



# Human Capital Trends Talks with Jolanta Bańczerowska, Member of the Management Board and Chief People Officer (CPO) of Żabka Group

Deloitte's 2023 Global Human Capital Trends survey polled 10,000 business and HR leaders across every industry, with 105 countries participating. The survey data is complemented by interviews with executives from some of today's leading organizations. These insights shaped the trends in this report.

## **Harnessing the workers agency**

Organizations drive value and strengthen their relationship with workers by embracing rising worker influence. This is possible only through open, respectful relationship that gives workers meaningful, mutually beneficial choices and brings them into the decision-making process on issues that touch the workforce. Organizations should start by acknowledging and embracing workers' desire to share authorship of the organization's future and then cocreating that future based on bilateral input.

Jolanta Bańczerowska, Member of the Management Board and CPO of Żabka Group speaks with John Guziak, Deloitte Partner.



**Jolanta Bańczerowska**  
Member of the Management Board and  
CPO of Żabka Group



**John Guziak**  
Deloitte Partner  
Human Capital

### John Guziak

Żabka Group is the ultimate convenience ecosystem that aims to make people's lives easier. Being one of the most recognizable brands in Poland responds to the needs of millions of customers every day. With over 9,600 stores and more than 8,300 franchisees, the importance of listening to your people would need to be essential. I am curious what and how you listened to the voices of your people in the past and what's changed since the pandemic?

### Jolanta Bańcerowska

A few years ago we used only engagement survey and many informal or formal meetings. The coronavirus pandemic forced us to create

more structured approach – employee listening strategy. We implemented quarterly pulse checks, once a year we conduct an engagement survey, and we continue to talk to our stakeholder groups. Additionally, we introduced very formal townhalls, led by Board Members for all Żabka employees. We find that one of most important aspects of those meetings are the question and answers sessions. We do our best to answer all questions in an open forum and in a transparent way. Transparency and openness support our values.

### John Guziak

From your perspective, how did the nature of these questions to employees change over time?

### Jolanta Bańcerowska

Before the pandemic, I think we were more listening to how people are aligned in terms of business objectives – Do they know what to do? Do they feel heard? Do they feel that their job is giving them satisfaction? After the pandemic we started getting interested more about our employees' personal well-being. We started to ask – How are you doing? It definitely changes the conversations that we are having, but also those connections are reflecting much better the current state of mind.

### John Guziak

What are you doing specifically when it comes to different stakeholder groups? You have the

board, managers and teams but you also have that unique group your franchisees.

### Jolanta Bańcerowska

Every group is listened to in the same way. For our franchisees, we have created a Franchisee Council. Our Franchisees have nominated their own representatives and during joint meetings we are discussing what could be improved, what's going on well and what they would propose us to change. Franchisees are also participating in our Net Promoter Score survey. Of course, the questions we use for our franchisees might be different than those that we are using for our regular employees.

### John Guziak

How do you quantify those answers and use them to make business decisions?

### Jolanta Bańcerowska

Pulse surveys are a key part of our employee listening strategy. They are confidential, however we can segment them accordingly to reveal differences or trends. For franchisees we can segment the results by sales regions. For our employees, we can look at the data from many different angles, depending on the need. Having the ability to segment our data demographically, by years of service or by people who are parents, is helping us to view the organization from various perspectives. We can understand the real needs per group. Even though we ask pretty much the same questions, we gain additional insights.



### John Guziak

That must be a massive amount of information. What are you doing to ensure that you don't go into "analysis paralysis", where organizations just create committees and ultimately nothing really happens and the cycle repeats itself the next year?

### Jolanta Bańcerowska

When the surveys are closed, real-time results are shared with all teams to ensure transparency. Team leaders see results immediately and can act accordingly. Reacting in real-time is also a priority for the board. We cut down the waiting time and we can see all teams' dashboards immediately. That way, in an easy manner, we gain a rich understanding of employees' motivation. We use surveys as well as a research tool. We used them to effectively evaluate changes that we have implemented in the organization or effectiveness of our recruitment or onboarding programs.

### John Guziak

Based on that data, what are the key things that are really changing as far as people's expectations or their level of engagement?

### Jolanta Bańcerowska

We are shifting our leadership focus from tasks and figures to purpose, people and engagement. This is now a priority. I also observe that people care far more about the purpose of our company, why we exist and what matters to us.

### John Guziak

What would you say is the key metric to watch for when harnessing workers' agency?

### Jolanta Bańcerowska

The key thing is to ask the right questions which do matter and follow up on them. I especially emphasize the importance of right questions. I know a story of a company that had 50–56 questions in their surveys, the engagement was high, yet the employees' turnover was also high and they were experiencing shortage of talent. It was clear that they were asking the wrong questions.

### John Guziak

Do you know how do you compare to others on the market?

### Jolanta Bańcerowska

If you want to be the best, you must play in a global league. Which is why, for last six years, Żabka has been working together with a company that provides a global benchmark. That makes you humble. Żabka has shown remarkable growth in the engagement journey and has moved from the 14th percentile in a global database in 2018 to the 77th in 2022, while also doubling their employee number. Today we are one of the most engaged organizations globally. And one of the most dynamically developing convenience retail chains in Europe. That definitely illustrates the positive change that we have been able to make thanks in part to listening to our people.

### John Guziak

What would be the one lesson that you would like others to take away?

### Jolanta Bańcerowska

Don't go for numbers because it means nothing. Have the courage to go for the benchmark which really can make you change your actions. Have a plan, communicate the plan and take actions. As they say – you don't fatten a cow by weighing it.

### John Guziak

We're moving into a world with many digital tools that will help us better understand our employees. This of course consists of enormous number of personal data. At the same time, there is this tension with the market and in regard to privacy, where do you see the fine line between these two?

### Jolanta Bańcerowska

The fine line is when we start to ask questions which are more about the person rather than employee. Whenever we are asking such questions, we follow our equity and inclusion policy. There is always an option not to answer individual questions with "I prefer not to say" option. However many of our employees are answering every question, so it looks like the thin line is very, very personal.



**John Guziak**

Anything else that you think would be helpful for people thinking about harnessing the worker agency, understanding the voices of their people?

**Jolanta Bańcerowska**

Every CPO should know what captures the CEO is attention. He/she is looking at stock prices, revenues, profits and customers. CPO must make HR the priority, invite themselves to the agenda. CPO must be extremely well equipped with this persistence and determination, but also knowing how HR supports the business. It is CPO's responsibility to take the lead in shaping the HR agenda.

**John Guziak**

I think this goes back to the idea that that CPO has to have the courage to remind the organization

that you cannot have revenue if you don't have people, you cannot have profit if you don't have effective people, and your customers will leave you.

**Jolanta Bańcerowska**

I would even say that you would not have customers if you don't have engaged people. And engaged employees create better customer experiences.

**John Guziak**

What I am seeing is that your engagement survey is not just telling you what's going on with your people, it's actually giving you a very strong sign of what's going on with your customers.

**Jolanta Bańcerowska**

Yes, exactly.

“CPO must make HR the priority, invite themselves to the agenda. It is CPO’s responsibility to take the lead in shaping the HR agenda.”

**Jolanta Bańcerowska**



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