

# A Value Proposition Canvas of Interim Management Providers in the Czech Republic

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## \* 1. Introduction

Currently, the company is still struggling with a volatile and complex economic situation. The problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which further strengthens and expands the conflict in Ukraine, have a significant impact on the economy. Energy prices and disrupted supply chains can put economic entities in difficult situations in which they cannot cope on their own (Evropská komise, 2022).

In a difficult situation, more and more entities are turning to interim managers for help as a lesser-known alternative to the standard management of the company by regular managers. Despite the high prices of their work, interim managers offer an effective approach to solving a problematic situation. Their main tool is their own experience, practice and know-how (Tancerová, 2021).

By combining the difficult economic period and the effective work of the interim manager, it can be concluded that the demand for these services will continue to rise. A report by the International Network of Interim Managers Associations (INIMA, 2023) shows a continuous increase in the workload of interim managers. The workload of Czech interim managers is on average 75% in 2022 (INI-

MA, 2023). If this trend continues, it is possible to expect an increase in demand to a level that the domestic interim market would no longer be able to effectively satisfy.

In the Czech Republic, interim management is considered a very young discipline that has appeared in the country in the last decade due to the penetration of foreign companies and personnel agencies into the Czech market (Karásek, 2017, p. 62). This is also evidenced by the initial inclusion of the Czech Republic in reports on the status of interim management in the EU only in 2022 (INIMA, 2023). Due to the unanchored legislative and legal nature of companies and natural persons providing interim management services in the Czech Republic, a question arises in this area is who can be considered as a player or provider offering interim management services in this market. On the other side, the customer is one of the main stakeholders in any business and his specification largely determines the company strategy itself. In order for businesses to thrive effectively on the interim management market, it is necessary to know not only the “profile” of the customer, but also their requirements and needs.

Therefore, the goal is to map the nature of the key focus of segments of companies operating in



→ this area and to identify the content of the needs and requirements of customers in the area of establishing possible cooperation.

This research is carried out as a pilot study and preliminary research as part of the author's procedure, which deals with the topic of the interim management market in the Czech Republic and the proposal of the concept of competitive advantages of companies on this market.

## 2. History and concept of interim management

Interim management has a specific form lies in its temporary nature. The first literature directed the definition of interim management to the efficiency in the area of human resources and the reduction of personnel costs. In recent years, interim management has been associated with general flexibility, expanded skills, expertise and experience that cannot be obtained internally in one company (Goss, Bridson, 1998, p. 38).

The Netherlands is the most frequently mentioned base for interim management. Around 1980, Dutch companies struggled with the issue of the legal setting of negotiations with employees. Using the concept of interim management, companies could hire managerial staff for a limited duration of a project or the time necessary to solve a problem. Thanks to demands for human resource flexibility, this trend gradually spread throughout Europe (Reijniers, 2003).

A rather extreme connection is the connection of the history of interim management with the medieval fief system. In this case, the sovereign puts a part of his estate in the hands of a householder or administrator, who bears a certain resemblance to the current interim manager, for a certain period of time (Karásek, 2017, p. 62).

Another development of interim management, which often appears even today, is layoffs. At the turn of the 80s and 90s of the 20th century in the United States and Europe, up to 40% of interim managers were from among employees dismissed

from managerial positions (Goss, Bridson, 1998, p. 37-38).

The term interim management itself could be broken down into two basic units, manager and interim. The term manager refers to a person who is involved in managing a part or the whole company in a certain project. He takes responsibility, is in charge of HR and often stands at the top of the company hierarchy. The term interim means a time limitation of the manager's authority for a specified time-period. This work is over at the moment when the expectations are fulfilled or the contracted state of the company is reached (Karásek, 2017, p. 62).

The role of interim manager also presents various problems. Some organizations are reluctant to adjust their established procedures to accommodate an interim manager. From his name alone, they expect that he is not permanent and will leave soon. Instead of being considered a friend, the interim manager is a stranger to the company. The reason for these difficulties is probably the incorrect connection of words, the managerial activity itself often has long-term effects, which contradicts the term "interim" or "temporary" (Interim managers need understanding, 2002).

An interim manager assumes temporary positions in the company that arise for various reasons. The result of the work of an interim manager can be the setting of procedures in the company that are followed by employees in the long term, as well as by new and permanent management (Rawat, 2009, p. 6).

An interim manager position may arise in a business if the current manager is temporarily unable to perform his job, but is likely to return to his position in the future. An example of this situation is going on maternity or parental leave. In this case, qualified interim management adopts the culture of the company and is not hired to make drastic changes in the company. Another example of the involvement of interim management is the variant when the company is facing a change or a new project. In that case, an interim manager is

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hired to manage a certain project or the entire company for the duration of the change or new situation. In such a case, the manager is expected to bring his know-how and proceed according to his practical experience towards a predetermined goal. This type of interim management is appearing more and more often. A special subgroup of the work of an interim manager is hiring him for a specific type of activity that the company cannot fill from its own limited resources. In these cases, interim work is often combined with consulting (Goss, Bridson, 1998, p. 38).

### **2.1 Interim management in Czech Republic**

In the Czech Republic, interim management is considered a very young discipline, which appeared in the country in the last decade due to the penetration of foreign companies and personnel agencies into the Czech market (Karásek, 2017, p. 62). Another problem is that interim management services in the given business are not legislated or legally anchored in the Czech Republic. Legislative impacts on the interim management market are primarily influenced by the factor of how this activity is performed. Interim managers perform their activities as self-employed persons, employees or statutory representatives. If the cooperation is established in the form of employing an interim manager, it is a fixed-term employment relationship established in § 39 of Act No. 262/2006 Coll. The basic rule is to determine the length of the employment relationship, which, however, does not exceed three years, and at the same time, this contract can only be extended once. Another

possibility of temporary employment is the form of agency employment. This form is established in § 307a–309 of Act No. 262/2006 Coll. In this case, the interim manager is an employee of the agency, which provides it to work for its customers (MPSV ČR, 2021).

### **2.2 Who can be considered as entity operating on the interim management market**

As this market is very small in the Czech Republic, many companies are only partially engaged in this work. Interim management can be included in the broad field of temporary employment. Personnel agencies, consulting and advisory organizations and other personnel-oriented and training companies for the B2B market are largely engaged in this activity. Despite their more general focus, these companies can shape the interim management market with their goals, products, and the resources they need.

In the case of companies with a broader focus, such as personnel agencies, it is possible to consider as an entity only the one that implements at least some activity falling within the work of an interim manager. Entities that act only as a mediator of contact with a separate interim manager should be excluded from the analysis, as they do not directly participate in the creation of the market.

The Czech Association of Interim Management (CAIM) exists for a more efficient and systematic search for interim managers on the Czech market. It's a platform that was founded in 2010 and is a tool for meeting people of the same profession, →

- highlights potential clients and generally helps increase visibility in the interim management market. The aim of the platform is to serve as the first information source when looking for an interim manager and to raise awareness about its advantages and possibilities (CAIM Czech Republic, 2023). According to the CAIM, there are around two hundred independent interim managers in the Czech Republic according to data from 2017 (Karásek, 2017, p. 74).

### 2.3 Typology of interim management

The Czech association (CAIM) defines the term interim management according to its purpose and divides it into three basic groups of product/service offerings:

- **Substitution interim management**

In the event that it is necessary to replace a professional employee for whose position there is no competent person within the company, it is possible to turn not only to an interim manager, but also to a professionally focused company. In the case of economic and accounting administration, it is possible to turn to an external accounting company, which will take over the administration of this agenda and at the same time may be able to assign its own experts to the customer. An example from the accounting field can subsequently be applied to most professional processes in the company. The legal agenda can be delegated to a law firm, human resources for recruitment agency and more. According to Vácha, the current demand for experts in technology, marketing, trade and adds that the great interest before the COVID-19 was in personnel and executive directors (Otto, 2020).

**Positive and negative aspects**

A selected expert with the necessary specialization is more competent to manage the assigned agenda. Compared to an interim manager, an expert does not have an overview and does not

perceive the customer's company as a whole. The interim worker does not seek to permanently lead the customer's agenda, and after the return of the internal expert, the cooperation ends (Younger, 2022).

- **Project interim management**

If the work performed versus time plays a significant role in the duration of cooperation, in many cases it is the services of project interim management. In this area, customers may consider a consultant or consulting company to be a suitable substitute. The consultant does not intervene in the processes directly and only provides expert advice and supervision to the existing management (New Street Consulting Group, 2022).

**Positive and negative aspects**

Since the consultant is not interested in the process, he does not incur any financial costs a threat that would motivate him. The management of the company is constantly getting new ones know-how that combines with the company's own long-term knowledge (Next Management, 2020).

- **Change interim management**

In the case of the service provided in this way, the interim manager is hired by the company at the point of crisis resolution or extensive changes. Large-scale changes that are usually solved by hiring an interim manager are often solved in small and medium-sized enterprises that do not have a multi-level hierarchy. In larger companies, large-scale crises and changes are handled by interim teams, in which work is divided according to the ideas of substitute interim management.

**Positive and negative aspects**

In contrast to the deployment of an external interim manager, the selected person has a relationship with the company and other employ-

ees and at the same time knows the mentality of the company. The employee knows the history that led to the change. Selecting an existing employee is less costly compared to interim services (Interim management and the future world of work, 2022). The process of promoting an existing employee is a time-consuming process unsuitable for an unexpected crisis. The current employee does not bring new know-how for the development of the company. An employee may have a problem returning to an originally lower position (New Street Consulting Group, 2022).

- **Generational transmission in a family business**

Another possibility of change, which is quite frequent, is the transfer of a position in the family circle. A traditional example is the passing of a company from father to son, but also other possibilities of family ties. In such cases, the competence of the given successor is often neglected. According to interim manager Jemelka, these generational handovers are liquidation for more than half companies.

**Positive and negative aspects**

A high risk of failure associated with the incompetence of the successor and at the same time not reflecting the interests of the new successor. Preservation of family tradition and possible connection of business with education offspring. Distrust of employees and fear of the introduction of new rules are minimized (New Street Consulting Group, 2022).

- **A new manager from large (very large) enterprise into the SME's**

The management position can also be occupied by a person with management experience in a corporate environment. In the case of this personnel change, it is necessary to pay attention to the experience of the new leader, since the management of large companies is in many as-

pects different from the management of small and medium-sized ones businesses.

**Positive and negative aspects**

In the case of a change involving the expansion of the company, the new manager applies already proven procedure from the past experience. On the other side, the new manager brings inappropriate managerial know-how and is not capable of it adapt. Less experience vs interim manager, which contributes to the accumulation of errors at the beginning of cooperation (Tancerová, 2021).

#### *2.4 Understanding the customer needs and requirement via Value Proposion Canvas*

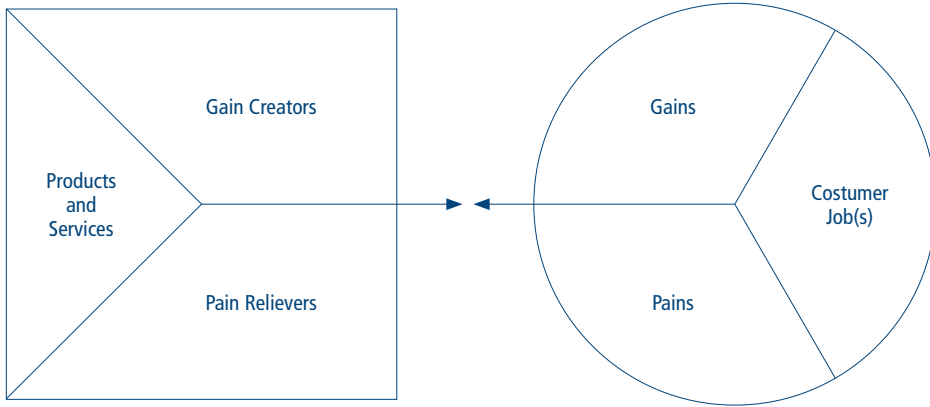
The author of the Value proposition canvas (VPC) is Osterwalder et al. (2016, p. 16-17), who also created the Business model canvas, from which the described framework is based. The VPC model consists of two parts: a value map and a customer profile. In the business model canvas, the value map can be found under the "value proposition" box, and the customer profile appears in the "customer segments" section of this model. The following Figure 1 illustrates the graphical breakdown of the model, which is described below.

The main division of the VPC is the customer profile, which helps to understand the customers. The other half, or the value map, is helpful for mapping out how value is delivered to the customer. The following description of the model corresponds to the chronology of its creation with real data (Osterwalder et al., 2016, p. 34-35).

First of all, it is necessary to create a customer profile, which is started in the Customer Jobs section, or customer tasks. In this part, it is necessary to summarize all the activities, problems and needs that the customer faces in his life and work. The customer's perspective determines the importance of individual tasks and also the division into functional, social, personal/emotional and support tasks.



→ **Figure 1** » *The Value Proposition Canvas*



Source: Osterwalder et al., 2016

The second part of the customer profile is Pains. The so-called difficulties determine what is difficult for the customer during the performance of the task, but also before and after it. In this part too, the customer determines the importance and strength of the difficulties. For proper identification, difficulties are divided into obstacles, risks, unwanted results, problems and characteristics.

Gains are the last part of the customer profile and describe what should be the benefit of the activity the customer does. Thanks to the maximum focus on the customer, the customer again determines how much benefit is needed. Following this level, benefits are divided into required, expected, wanted and unexpected (Osterwalder et al., 2016, p. 38-43).

After building the customer profile, a value map follows with its first step describing products and services (Products and services). The following section contains a list of all products and services that the company can offer. They can be broken down into physical/tangible, intangible, digital and financial. The value of each product separately is also different and is determined on a scale from essential products to bonus products. Subsequently, the map of values switches to Pain reliev-

ers or solutions to difficulties. To make this part, it is necessary to compile a list of possibilities by which the company's products reduce or eliminate the customer's problems. Since it is not possible to eliminate all customer difficulties, it is necessary to proceed systematically downwards from the most fundamental difficulties identified in the customer profile.

The third part of the value map is the creation of benefits (Gain creators), expressing the possibilities of fulfilling benefits for the customer. Also in this case, the company gradually focuses on the benefits required, expected, wanted until finally it fulfils the unexpected benefits according to its possibilities (Osterwalder et al., 2016, p. 54-59).

The final piece of the VPC puzzle is achieving compliance. This alignment can be considered the main goal of creating a value proposition. The achievement of the goal can be considered the moment when the customer gets products and services that satisfy his main difficulties and benefits that he cannot do without. For a more precise determination of compliance, it is possible to divide it into three subsequent parts. Compliance of problems and solutions, which is followed by compliance of products with the market and completion

is compliance with the business model (Osterwalder et al., 2016, p. 68–74).

### 3. Research methodology and sample

The main goal is, on the one hand, to find out the key segments and problems faced by customers of interim management providers and the resulting requirements for cooperation with an interim manager. On the other hand, it is necessary to define the current offer of products and services of providers in an effort to help customers in solving their pains or reducing risks or, conversely, increasing their profits. The central research question is set as follows: What problems and requirements are the most common reasons for establishing cooperation with an interim manager and how the providers of interim management respond with their offer in an attempt to solve the client's problem? These two areas, with the aim of compiling and linking for the overall UVP Canvas model, were obtained and analyzed from secondary sources through an online presentation of interim management service providers selected according to criteria and customer references published on the websites of interim management companies. Research procedure and its objectives:

1. Creation of a sample of companies and customer references of interim management companies. Extraction of text content from web presentations of interim management providers in the area of offered products and services, resources and goals.
2. Cleaning customer's references to key areas and data with respect to the coding structure of quantitative content analysis. Statistical evaluation and summary of customers (references) with regard to the field of business.
3. After cleaning the data, compile a list of groups of problems and requirements extracted and repeated in the references. Determine the significance of the individual formed groups through the occurrence of relative frequencies.
4. Incorporation of the result into the VPC model,

which is chosen for a comprehensible description of the conclusions and the final visualization.

#### 3.1 Method and techniques of data collection

Since the interim management market in the Czech Republic is still underdeveloped and not exactly legally anchored, it is not possible to determine the current number of interim managers as a basic set for determining the research sample. A picture of the size of this market can be outlined by the CAIM estimate from 2017, which states that there are around two hundred independent interim managers operating in the Czech Republic (Karásek, 2017, p. 74).

The selected interim management entities were primarily drawn from the CAIM membership base, where the condition for inclusion in the analysis was the subject's existing websites that present the areas under investigation. Since participation in CAIM is not mandatory, when providing interim services, other entities were added to the analysis by searching for the keywords "service" and "interim management" with localization in the Czech Republic.

For the companies searched in this way, the existence of websites on which they present the analysed areas was also a condition. In the case of companies with a broader focus, such as staffing agencies, only those entities that implement were selected at least some activity falling within the work of an interim manager. Entities that act only as a mediator of contact with an independent interim manager were excluded from the analysis, as they do not directly participate in the creation of the market. The resulting generalization into broader units works with the percentage representation of individual goals, products and resources per unit, and further conclusions representing dominance are determined market entities. With these criteria, the following entities were selected to be the subject of investigation:

- Kompetenz People s. r. o.

- HEADIM s. r. o.
- M.Sc. Petr Kmošek
- Ing. Dalibor Petrů
- PG Logistic
- FENIX SEARCH s. r. o.
- Petr Ševčík
- JPF Czech s. r. o.
- ASCALAE spol. s. r. o.
- LCM Interim Management, s. r. o.
- TP Consulting s. r. o.
- Ing. Jaroslav Skoták
- Aim high s. r. o.
- Fm pro s. r. o.
- Advantage group, a. s.
- Global servis
- Accord Group Interim Managers and Consultants (AGIM)
- Simon Says s. r. o.
- BM4U s. r. o.

At the same time, this is a specific segment for which cooperation with the customer is negotiated for a longer period of time. Thanks to this, many references are the private property of the interim manager and are presented individually to each potential customer separately. For this reason, all available references published on the website are used, which also contain information about the state of the company. Individual interim management entities publishing references were searched through the list of CAIM members and further through the Google internet browser when searching for the words: interim manager, interim management, temporary management and interim.

Data collection took place in the first quarter of 2023. The technique of data collection was a content analysis of qualitative data contained in the references of interim managers. Data are used from written, audio and audio-visual sources published on the websites of individual interim management entities. First of all, the qualitative data are subjected to open coding during the content analysis. Individual codes are selected into groups of recurring reasons for establishing cooperation by the interim manager. The quantitative approach

is then applied to the resulting coding structure through descriptive statistics, the result of which is the recording of the frequency of occurrence of individual codes.

### *3.2 Cleaning up references to key areas and words*

For the content analysis, we used data from references that were published on websites by entities that fully or partially operate a gainful activity on the interim management market. These are all references that were available during the research period. The total number of references is 60. Since these are all references, equal representation from individual types of interim management is not ensured. The research results are generalized for all subjects of the interim management market, but this disparity will not have a negative effect on the result.

All references are of the same nature, which is an assessment of the cooperation with the interim manager by the client. Even so, this is a marketing promotion of a company that has the appearance and content largely in its own hands. For that reason, a drastic cleaning of the data was necessary, from which only factual data related to cooperation was used. All the mentioned data are contained in Appendix No. 1 and are used in the rest of the work as a basic building block from which it is based.

Data from the Orbis Europe database was used to expand the database. In this database, data about the referees has been collected with regard to the field of business they focus on. The CZ-NACE classification is used to break down the field of business. In the standard classification, businesses are divided in alphabetical order into categories A to U. Since some fields of business did not appear among the respondents, these categories were discarded for clarity. At the same time, it was necessary to add the “Other” category, which contains referents not belonging to CZ-NACE. The companies fall into the following categories:

- A Agriculture, forestry, fishing,
- C Manufacturing industry,
- G Wholesale and retail trade; repair and maintenance of motor vehicles,
- H Transport and storage,
- I Accommodation, catering and hospitality,
- J Information and communication activities,
- K Finance and insurance,
- L Real estate activities,
- M Professional, scientific and technical activities,
- Q Health and social care.

Relative frequencies of occurrence of individual categories were used to determine the relative percentage representation. The resulting representation is shown in the following graph (see Graph 1). The results of this breakdown are not intended to diminish the importance of individual customers, as a suitable customer can result from any line of business if the required match is made. Even from those categories that are not included in the references. The benefit of this division is the broadening of the view and precision when determining the target customer. Since no business can provide its services to all customers, this segmentation is the basis for making business targeting more efficient.

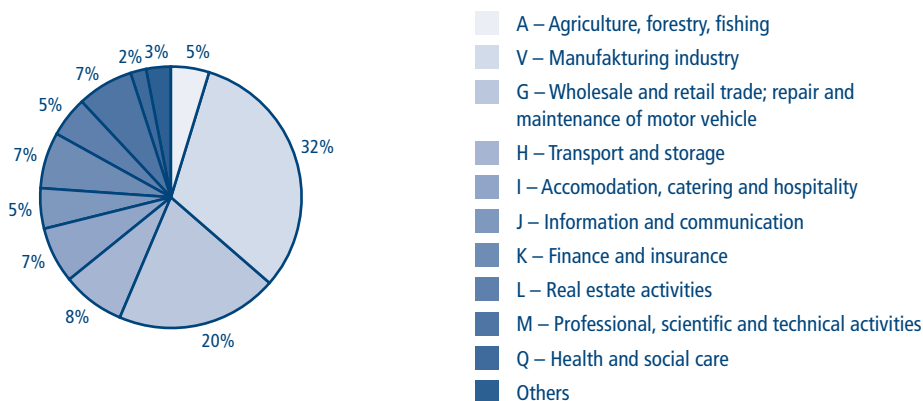
#### 4. Research results and discussion

The following content of the analysis and results follows two parts, namely a description of the needs and problems on the part of the clients, including their economic profile, and the offer of products by companies offering special services of interim managers. The overall summary of both sides in the form of a UVP model is presented in the discussion.

##### 4.1 Profile of customers according to their economic activity

The results show that the largest representation of customers on B2B market is in the manufacturing industry at 32%, the group of businesses focusing on wholesale and retail came in second place; repair and maintenance of motor vehicles. These two categories represent more than 50% of all referents and should therefore be preferred when choosing a target segment of customers with regard to the field of business. Furthermore, the transportation and storage category finished with 8% representation. Even this category can be included in the range of 5 to 10 percent, which includes most of the represented categories.

**Graph 1 » Relative frequency of customers according to economic activity**



Source: own work



**Table 1** » *The list of problem groups and requirements from customer point of view*

No.	Group	Description of problem and requirements
1	Occupation of a specifically professional position	The customer needs a competent person to fill a position with a high degree of expertise in a certain sector.
2	Time commitment	Strict adherence to the agreed time schedule.
3	Knowledge of a foreign language	The customer requires knowledge of foreign languages at a high level to fulfil the cooperation.
4	Long-term practice	The practical experience of the interim manager is emphasized.
5	Personnel consulting	The interim manager provides advice in the field of human resources (recruitment, dismissal, communication).
6	Keeping rules	Reliability of the interim manager and compliance with established rules.
7	Adapting to the situation	If an unexpected situation arises, the customer expects leniency and the possibility of adaptation from the interim manager.
8	Involvement of modern technologies	Orientation in new trends and online environment with follow-up on implementation options.
9	Team work, integration into the structure of the client	Collaborative skills, leading a larger group of people, integration within the existing structure.
10	Company processes	The interim manager can set up and manage the processes assigned to him in the company.
11	Business finance	The business requires a solution to the financial situation of the business with knowledge in the field of accounting.
12	Business strategy	Business requires business strategy setting and sales leadership.
13	Establishing long-term goals	A business requires long-term planning with goals for more than one year.
14	Analyse of current state	At the beginning of the cooperation, the interim manager will impartially and objectively evaluate the current state of the company.

Source: own work

Representation in the category outside CZ-NACE was not included in this range, as, for example, cooperation with municipalities is rather an exceptional matter and interim management is still primarily concerned with the business environment. It is also worth mentioning the least represented category of healthcare and social care, which, however, may still be of interest to interim managers with this specific field of focus.

#### 4.2 *The categories of needs and requirements of the customers*

The following table 2 can be considered as the result of the fourth sub-step of the research. From the references of past and present customers of interim companies, the author crystallized fourteen codes that were repeated in different forms in individual references. Further merging of causes and effects into larger groups would result in oversimplification and loss of explanatory value. Numeri-

cal codes are used to connect the cleaned data with Appendix No. 1, part of the data cleaning and the creation of groups took place simultaneously to some extent. The names of the groups changed over time according to the parts of the references that fit into the groups until the final form of the names and descriptions.

### 4.3 Frequencies of occurrence of customer's needs groups

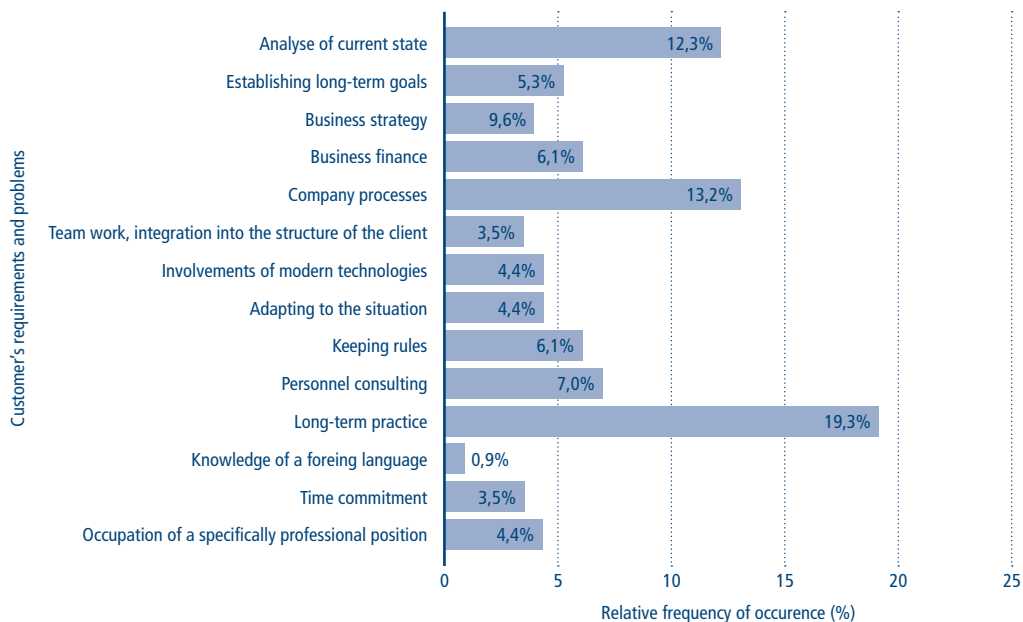
The previous definition of the problems can be considered as an intermediate step in the investigation and the added value of the information about the groups is part of the following Graph 2. The results show that the most important aspect for the customer is the long-term practise of the interim manager, which brings a lot new experiences. The need to solve corporate processes in the customer's company also reached the threshold of ten percent of occurrences. Another parameter is the im-

portance of the company's input analysis, which appears in 12% of cases. Another problem for which businesses seek the help of an interim manager is the setting of a business strategy. Furthermore, it is worth noting that only one percent occurrence of the requirement to know a foreign language. In this line of business, however, it is likely that individual clerks take the language skills of the interim manager for granted, which does not need to be mentioned.

### 4.4 The product and service offerings by interim companies in Czech Republic

The product offer area is very fragmented. The reason is the variety of the effort to come up with a unique value proposition that will strengthen the company's competitiveness. A sample from the text of the content analysis and coding within the UVP Canvas product offerings and parameters is shown in Table 2 below. The composition of these

**Graph 2 » A relative frequency of customer's requirements and problem's**



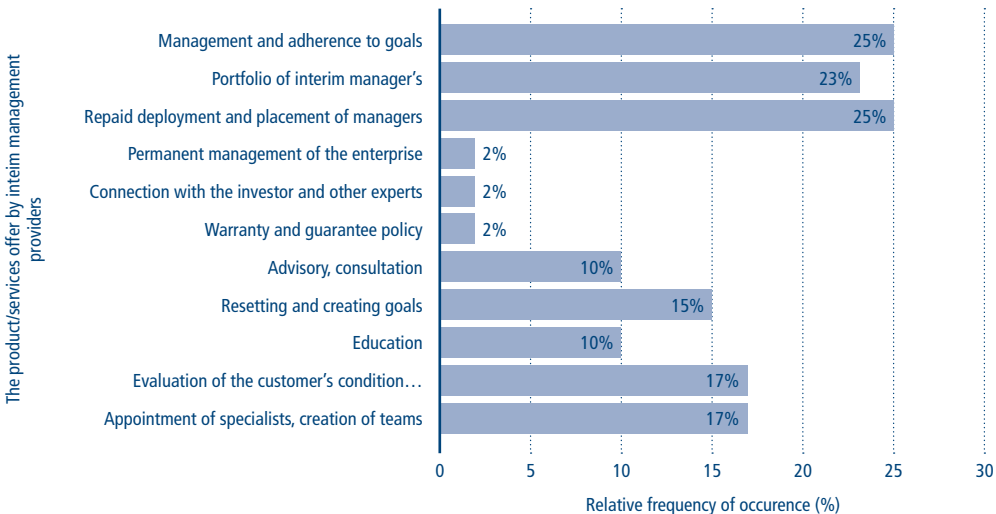
Source: own work

→ **Table 2 » An example of the coding structure within the content analysis**

The name of the company	Product and service offerings	Code's
Kompetenz People s.r.o.	Our goal is as quickly as possible, fill a specialized position for a temporary period in order to save the client's money and time. We have know-how, with the help of which he finds out who the client really needs. A key resource is the established network of independent interim managers. A key activity is the acquisition and hiring of interim managers at the beginning of their interim practice.	<b>Product:</b> Substitution interim management <b>Gain creators:</b> Independent and objective assessment the needs and state of the client's problem <b>Pain relievers:</b> Rapid manager deployment and mediation A wide portfolio of interim managers
HEADIM s.r.o.	Our goal is helping SMEs in growth and crisis resolution. We set up long-term goals and plans within 4 to 6 months. We provide evaluation of the state of the customer's company, design of tactical and action plans according to identified needs, supervision of implementation and compliance with established procedures and goals. A promotional and educational spin-off is podcast advice and tools. We have knowledge and partnerships in the field of IT systems for companies.	<b>Product:</b> Change interim management <b>Gain creators:</b> Independent and objective assessing the state of the problem and the needs of the client Partnership in the field of IT systems of companies <b>Pain relievers:</b> Overseeing adherence to solutions and goals

Source: own work

**Graph 3 » Gain creators and pain relievers of interim management providers in Czechia**



Source: own work

parameters in terms of creators and relievers is summarized in the following Graph no. 3.

It is possible to connect activities primarily with three areas: rapid deployment and placement of manager's (25%), wide portfolio of interim manager's with know-how expertise in given area (23%) and overseeing adherence to goals and solutions (25%). The reason they don't have the same representation is the substitute interim management, which doesn't change the company and does the work, which the customer requires. A small difference between the stronger development of audits and reconfiguration is a positive indicator that interim managers want to be active in the customer's company.

The opposite of this is consulting, which has 10% where the interim manager remains outside the client's business. Also with one-tenth representation is education. Education most often takes place through lectures, interviews, or podcasts. A very unique services are those, that can be the competitive advantage you are looking for. The guarantee of success is very positive for both parties, both for the customer and for the interim manager in the form of motivation. It is possible that these forms of guarantees have more than 2%, as individual negotiations may occur for each client separately.

In terms of resources and abilities that necessarily complete the offer, apart from the portfolios of employees in the form of interim managers (23%), there are also other resources mentioned in the presentation of the service providers, such as the acquired reputation and experience (23%), which are individual managers lean. A specific form of reputation support is participation in organizations that increase (especially CAIM) the credibility of individuals (12%). Self-education and level of acquired education of interim managers, as well as degrees or certifications improving their position on the market (12%). However, as customers have specific needs and specialization requirements, areas of collaboration with practitioners are important (12%).

#### *4.5 Customers and supply of services by interim companies in the VPC model*

In this section, the VPC model is created and described, which is shown in the following figure 3. The first step in the Value proposition Canvas model is the determination of customer activities (Customer jobs). For this part, the data obtained during the representation of individual fields of business are used. When determining the fields of business, it is necessary to orientate yourself from the most represented to the descending represented for maximum efficiency. In the UVP Canvas model, there are three main customers of the business area. Manufacturing industry (32%), wholesale and retail trade, repair and maintenance of motor vehicles (20%), transport and storage (8%). It is likely that the majority of customers of interim firms will flow from the first two sectors (more than 50% representation in customer references). If we compare the results from the INIMA survey (2023), the main segment is equipment manufacturers and automotive.

For this work, the other two steps were combined into one, which is the determination of Pains and Gains. The resulting groups of problems and requirements, which were obtained from customer references, were sorted into these points. The right side of the VPC model, which is the customer profile, is the first answer to the central research question. According to the highest frequency of representation of customer problems, these are business processes (13.2%), followed by business strategy (9.6%) and personnel consulting (7%). According to the results of the INIMA survey (2023), process optimization ranks first among clients' business assignments in the Czech Republic.

The left side of the VPC model is intended for the value proposition of interim management companies and its benefits. In the first part (products & services), it is possible to use the basic breakdown from the current literature, which was described in the introduction of the thesis. Interim managers →

offer a product in the form of substitution, project or change activities with regard to the identified needs of the customer. At the moment, with regard to the focus on the customer, it can be estimated that the experience gained from the past activities of the interim manager and the know-how acquired with him will be used in the area of benefit creation different paths. This is also reflected in the area of problem solving, in which interim managers are able to offer a different proven view of the situation in the company. Whether it's setting strategy, goals, business, HR and more. With great exaggeration, we can say that the most likely customer is a company from the manufacturing industry with problems in the area of (setting up or optimizing) company processes, for which it would be beneficial to quickly acquire a person with long-term experience who can analyze and evaluate the client's current situation.

As part of change management, a key activity is not only the setting of new goals, but also the supervision of compliance with solution procedures and the implementation of measures by interim management providers. The so-called guarantee policy can be classified as a unique and newly expanding approach on the part of interim man-

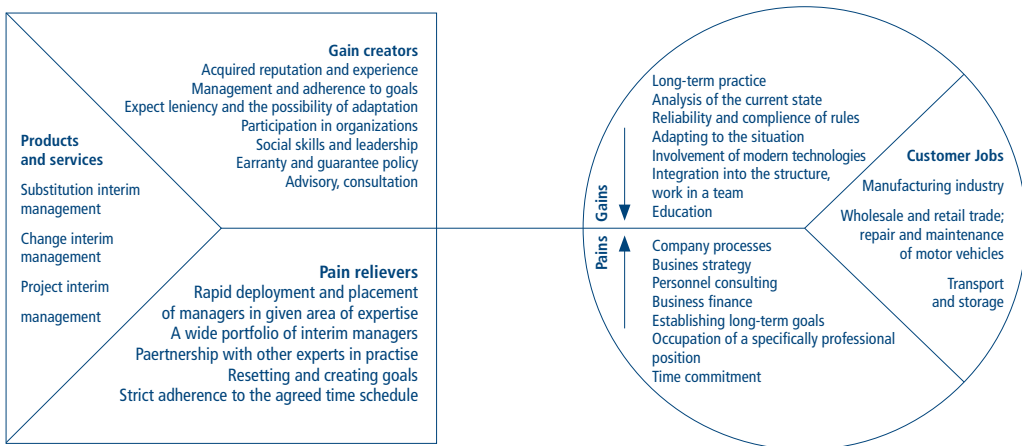
agement providers. For example, "Risk free guarantee," which consists in refusing financial compensation if the set goals are not met, was found, for example, at the company JPF Czech s.r.o.

### 5. Conclusion and limitation

The aim of this pilot research was to map the potential problems and requirements of the target customer of interim management providers, taking into account their relative importance, as well as to identify the lines of business in which the target customers are most likely to be found. The result was the creation of a customer profile in the VPC model, which is represented by the right side of this model.

In the left part of the model, information from current theory and practice on the interim management market has been added with the aim of describing the current offer of products and services and a summary of activities, resources and capabilities that help not only solve clients' problems, but also increase profits or fulfil customer requirements and expectations from cooperation. The last step was to incorporate the results into the VPC and thereby achieve the desired goal.

Figure 3 » UVP Canvas of interim management companies in Czech Republic



Source: own work

Data were obtained and analyzed from secondary sources through an online presentation of interim management service providers selected according to criteria and customer references published on the websites of interim management companies. The approach of secondary research is based on the method of content qualitative and quantitative analysis, which examined 60 customer references within the framework of interim management service providers in the Czech Republic.

The informational value of individual references can be considered as the limits of research due to the marketing arrangement of interim companies that present themselves in this way. A completely different approach is needed for removal, when the author of the work would collect references directly from individual customers. This would achieve homogeneity of references and avoid bias due to missing information.

Another limit can be considered the time interval of research processing. Although a large number of references were analyzed, it is likely that more references will be found in the longer term. In this case, it would be necessary to check the threshold beyond which further search is still effective. It is also limiting to compile a customer profile only from data on the field of business and the problems or requirements they solve. A possible limit could be the view of the customer with regard to its size, which would significantly contribute to the identification of the target customer. Unfortunately, the vast majority of references do not mention the date of establishing cooperation. Current data on the size of the company with regard to the number of employees, sales or turnover have no informative value for this work.

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## A Value Proposition Canvas of Interim Management Providers in the Czech Republic

### ABSTRACT

*In a difficult situation, more entities are turning to interim managers for help as a lesser-known alternative to the standard management of the company by regular managers. Interim management is still a very young discipline in the Czech Republic, which is only beginning to develop and become popular. The goal is to map the nature of the key focus of segments of companies operating in this area and to identify the content of the needs and requirements of customers in the area of establishing possible cooperation. The secondary research approach is based on the method of content qualitative and quantitative analysis, which examines 60 customer references within the framework of interim management service providers in the Czech Republic. The results show that the main customer segment is the manufacturing industry and wholesale and retail trade. Following the difficulties faced by customers, the areas of business processes, business strategy and HR are most often represented. On the contrary, to the expected gains, customers demand long-term practice and experience and an analysis of the client's current situation and problem, and an emphasis on the credibility and compliance of the hired manager. Interim management service providers try to respond to this situation either by offering a wide portfolio of interim managers or cooperation with experts with the aim of rapid provisioning and deployment and independent audit of the client's situation. To increase trust and credibility, providers try to offer warranty and guarantee policies.*

### KEYWORDS

*UVP Canvas; interim management providers; customer's segments; Czech Republic*

### JEL CLASSIFICATION

*L20; L26; M20; M31*

