine with extreme accuracy how humanity will develop in the next 100 years, today, even on the basis of statistics, it is difficult to make a forecast for at least six months ahead.

“C” stands for “complexity”. Political, economic, social, technological and environmental factors that need to be taken into account when making decisions are multiplying every minute. The more of them, the more difficult it is to analyze the result and the easier it is to get confused in cause-and-effect relationships. In addition, people play a lot of roles at the same time: an employee, a parent, a student, a volunteer, a facilitator. In order not to ruin our career, if suddenly no one needs our profession tomorrow, we have to have a variety of superpowers, from content creation to data analytics.

And finally “A” stands for “ambiguity”. The endless policy of double standards, understatement and secrecy, ideas, terms and speeches blurred like watercolor on paper lead to ambiguous interpretations and deadlock.

VUCA is not a characteristic of a new world in which it is scary to live. This is the key to awareness, or, as they say in the business environment, soft skills that can be learned to navigate this reality. Let's dwell upon them.

The first method of adapting to VUCA world is the de-concentration of attention. It is necessary to develop methodologies for entering the resource state. Mentors should teach to distinguish employees' volitional activity from automated actions, and the basis of training is the position of an active observer. Our body really likes to get used to something and creates roles for certain processes. We begin to act on the basis of such automatisms, get carried away, and our active volitional position goes into the background – as a result, we become like mechanisms. The methodology should be aimed at countering this and returning a person to the present moment [12-18].

The situation of uncertainty shows that it will not work automatically according to previously worked-out schemes. One needs to behave differently, look for new approaches, and think really creatively. The number of factors that need to be taken into account today exceeds the capacity of consciousness. The reverse property of attention – its de-concentration can help in this. When concentrating, we focus on one object, and everything else becomes the background. De-concentration is a state, in which there is no one object, but there is a background, and all attention is distributed over it. De-concentration leads us into a holistic and intuitive perception of the world. And volitional meditation (observation) leads to the "true self". A person should combine his "I position" with de-concentration. One without the other leads to the loss of personality. Thanks to this symbiosis, people can track external interference and stimuli that turn them into a resource, direct them into action [19-23].

The state of de-concentration is something like mental silence, when the internal dialogue stops, chaos dissipates and everything falls into place. Against the background of this silence, people get rid of the assigned roles, get high productivity, direct resources to solving the necessary tasks, react less to external stimuli, and act creatively and unconventionally.

Cognitive flexibility is another method. In times of constant change, the ability to adapt quickly to them becomes the main skill. Adaptation is based on cognitive flexibility — an ability that can be developed. It requires more mobilization of forces from someone: everything depends on the neuroplasticity of a certain person. The antonym of cognitive flexibility is rigidity, when it is difficult to change the preset settings. We enjoy the future realization of our plans, and people with low cognitive flexibility are literally hurt by the collapse of plans. In order not to perceive changes as a tragedy, you need to be able to throw everything out of your head and use only what is necessary. There are three practices for developing the ability of cognitive flexibility [24-28].

- Quoting the interlocutor. It is worth being aware at the moment of communication, listening carefully to the interlocutor and at any moment being able to quote him, and not being absent-minded. During communication, we remember only half of what we heard.
- Building hypotheses. Watch a stranger and try to fantasize what this person is doing here, where he is going, what he has in his bag, and what his past is. That's what children often do. Going over hypotheses, we can change the quality of thinking and see something beyond the usual rut.
- Change of perspective. It is necessary to literally force yourself to consider other aspects of a situation or task: twist them like a Rubik's cube, discovering new facets. For the VUCA world, this is as relevant as possible.

Emotional Intelligence has been acquiring greater and greater popularity in HR management. This concept was introduced in the 1960s by three American scientists: John Mayer, Peter Salaway and David Caruso. If at the end of the XX century everyone was talking about IQ (analytical mind) as the foundation of success, now self-realization, career building and business are based on our ability to interact with this world and communicate with people – charisma also applies here. Previously, this was treated as a gift from above, but today it turned out that this is a set of skills that can be upgraded.

In the conditions of the VUCA world, emotional intelligence training is not some kind of privilege of the IT community, but a necessity as everyone's mental health will depend on it. In times of crisis and instability, the emotional intelligence is extremely important. Emotional intelligence allows getting away from external experiences deep into ourselves and find out the causes of certain reactions, learn how to manage them.

There are various approaches to the development of emotional intelligence, but the most comprehensive approach is through inner experience. It can be used not only in business, but also in personal life to learn how to interact with family members, loved ones and, most importantly, with yourself. Self-awareness is one of the most important skills. It is necessary to learn to notice and monitor our own

emotions, and only after that we can move on to self-regulation, or emotion management, so that conflicts can be resolved before they have reached the peak point.

Another necessity of the VUCA-world is the so-called lifelong learning. It used to be possible to get a diploma at a university and use it all your life. It doesn't work like this anymore. According to the rules of the VUCA-world, you have to study every day: read articles, books, take courses, watch webinars, learn foreign languages, etc. Accept that now, in order to be on the horse, you will have to study constantly. Tools will change, technologies will improve. And you will have to keep up with all this.

And the last but not the least is mindfulness which means the ability to carefully observe yourself and the world around you with interest and goodwill. Until we have the skill of internal observation, it is useless to answer questions about who I am and where to move? what to do with work or business? what brings me joy and what empties me? Mindfulness is a set of techniques from different practices introduced into secular everyday life. This may include the same meditation or, for example, observation diaries. This is something that both adults and children can practice. With regular practice, mindfulness helps to perceive things that are happening in the world more clearly, sensitively and objectively, to be less susceptible to emotional swings."

Working with mindfulness can be an excellent springboard for other equally important skills of adaptation to the VUCA-world: for example, the ability to work with your resources and energy. Stress resistance is not an innate skill; it is developed due to the quality of sleep, food, high mobility. In the VUCA-world, it is not just a pursuit of trends, but a matter of survival. The better the sleep and overall well-being, the higher the efficiency, the stronger the immune system. Another important point is the development of tolerance to uncertainty. This ability allows you to maintain flexibility of thinking and perceive the crisis as an opportunity for transformation, and not as a tragedy and hopelessness.

In conclusion, it is indispensable to show another approach to interpreting this acronym. The idea of the VUCA Prime model: "Vision", "Understanding", "Clarity" and "Agility" is aimed at overcoming the crisis and making people feel stronger and sure in future.

"Vision" counteracts "volatility". In a hectic time, forming a vision for the future of the company is more important than in normal times. This will help to withstand turbulence, crisis or withstand competition. It is also important that employees also understand where and why the company is going.

"Understanding" counteracts "uncertainty". In order to identify new opportunities, the manager needs to go beyond the boundaries of his competencies. It is important to be flexible, communicate with employees of different levels. Soft skills, in particular communication skills and empathy, play an important role here.

"Clarity" counteracts "complexity". In the VUCA environment, chaos comes fast and hard. It is necessary to quickly determine which strategic areas to focus on in order to get out of the crisis situation as soon as possible.

"Agility" counteracts "ambiguity". Speed refers to the ability to communicate effectively, make and execute decisions quickly.

To live in the VUCA world it is not enough to hire "flexible" managers a company. It is important that they create a VUCA culture that is focused on innovation, adaptive behavior and thoughtful risk.

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