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## **PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN THE CONDITIONS OF MILITARY CONFLICT: EXPERIENCE OF UKRAINIAN COMPANIES AND PROBLEM SOLVING WAYS**

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### **Abstract**

The article analyzes the impact of the military conflict in Ukraine on personnel management in the business environment. It examines how Ukrainian companies adapt to new challenges, maintaining business stability and supporting employees facing psychological, social and physical threats. The article emphasizes the importance of revising traditional approaches, implementing flexible schedules, remote work and active psychological support.

Analysis of these changes in personnel management strategies is extremely important, as it helps to understand how Ukrainian businesses can effectively respond to the challenges of war, support their employees and contribute to the sustainability of society. This study aims to develop recommendations for Ukrainian companies to improve their management approaches in wartime conditions and to determine ways of further business development in crisis conditions.

### **Keywords**

Personnel management, crisis management, stress, psychological support.

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### **Problem statement**

The conditions of war require a rapid review of existing management strategies to preserve business and support workers facing various types of threats. The problem lies in the need to adapt companies to new conditions, develop effective personnel management measures and support employees in conditions of stress and uncertainty.

### **Relevance of the chosen topic**

Personnel management in wartime is critical to ensuring the stability of companies, maintaining employee morale and productivity. The study provides practical recommendations for Ukrainian companies to improve their approaches to personnel management in crisis situations, which contributes to their sustainability and development.

## Analysis of recent research and publications

Recent studies show that during the military conflict, Ukrainian companies implemented a number of measures to support their employees, including telecommuting, flexible schedules, psychological support and training programs. According to Gradus Research, the level of employee satisfaction in Ukraine has significantly decreased, which indicates the need to strengthen support measures. Other studies show rising levels of stress among workers and changes in perceptions of work-life balance.

Theoretical and practical aspects of the role of the psychological state in personnel management at the enterprise under martial law were studied by such domestic researchers as V.I. Kudelia, V.G. Yakovenko, O.G. Cherep, O. Uvarova and M. Saprykina. Studying the experience of Ukrainian companies allows us to identify the most effective personnel management strategies in crisis conditions.

### Purpose of the article

The purpose of the study is to analyze the experience of Ukrainian companies in the field of personnel management in the conditions of a military conflict and to develop recommendations for improving management approaches in crisis situations. Research focuses on exploring new strategies to support workers, ensure their safety and psychological well-being.

Achieving the set goal made it necessary to solve the following tasks:

1. To investigate the impact of the war on the activities of employees of Ukrainian companies.
2. Determine the level of stress and happiness of employees, identify the causes.
3. To study Ukrainian companies and their strategies in personnel management in accordance with new realities.
4. Develop relevant strategies to increase the efficiency of staff work.

### Presentation of the main research material and results obtained

The military conflict in Ukraine has significantly affected all spheres of life, including the economy, social sphere and business environment. Ukrainian companies found themselves in conditions of unprecedented challenges that require rapid adaptation and implementation of new management strategies.

Personnel management is a set of measures aimed at effective use of the company's labor resources, which includes planning, recruitment, motivation, training and development of employees. In crisis conditions, these processes acquire special importance, since companies must quickly respond to changes, ensure business stability and the preservation of key personnel (Kudelia & Yakovenko, 2023).

Faced with unpredictable conditions, Ukrainian companies had to adapt their strategies, management approaches and priorities (Figure 1).

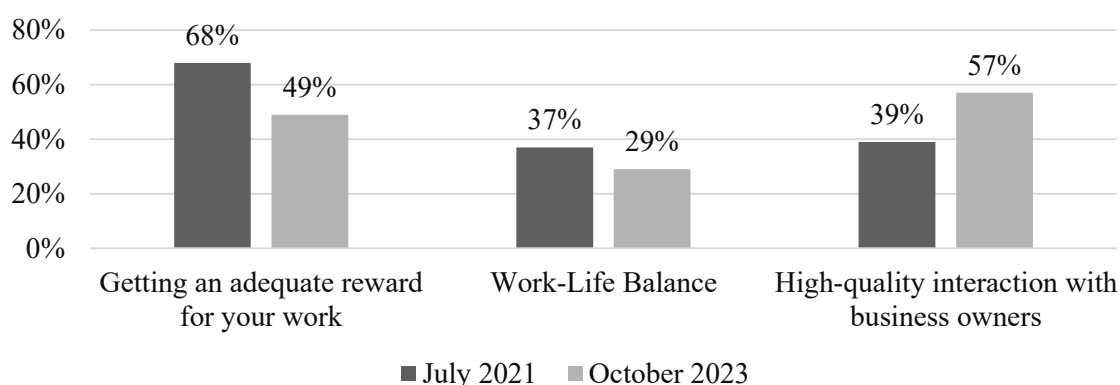


Fig. 1: The impact of the war on the activities of Top Managers of Ukraine

Source: Compiled from (Gradus Research Plus, 2023)

The analysis of Figure 1 shows that the level of employee satisfaction in Ukraine has changed significantly in recent years. According to research by Gradus Research, the percentage of employees who believe their compensation is adequate decreased from 68% in 2021 to 49% in 2023. This change is explained not only by economic difficulties, but also by the increased level of stress that accompanies military conflict. There was also a significant change in the perception of work-life balance, with this indicator falling from 37% in 2021 to 29% in 2023. Employees began to spend more time at work, trying to maintain their positions in conditions of economic

instability, which leads to emotional burnout and reduced productivity. A large number of companies switched to remote work, which allowed employees to manage their working time more efficiently, but, despite everything, blurred the boundaries between personal life and work. Despite all the difficulties, there are also positive changes. The quality of interaction between business owners and employees increased from 39% in 2021 to 57% in 2023. This may be due to the growing awareness of management about the importance of supporting employees during a crisis, as well as the involvement of new approaches to personnel management (Gradus Research Plus, 2023).

Managers began to pay more attention to the moral support of their employees, the development of their skills and the creation of a safe and supportive work environment. Many companies have started training and development programs aimed at supporting the psychological health of their employees, which has helped to strengthen team spirit and improve work efficiency.

Psychological support has become one of the main tools in ensuring stability and efficiency of work in wartime conditions. Employees experience stress, anxiety and uncertainty, which negatively affects their performance and morale (Figure 2, 3) (Gradus Research Plus, 2024a, 2024b; Teterin, Hoidash, & Protsak, 2023, pp. 200–211):

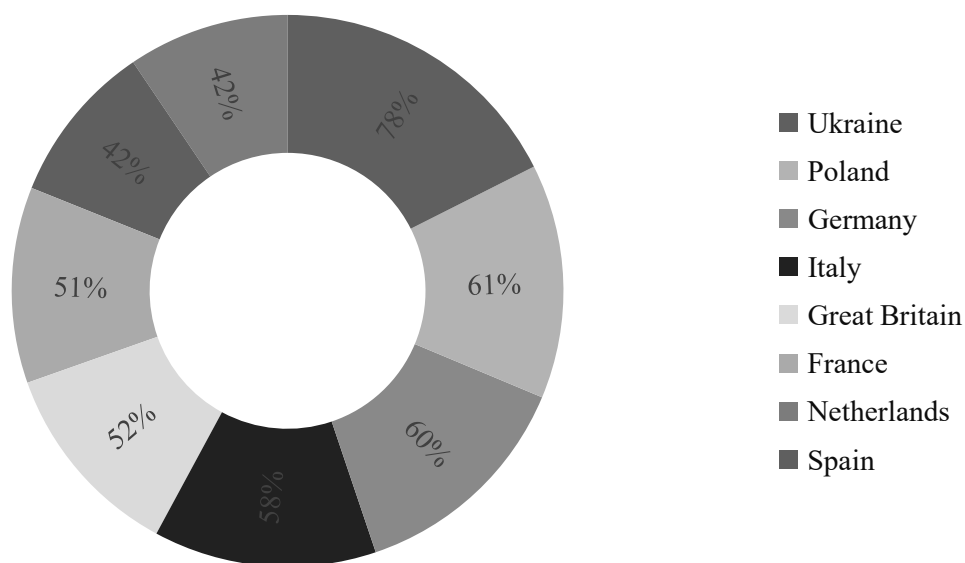


Fig. 2: Feeling of stress or nervousness in Ukrainian and European office workers in March 2024  
 Source: Compiled from (Gradus Research Plus, 2024b)

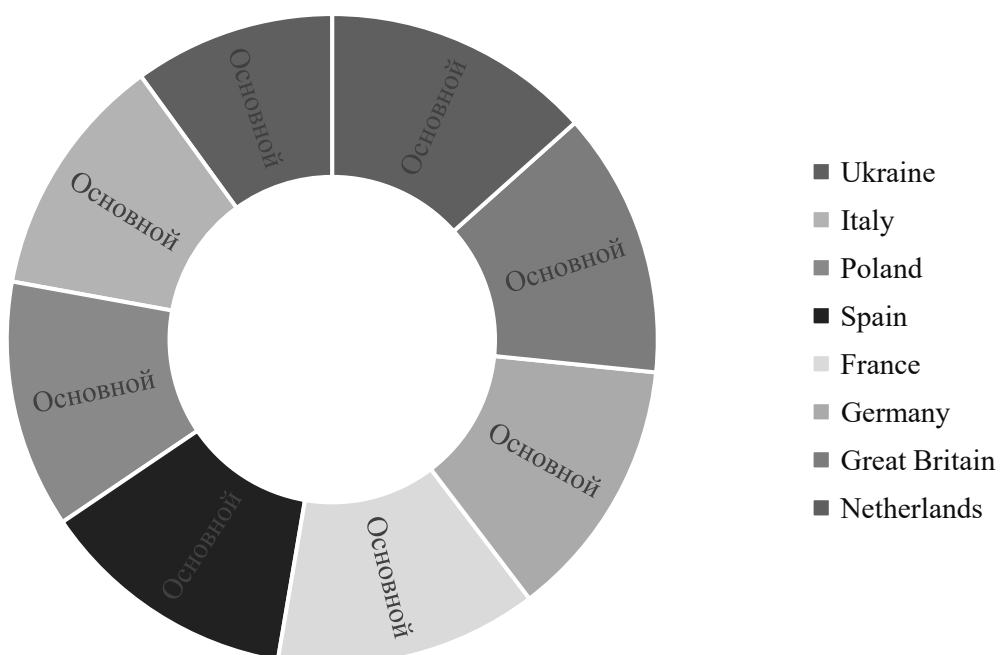


Fig. 3: Level of happiness of Ukrainian and European office workers at the end of 2023

Source: Compiled from (Gradus Research Plus, 2024a)

Analyzing the data in Figures 2 and 3, we can conclude that Ukraine ranks first and last among the studied countries in terms of stress and happiness, respectively. Among the most common reasons for stress, Ukrainians single out the socio-political situation, work and financial issues, at the same time, in order to be happy, one needs the health of oneself and loved ones, peace and security, and financial stability (Figure 4, 5).

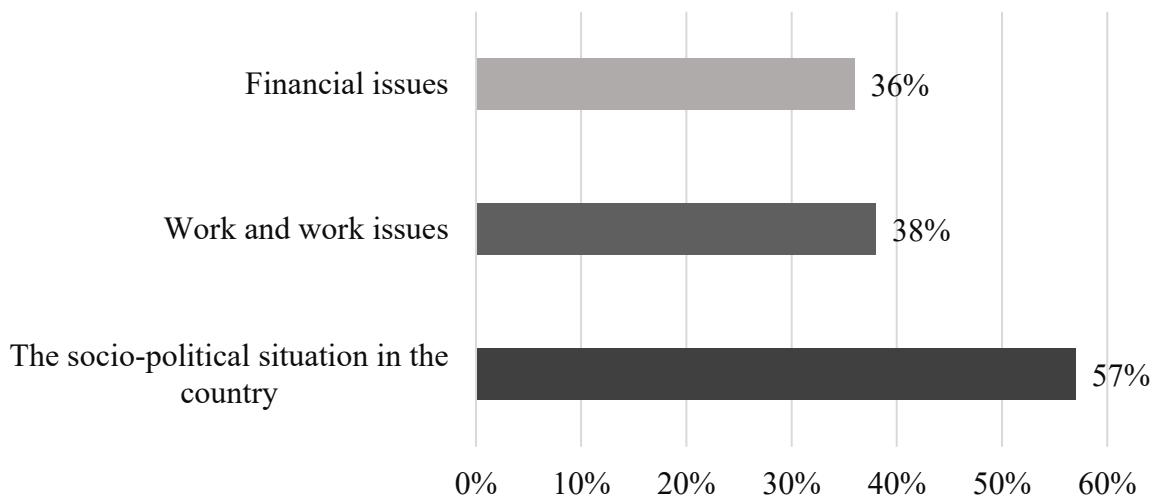


Fig. 4: Top three causes of stress or nervousness among office workers in Ukraine in March 2024  
Source: Compiled from (Gradus Research Plus, 2024b)

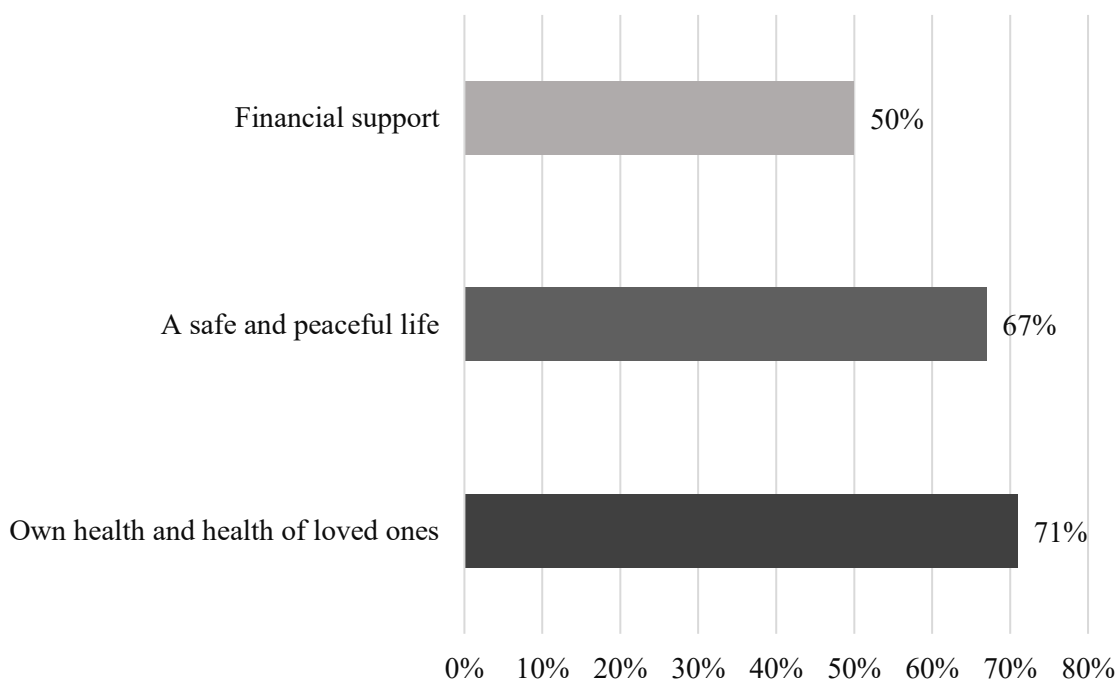


Fig. 5: Top five conditions for a happy life in Ukraine at the end of 2023  
Source: Compiled from (Gradus Research Plus, 2024a)

According to Figure 4 and 5, psycho-emotional stress is caused by constant shelling and aerial alarms and threat to the life and health of both the respondent workers themselves and their families. This leads to the inability of workers to concentrate on work tasks, as a result of which there is a decrease in productivity and an increase in the number of errors. The loss of relatives or friends directly affects the psychological state, leads to depression, anxiety disorders and, in many cases, to the need for long-term recovery. Many Ukrainians were forced to leave their homes and jobs because of the hostilities, which affected their emotional and financial state. Relocation, uncertainty about the future, the need to adapt to new living and working conditions increase feelings of anxiety

and uncertainty.

In such conditions, the organization of psychological support becomes an important aspect of personnel management, since the well-being of personnel has become a critically important factor for ensuring stable work in crisis conditions. Leaders must be ready to have open conversations with subordinates, show empathy and support. It is important to provide staff with information about available psychological assistance resources, including internal support programs, governmental and non-governmental organizations (Kudelia & Yakovenko, 2023, pp. 290–297; Tsalko, Nevmerzhytska, & Ptukha, 2024).

An example of successful personnel management under martial law was PJSC OBOLON, which is the largest producer of beverages in Ukraine.

Figure 6 describes how PJSC "OBOLON" uses ways of supporting the psycho-emotional state of their employees and the improvement of their productivity.

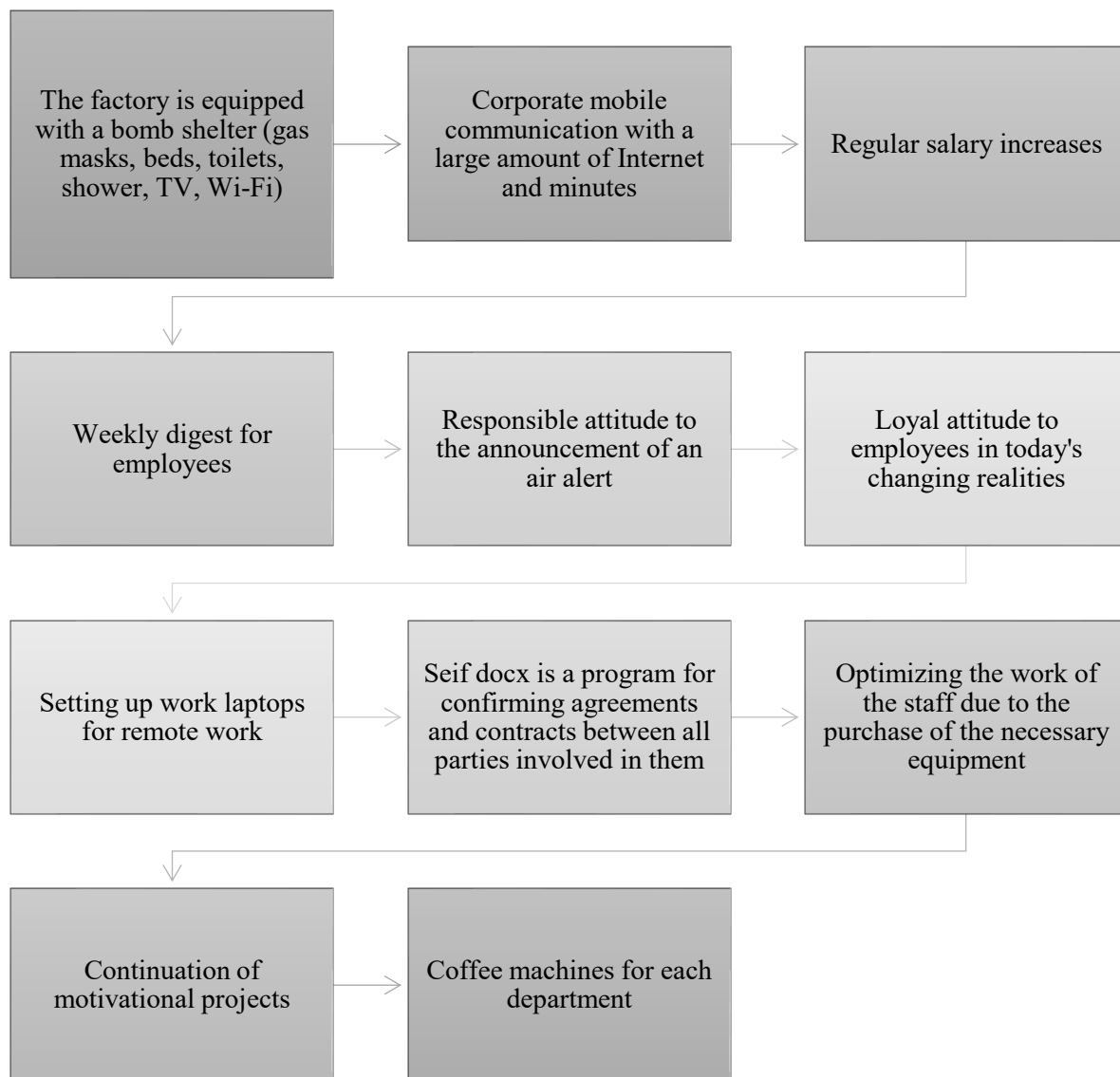


Fig. 6: Ways of supporting the psycho-emotional state of employees PJSC "OBOLON" and improving their productivity in 2024

Source: Compiled by authors

Analyzing Figure 6, the main ways of supporting the company in question are the creation of safe working conditions. These methods include:

1. Rules regarding the air alarm. In addition to having to go down to the bomb shelter, the company has implemented rules according to which employees do not go to work under any circumstances if the alarm sounds in the morning. If the threat of shelling was at night and the workers, accordingly, did not sleep, they are allowed to come later to the workplace, or go home earlier at the end of the day.

2. Loyal attitude towards employees and care for them include:
  - additional notifications from management regarding the current situation;
  - every morning check-ins of employees regarding the fact that they are safe, at the workplace and feeling well;
  - availability of generators so that employees can come to work at any time and charge their gadgets;
  - weekly digest - company news, which contains articles on how to cope with stress, and also in each digest, from the beginning of the log in, several pages are dedicated to managers (their experience, life path), as a way of motivating employees.
3. Motivational projects include standard bonuses for exceeding the plan or creative ideas. But in the opposite situation, when the plan was not fulfilled, or there were certain mistakes, the system of fines was canceled. In addition, the factory does not lay off anyone, but on the contrary, tries to offer alternative positions or work so that people have work and the opportunity to earn during this difficult time.
4. The company has done everything possible to improve working conditions, from creating a comfortable working environment where you can sign documents online, to basic human needs such as coffee.

Among other examples of successful personnel management, the following companies should be noted:

1. The Eleks IT company opened a Psychological Support Center, where 15 internal specialists and 10 external psychologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists and crisis specialists work (Uvarova & Saprykina, 2023).
2. "Kernel" company organized classes on paramedical care, including both theoretical and practical sessions. Before starting the classes, participants take an online course and receive additional video materials about the MARCH protocol (Uvarova & Saprykina, 2023).
3. The Danish company A.P. Moller – Maersk established an internal crisis management team that worked closely with the regional team and employees in Ukraine. The following measures were implemented: development of guidelines for workers on different support options, establishment of a hotline and encouragement of workers to use the Employee Assistance Program to support the mental health of workers and their families, support for workers and their families during evacuation, establishment of assistance centers in Romania and of Poland, as well as the provision of temporary housing, financial assistance and assistance in the relocation of workers (Uvarova & Saprykina, 2023).
4. The Meest company has organized a coordination center to provide assistance to its employees with evacuation, housing, traveling abroad, as well as providing psychological support. A shelter was set up in the Lviv office for employees evacuated from eastern Ukraine. Humanitarian food boxes were sent to people who decided not to leave their homes (Uvarova & Saprykina, 2023).

These measures demonstrate the company's concern for its staff and contribute to maintaining work efficiency even in the most difficult times.

Considering the modern challenges, companies should focus on the following strategies to increase the efficiency of personnel (Table. 1, 2)

Table 1: The program "Emotional Counter"

Description of the concept	"Emotional counter" is a mobile application that will allow the company to monitor the workload and emotional state of employees in real time and adjust and adapt certain decisions and tasks accordingly.
How does it work?	Every week, the employee notes and evaluates his emotional state according to a number of criteria: stress level, exhaustion, anxiety, job satisfaction, received motivation, feeling of support, etc.
	The employee fills in the meter items anonymously from colleagues, but openly for the manager.
	The system analyzes the received data and sends a summary report on the employee's condition to the manager, and personal recommendations to the employee, such as reducing the workload, special trainings, sessions with a staff psychologist.
	The manager, in turn, sets the workload for the employee per week in accordance with his emotional and physical state.

Program benefits	The program allows the company to predict possible burnouts and motivation problems.
	Each employee receives individual support tailored to their needs, which will increase work efficiency.
	Using the program will contribute to the formation of trusting relationships between management and subordinates.
The condition	Visit of a staff psychologist for managers is mandatory for correct and unbiased response to reports on the condition of subordinates (Teterin, Hoidash, & Protsak, 2023).

Source: Compiled by authors based on (Lenda, Ohanesian, & Skibska, 2024; Teterin, Hoidash, & Protsak, 2023).

This program will help not only to maintain the emotional balance of employees in difficult conditions, but also to increase the overall resilience of the company to crisis situations (Khliebnikova, Temchenko, & Bilinska, 2023).

Table 2: Recreation capsule

Description of the concept	Rest capsules are specially equipped places in the work spaces, designed for a short rest or sleep of employees during the working day. Such capsules usually have a compact design that allows them to be placed in small office spaces or on production sites.
How does it work?	Workers can use capsules for short sleep or rest breaks of 10 to 30 minutes. Such breaks contribute to increased concentration and productivity for the rest of the working day.
	The capsules are equipped with settings that allow the user to change the lighting, temperature, ventilation and tilt of the chair, creating optimal conditions for relaxation.
	They provide soundproofing from the noise of an office or industrial environment, creating a quiet and peaceful space for relaxation.
Program benefits	The presence of the function of monitoring the health status of the employee, such as measuring the heart rate or stress level.
	Scientific studies show that a short nap or rest during the working day can significantly increase the productivity of workers (Shyroka, 2019).
	In today's fast-paced work environment, many workers face high levels of stress, which can lead to emotional burnout. Relaxation capsules provide an opportunity for quick relaxation and help reduce stress levels, maintaining a healthy balance between work and rest.
	The introduction of innovative solutions, such as rest capsules, demonstrates concern for the well-being of employees. This can increase staff satisfaction and reduce employee turnover.

Source: Compiled by authors

The introduction of rest capsules at workplaces is a promising initiative that corresponds to modern trends in caring for the health and well-being of employees. By providing an opportunity for a short sleep and relaxation, the capsules help increase productivity, reduce stress and burnout, and improve the health of employees, which positively affects the overall efficiency of the company's work. An innovative approach to personnel management, in particular through the creation of a comfortable working space, is becoming an important success factor in the modern labor market.

### Conclusions

The war in Ukraine has significantly affected all aspects of business, forcing companies to reconsider traditional approaches to personnel management. Changes in strategies have become a necessity to support workers facing stress, psychological and physical threats. Ukrainian companies, such as PJSC OBOLON, were able to adapt to

new conditions thanks to the introduction of flexible schedules, remote work, as well as the provision of active psychological support. These measures helped maintain business stability and increase employee efficiency. The organization of psychological support and the implementation of innovative solutions, such as the "Emotional Counter" and "Rest Capsules", have become critically important for maintaining the emotional balance of employees and increasing their productivity in crisis conditions.

Thus, the study demonstrates that effective human resource management during military conflict is critical to ensuring business sustainability and maintaining employee morale. For further study of the impact of military conflict on business, it is worth focusing on areas such as the effectiveness of social programs during wartime and the role of technology in managing business during wartime.

It is important to investigate which social initiatives are most effective during military conflict and how they can be integrated into company development and personnel management strategies. Studying how the latest technologies, particularly in security, telecommuting and cyber security, help companies survive and thrive in conflict. These studies will help to better understand the challenges faced by business during war and to develop effective strategies to overcome these challenges.

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