

STRESZCZENIE W JĘZYKU ANGIELSKIM

The modern economy is characterized by increasing competition. Globalization as a process of spontaneous liberalization accompanied by unification of goods markets, capitals, manpower, technology and information into one interdependent market caused consolidation of markets. Now the business leaders have faced an issue of how to improve their competitiveness. An element that differentiates a business is human capital gathered by the organization. In order to pull ahead of the competitors, every enterprise needs to consciously manage the staff competencies and show flexibility in adjusting them to changing market demands. Employees who are accustomed and can easily adapt to frequent changes, who are ready to make decisions when the business requires it, are the essential element for building an ideally flexible organization. Therefore, human resource management is very important to increase business competitiveness. Skills and qualifications of employees are the capital of an enterprise which can help it gain a competitive advantage on the market. Continuous improving of skills and knowledge of the staff is possible and the response is life-long learning of the employees and of the organization.

An employer who wishes to invest in development of employee skills will face certain risks. The main risk is when an employee, shortly after he or she acquires knowledge and skills at a sufficiently high level, terminates the employment agreement, leaves the organization and – what is worse – goes to a competitive company. Another risk is related to the level of competencies of the training providers and quality and relevance of the selected training techniques. The risk may increase if the organization decides to use external suppliers.

All organizations are much interested in measuring the effectiveness of training programs provided by either external vendors or internal providers. Because of this demand, many training assessment programs were implemented. Therefore, this paper presents a systematic review of different training assessment methods, and analyses the frequency of use of each approach on example of Polish companies in some selected fields of industry. Empirical research on the methods of assessment of training effectiveness and the data collected from managers allowed the author to find several important relationships. It was concluded that low level of engagement of managers in the staff training and lack of consistency in implementing the changes at the workplace negatively affect the development of the employees and the achievement of results. Another factor which has a negative effect on the development and performance of the departments included in the survey is lack of spotting skill gaps in planning staff trainings. According to the survey respondents, creating and implementing of workforce development plans that are boilerplate and do not address the actual training needs is less effective than provision of trainings focused on identified skill gaps. The results

of a survey conducted in organizations where a model of systematic approach to staff training was implemented in full or was adjusted and tailored to business requirements showed an increase of efficiency of the sales department management. The enhanced effectiveness was manifested by increased performance in those departments, in which the development programs had been implemented. The management of the sales department also became more effective because the development programs were planned on the basis of a skills gap analysis. The objectives of the training programs were closely related to the goals to be achieved by course participants, which really improved their engagement in the training and commitment to implementing the newly-acquired skills in every-day work. Obligatory attendance of immediate supervisors during the courses enhanced the employees' motivation to use the new qualifications while accomplishing tasks together with the managers. Creating a plan of skills implementation by the managers largely helped to achieve the expected results and levels of competencies, in some cases in a shorter time than originally planned. By using well-defined competency portfolios and adhering to the required competency levels, the managers of a human resources department can more effectively plan development trainings, define project goals or participate in creating an implementation program directly at the participant's workplace. Using quantified data with respect to the level of competencies prior to and after the staff development program, the human resource managers can easily assess whether or not the investment was beneficial for the organization. The positive relationship between the improvement of competencies and performance of individual goals can be assessed by comparing the competency levels with the results achieved by the participants before and after the implementation of the development program, using the key performance indicators.

In the model of systematic approach to competency development, simple and effective methods of skill assessment before and after the implementation of the program are the most important assumption that allows to determine if, and to what extent the level of qualifications changed. Such evaluation helps the management to answer the question if the training program was prepared and carried out properly. Knowing the response to that question, it is easy to assess if the investment in the development program was profitable to the enterprise. However, it must be noted that efforts to improve skills and knowledge of the employees do not always cause a change of behaviors at the workplace. Thus, active participation of the managers and supervisors in the implementation of business development programs is highly recommended. Unfortunately, there are no universal methods of evaluation of the skill level which could be applied in every organization. An integral part of a systematic approach to training development is a choice of methods of personnel's skill assessment to be used and easily implemented by an organization.

The results of the survey also showed directions to be scientifically explored in the future. It would be advisable to check the extent to which the participation of an immediate supervisor will influence

improvement of the participant's competencies and thus, if managers should be actively included in each development program implemented at the organization. It is an open question if, and how, the engagement of managers in development programs can affect the performance of individual targets. Another issue to be included in future research studies is pursuing innovative methods of assessment of the skill level. Because of the rapid pace of technological changes it would be worth to consider the impact of current technologies on changing the scope of competencies. This does not only relate to the completion of personality tests using online platforms, as even now we are probably not able to evaluate the level of competencies without using an "Assessor".

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