

## Exploration of some of the 7 concepts identified as constituting a “circular” HRM

### Business case : ISTOBAL (Spain)

Interview : Francisco Navarro, Head of HRM.

Date of interview : 21 June 2021

### Context :

ISTOBAL is a leading Spanish multinational group in the design, manufacture and marketing of car wash and car care solutions.

The ISTOBAL Group is among the main European leaders in the car wash and car care sector, thanks to its commitment to internationalisation, innovation, talent development and entrepreneurship. A consolidated network of subsidiaries and distributors allows us to respond with agility and flexibility to the needs of more than 75 markets around the world with pioneering products and services provided by a sales team and a global technical service. ISTOBAL exports its products and services to more than 75 countries on all continents.

ISTOBAL has a staff of more than 850 professionals, in addition to a wide network of distributors.

### Concept 1

**The design of ‘work practices’ and ‘work spaces’, emphasizing maximum positive impact on a worker during his/her employed experience**

To support employee wellbeing, ISTOBAL has implemented the following practices:

- Specific courses to protect the back from musculoskeletal injuries and physiotherapy.
- Nutritionally healthy menus are offered in the company canteen.
- Provides employees with Health Promotion Cards in the workplace.
- Anti-smoking programme
- Healthy Eating Programmes
- Overweight Control Programmes
- Physical Activity Programmes
- Family reconciliation programmes
- Promoting social housing in the area for employees
- Healthy Vending Machines

## Concept 2

**Processes for understanding and responding to workers' needs in order to optimise their redeployment within the company.**

In ISTOBAL, the HR team establishes conversations with employees to guide them on the progress achieved, the next goals and all this in dialogue with the employee to align professional expectations with the development of the achievements reached. All this is discussed with the employee and agreed with them.

For ISTOBAL, one of the main goals is to have objective and transparent criteria on what is expected of the professional and it is important to specify and assess the contribution of each employee in achieving these goals.

On the other hand, they have a special type of training. ISTOBAL has a Collaboration Agreement with the Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPV).

Through the ISTOBAL Chair of the UPV, it contributes to the training of future professionals, promotes research in the engineering sector and drives R&D projects. The ISTOBAL Chair is committed to the talent and innovation generated at the university, and to this end offers various collaboration grants, design competitions, training courses and technical dissemination seminars for the university community.

The ISTOBAL Chair is affiliated to the School of Design Engineering. This initiative contributes to the training of future professionals, promotes research in the field of engineering and promotes R+D+I projects.

Among the activities foreseen in the ISTOBAL Chair are the announcement of prizes for end-of-degree projects, projects and idea competitions, the teaching of complementary training courses, collaboration in master's degrees, as well as the organisation of technical and technological dissemination conferences, and the promotion of national and international meetings of experts in various fields, among others.

With this initiative, the Valencian company, leader in car wash solutions for the automotive industry, reinforces its commitment to the talent, research and innovation generated at the university.

## Concept 3

**Support for the reintegration of a worker so that, after a period of leave or illness (short/long term), he or she can continue to be employed in his or her original function or in a new function within the company.**

They care about the health of their employees before they become ill, by taking action in the company to promote their health and maintain a good quality of life.

They have implemented for instance:

- **The Back School Training (3x3x3)**, which includes 3 minutes in the morning, 3 minutes at the lunch break and 3 minutes at the end of the day of stretching and muscle strengthening exercises, guided by a coach, who is another worker in the section.
- **The Healthy Eating Programmes** to lower the Body Mass Index of the staff and reduce the overweight of the staff, giving them guidelines for healthy eating, balanced diets for their constitution and types of exercise
- They administered the questionnaire "**Population Risk Tool**" (PORT) to all employees, in which they assessed their habits and lifestyles with 9 questions, and calculated the functional age versus biological age. Thanks to that they can inform the worker about the tendency to have a good or bad quality of life.

In any case, if an illness or accident occurs and workers, after this process, present a degree of disability that prevents them from carrying out any of the tasks they have been carrying out until now, their job is adapted and if not, they are relocated to another job that is compatible with their current state of health.

The return to work of a worker after a long illness or accident at work requires an initial Medical Examination to assess the worker's situation and any after-effects that may be incompatible with the requirements of the job. The doctor is the one who determines the worker's suitability because he knows the job and assesses the current clinical condition of the worker, and can certify that he is fit for the performance of his job, or is fit with restrictions of some kind, which will lead to HR, together with the Occupational Physician and determine the necessary adjustments to adapt the job to the new situation or find a job within the alternative company.

### Concept 5

**The categorisation of workers' qualifications, with the aim of planning and implementing strategies centred on the individual and enabling the optimisation of the set of skills identified in the company's ecosystem.**

Twice a year, the company carries out "The Performance Evaluation and Talent Management", which allows them to check the degree of achievement of annual objectives, as well as the level of development of employees' competencies, and to assess performance in order to relocate or take advantage of people's talent.

The Development Plan assigns each employee the competencies they need to develop, an action plan to achieve them and a monitoring system. In addition, their attitudes towards new challenges are analysed in meetings with the managers.

In this matter, it is important for them to involve employees in order to make it an interactive process between them and their direct managers, and to incorporate continuous feedback with constant readjustment of objectives, beyond the traditional annual evaluation.

## Concept 6

### The prioritisation of human centred optimisation over contractual obligation

They have clear that human talent management requires to identify what professional competencies, attitudes and aptitudes their staff need to have in order to perform each of the jobs correctly.

This will help them to recruit the person who best suits the way the company works. In other cases, it will be used to develop a specific strategy that allows employees who are already part of the workforce to exploit their skills.

In their case, they rely on leadership, employee loyalty, training, innovation capacity and employment stability, which has enabled them to withstand crises and continue to grow. They are concerned about aspects such as the commitment or potential of their employees or how to avoid their demotivation.

Detecting internal talent correctly requires the to take into consideration different parameters (productivity, degree of resolution in various fields, training...), which can mean a heavy workload for the HR area.

## NOTA

*The other concepts identified as part of the project (mentoring and worker's transition to the (external) labour market) appear to be less relevant in the specific context of the transformation.*