TRANSFORMING STATE ORGANIZATIONS TO SURVIVE IN COMPETITIVE MARKETS: LESSONS FROM POLAND

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The purpose of this paper is to examine and discuss the experiences of three state-owned firms that selected very different transformational strategies of privatization. A case method of analysis was utilized to examine three Polish manufacturing firms that have undergone successful transformation from state to private ownership during the 1990s. Based on our field study of human resource management practices, it appears that there were three models for successful privatization. These were: Rapid Downsizing and Restructuring to improve efficiency and financial viability; Foreign Investment to maintain and later expand operations and products/services; and Social Responsibility to employees and to the community at large by minimizing unemployment through the development of niche markets and the use of human resource (HR) outplacement activities. The three case studies presented here suggest that strategic and contingency approaches designed to maximize organizational objectives are preferable over universal models that merely seek to maximize short-term profits.

(next page: résumé en français; Zusammenfassung in Deutsch; extended abstracts)