THE ROLE OF NETWORKS IN PERMANENT TRAINING

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In order to decide on an education necesity one has to answer the question "What and who do we organize a certain educational process or system for and why do we organize it in a certain way and not otherwize?". In order to decide on an education necessity one must also answer the question "What social problems does the educational process or system we devised solve?". The problem of lifelong in-service training is important for supporting the workforce change, being the main instrument it uses in order to adjust to the new requirements, this enabling its nobility among differerent fields of activity.

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National economies and even national cultures are prove to globalization. By this we mean that the activities of the society (politics, economy, culture, sports, etc.) work closely depending on each other at international level in real time. This phenomenon has been recently made possible due to the infrastructure offered by communication and IT. Globalization involves a high cultural and civilization level of different peoples, which is impossible to achieve without an efficient and modern education system.

The most comprehensive definition of the globalization phenomenon is induced by the well-known collocation "the planetary village" that Marschall McLuhan used a few decades ago in order to catch the essence of the contemporary phenomenon that mainly led to spreading behaviours caused by a Homo oeconomicus reasoning without borders of local feelings.

The Effects of Globalization and this Homo globalus = supermarket global appeared:

- information technologies that connect us faster and more often;
- diminishing distances through new technologies;
- interconnection and increasing the mutual dependence;
- integration of financial and capital markets;
- increased internationalization (globalization) of production through the trans-national companies;
- occurrence of planetary phenomena that ask for global approaches.[26]

Quality ensurance systems, when and if applied, are in an incipient stage o development. Many providers cannot see yet the necessity of adopting them, as they think the market is not yet ready to cover their costs and, therefore, investing in such expensive systems will only bring small returns. The role of marketing strategy is to detail for a certain program or market, having all necessary data to achieve the proposed objectives.

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This context is the result of the combined action of private initiative, competition and social insecurity but also of the difficulties that are inherent to any government change. Under the new economic and social circumstances, the existing human resources encountered a strong process of erosion but also of alternative valorization through alteration and creation and this ensured in a high degree the answer to the requests of an uncertain market.

The globalization process determined significant changes in Romania's occupational structure: new professions appeared and, one the other hand, the contents of many others underwent changes.

[26] Bari, I., Globalizarea economiei, Ed. Economica, Bucuresti, 2005, p.29.

Inside different fields of activity some professions became more required, others become absolete and disappeared.

The causes of changes in their activity substance are: adjusting to customer needs, increased competition and retechnologization. The employed population increased in some fields of activity/economic activities/professions. The main competences connected to the changes in activity substance are: computer and IT literacy, solving occuring problems, resources management and comunication. The following trans-sectorial competences have become obvions: computer literacy and mastering foreign languages (mainly English).

This contradictory situation that combines the dealine and apathy with the rise of new competences, institutions and excellengy centres should be put to good use in the work resources development strategy. The new centres of inovation and expertize should become a key factor of social change. To this purpose they should not be just protected and preserved but identified, encouraged and used as decision, management and social influence centres.

Supplyng the organization with the necessary workforce is done according to its proposed objectives and to the extent the "qualities" of the future empoyees answer these objectives. Professional training with its two sides- school training and in-service training – asks for considerable expenses to be incurred, but their outcome is to be seen later.

In order to ensure their expected efficiency, it is essential for these expenses to be considerated all the time a special kind of "investment", a human resources investiment that begins with the employee selection and lasts as long as the respective company exists.

It is also well-known the fact that workforce mobility is greater as compared to other fields of activity. In order to increase the efficiency of the investiments the company made in the professional development of the employees, it is therefore absolutely necessary to take permanent and coherent action with regard to diminishing "voluntier leaving" of employes, as the fact that "investment" leaves when people leave is very well known.

The deep changes that take place in modern society and the spectacular evolution of commercial technologies often caused some employees to be unable to professioanally keep pace with the changes in devising organizind and unfolding the activities. Therefore the necesity of "updating" their professional knowledge occurs.

The process of changing the economic structure led to essential changes in the professional structure of population. Massive redundancy occurred in industry and was only partially compensated by new jobs in services and the industries that revived. Unemployment cannot be exactly measured as the decrease in the number of workplaces was accompanied by important activity in the underground economy, by hybrid forms of official and unofficial activity that make a concrete analysis of labour market extremely difficult to run.

Professional structure – Changes:

- New professions
- Changes in some professions
- Changes in the importance of some professions
- Huge loss of working places in industry – partially compensated
- The rise of underground economy

The process of changing the economic structure and the society as a whole, the necessity of individual and collective professional reconversion, the new requirements regarding qualifications and competences had as their outcome a multitude of free and imposed as well as formal and informal learning processes.

In the age of globalization, specialists talk about "the digital company", "the virtual company" or "the company of the third millenium" . The "new"company doubtlessly presents some characteristics that differentiate it from the "old" company. The following are worth emphasizing:

- the information is the most important resource of the contemporary company, and, at the same time, the main source of getting the competitive advantage; information is a merchandise as good as any;
- the employees change the place they work in; some of them don't even have a workplace in the ordinary sense of the world any more, they work at home and keep in touch with their managers through the informational channels - these "teleemployees" allow the company the reduce its costs a lot;
- the company employs workforce that has the necessary abilities of currently working on computers;

- the company signs more and more often work contracts on determined periods of time. The market logics makes it possible that acquiring and maintaining long-term very high professional competence should cause any individual to be preoccupied by more important problems than keeping a stable workplace;
- the company has the possibility of runing business on global markets;
- the markets the company is running business on have no more physical dimensions only but also virtual dimensions;
- the competition is harsher; on the "Web Planet" there is practically nothing local any more, which makes it possible for the company to face unknown competition/competitors any moment;
- the goods/services have a shorter life than in the past, which make it necessary for the contemporary company to pay increase the attention to it's own research-development activity; as a result, many alliances among companies appear;
- the contemporary company plays a more important political part than in the past; for example, a lot of European company managers contributed to creating the European Union;
- the company increasingly externalizes its less profitable activities of functions.

Globalization also means gradually and completely including the whole world economic activity into a network. It is only the network that can ensure, in our complex world, the connections among the micro, macro and world economic levels. Therefore globalization affects not only the national economy as a whole but also each and every company's activity. Moreover, the contemporary successful companies can be only *those that will be able to establish the most efficient global networks since*[27] …the network *effect significantly reconsiders the limits of the production capacity*[28].

Efficient co-operation inside these networks is based on a series of elements that can help the interested factors bring changes in the way they perform services. The most important are the following:

- Involving the suitable partners. Partnerships work with maximum efficiency when they are formed of an adequate combination of several organization representatives. This various services are offered to young people by inviduals having the most adequate competences and experience. Particularly, by involving economic agents that vary in size and type, young people can benefit inside this partnership of a vast series of practical activities, of efficient professional councelling and work experience.
- Contract ensurance. The partnership must be agreed on and supported by the high level leaders of the collaborating organizations that should be ready to allot time, money and human resources to the partnership activities. Agreement for such a collaboration might be enhaced by developing the ownership feeling among the different organization.
- Developing a common future plan. It is necessary to develop a common future plan that should include the expected results. They should be realistically viewed and should take into account the individual aims of each partner, so that true understanding should exist among partners.
- Devising an official plan. In order that the collaboration efforts should succeed, it is essential for the partners to devise an official plan that should include the long-term and short-term common objectives and aims, as well as the actions taken to achieve these.
- Emphasizing performance. The companies involved in partnership can benefit from using the private sector perspective, which emphasizes responsibility and performance.
- Pursuing a common objective. Forming an environment where the needs of the adults involved in lifelong traning and achievement of expected results are emphasized, must be promoted.
- Maintaining the partnership. Partnerships must be developed and maintained. We need time and effort in order to get ready for the inevitable changes that are prone to appear during a partnership.

Althongh there are many ways of involving the econominc agents, the community organizations and other partners in supporting the trainees in getting prepared for employmen, the better organized efforts that are characterized by the above-mentioned elements have in fact better chances to ensure an efficient collaboration among all the interested factors.

A series of aspects are connected to the activity of training institutions that can benefit from partnerships and colaboration networks. Among them we can mention:

[27] Ph. Kotler, Managementul marketingului, Bucureşti, Editura Teora, 1997, pag. 32.
[28] T. Brăilean, Noua economie. Sfârşitul certitudinilor, Iaşi, Institutul European, 2001, pag. 124.

- Understanding the internal and external and internal environment where the adult training institutions carry their activity so that planning should be more efficient and should be based on request;
- Planning the joint supplying of certain services such as information services, counselling and conversion services, and advertising services;
- Ensuring opportunities for work experience (Key ability);
- Ensuring professional in- service training;
- Funds for the equipment, furniture and materials purchase in order to support the training process;
- Ensuring adequate resources for the expenses that the everyday activities involve;
- Elaborating and writing new didactic material;
- Sharing good practice examples in order to improve the general quality of training process and the way it is administered;
- Organizing joint activities/sessions of staff professional development;
- Designing new instruments and gathering market info and user feed back.

However, the variety of training necessities, determined by the great social and economic changes that took place and are going to take place in Romania are not correctly assessed and one of the reasons is the fact that at decision factor level as well as in the society as a whole, the fundamental importance of training for solving the problems generated by structural changes is not yet admitted. Also, there is very little assessment on the lifelong training that is presently carried ont,on the planned one and on the lifelong in-service training potential of Romania.

That is why the process of identifying the professional training requirementsmet with a series of difficulties, among which the most important are the following:

- lack of economic development strategies at sector, branch or company level;
- the process of reorganization that is still going on in many fields, branches and companies;
- the difficulty of achieving a correct picture of the economic reality at national, regional and local level as the formal and informal economic sectors coexist and relate to each other;
- the precarions financial status of many companies;
- the decision makers underestimate the role of lifelong professional training;
- low level of financing the lifelong professional training;

But actually, professional training does not seem to be ready to adjust to the new changes. Nowadays more than 36% of the „specialists/ authorities"(Regional workforce Agency staff, work divisions in the field of adult professional training employees, training suppliers, workforce control agencies staff) state they don't know or are not aware of any changes in the workforce structure whereas it is obvions that profound changes took/are taking place, that generate serious social problems. Also, 30,4% of the specialists/authorities state that the legislations is not in accordance with workforce market requirements.

When analysing the relationship between offer, requirement ratio assessment regarding workforce qualification in the process of job getting/employment and the adult proffesional training system correlated with labour market requirements one cannot fail to notice that the professional training system does not answer the labour market requirements.

It is stated that the offer/requirement ratio is unbalanced in its present structure and in a such conditions we consider that staff lifelong in-service training is useful for increasing performances. Among its most important segments we mention:

- Acquiring professional competences, getting info, training, specializing according to EU requirements;
- Registering fields of activity (textile, mechanic, commercial, building, services, agriculture), project management;
- A highly qualified (lifelong trained) person will answer better the job requirements;
- Increasing work productivity and product quality;
- Increase in employee performance should be accompanied by wages increase;
- Motivating employees through: seriousness and responsability, final assessment (expert committee), organization, management, law obedience/skepticism.

Their reasons are the follouring:

- Employers' and trainers lack of funding for lifelong professional training, for technical and material endowment of practical activity workshops that should offer training for the most sought for trades, high costs, very little government support for lifelong professional training;

- Obscure, everchanging legislations, unclear and difficult procedures to be followed in order to get authorization and certificates, bureaucracy, two –headed coordination, lack of stimulating and motivating measures, lack of sanction/punishment;
- Lack of interest in training both from employees and employers (reasons could be for example: little difference in payment between the qualified and unqualified staff, employees are not promoted after attending training courses, graduation certificates are not registered in the workman's passport, diminished financial power of employees, lack of time because of too many work responsibilities, lack of employer motivaton, periodically suspending employee activity may lead to decrease of productivity, no training schedules are devised by employers), very little involvement of social partners;
- Poor quality of lecturers and lack of experienced trainers, particularly for new or rare professions, trainers lack of pshycho-pedagogical competences;
- Lack of flexibility in organizing short-term programs, too long professional training courses, validation of incomplete training certificates;
- People do not fully understand the use of professional training, they lack the necessary information (employers see lifelong professional training as a cost not as an investment);
- Lack of or shallowness of specialists in authorization for different fields of activity;
- Lack of corelation between and real requirements of labour market (especially for graduates), long-term and middle-term prognoses are missing;
- High rate of dropping out of courses;
- Small number of training suppliers and of authorized programs, authorized professional training suppliers do not exist for traditional trades specific to geographical areas, little access for disadvantaged areas, lack of economic agents necessary to carry out the practical training, particularly in rural areas;
- Poor quality of training programs advanced by the suppliers, programs that are not adapted to target groups;
- Student selection according to target groups (according to common objectives, intellectual abilities, motivation level);
- Difficulties in updating the Qualification Nomenclature;
- Acknowledging competences at European level;
- Disagreement among COR, NC, and SPP;
- Low level of students' initial training.

It is our belief that there are conditions (exigencies for an efficient lifelong professional training. Among them the most important are:

1. The quality of the services offered by the lifelong professional training suppliers:

- initial assessment when the course starts and devising personalized programs (training route);
- the diplomas shoulds certify the acquired competences;
- highly experienced and well-prepared lecturers (specialized in trades adult, pedagogy and pshychology) and course logistics (quality);
- ensuring both human and material resources for theoretic and practical training (modern tools and equipment);
- training should be seriously and responsibly carried out ;
- quality ensuring system should be applied;
- lifelong training of professional training trainers;
- programs should be in keeping with competences, they should have optimum duration;
- course logistics should be adapted to adult trainers, ensuring practical training with modern, performant equipment;
- trainers selection.

2. Suppliers' levelling to labour market requirements, adapting training programs (qualifications) to market requirements.

3. Trainees' participation, involvement, permanent interest in and understanding of professional training necessity, the trainees' learning capacity.

4. Permanent updating of standards and nomenclatures, corelating training programs with so, devising flexible and realistic programs togheter with the employees' representatives.

5. Professional training efficiency is enhanced by employing graduates, increasing employment or promotion chances after graduation, earning a good salary, acquiring European level competences, acknowledging qualifications.

6. Strict, efficient and permanent control of professional training suppliers, altering legislation regarding authorization withdrawal, flexible and easy-to-apply legislation, quality specialized control (including in authorization methodology the authorization committee duty to control the professional

training programs organized by professional training suppliers in other districts; this should be the CA duty in the district where the program is run).

7. High level of trainee assessment (professional training suppliers should not be allowed to advance final exam subject variants, these should be made up by evaluators), objective intermediate and final assessments.

8. Ensuring sufficient financial resources.

9. Suppliers should adapt to trainee requirements within the law limits.

10. Dropping out (of training course) ratio.

11. The presence on the labour market of authorized trainers different from government financed institutions.

12. Great importance is attached to diploma to competences and abilities' detriment, thus creating a false aim for the trainee.

13. A real possibility of dividing programs (modules).

14. Completing training with nationally acknowledged certificates.

15. Other situations (lack of info at central level-MMSSF, lack of training centres in disadvantaged areas, etc.).

Marketing Strategy – fundamental action in the marketing of the permanent training services:

1. The main tool used by institutions to gain favorable position within the market
2. It has as starting points the following:
3. Needs, preferences, buying and consuming behavior the target groups.
4. It offers information to the organization management in order to help their one identify market opportunities, appreciate the possibilities of using these and applying strategies to reach its goals.
5. It must adapt to the environment in which it works; it must cope with the changes that arise. The educational organization must benefit from a long term perspective and all its activities must be according to this perspective in a unitary marketing policy.[29]

The educational institutes must research the consumers' needs, must make up programs and services to cover these needs, to offer them on the market at a competitive price, to be able to communicate them and distribute them in such a way as to meet the needs of the society for permanent training. The mix must be conceived in such a way that trainers should perceive it as being superior and unique in companion with competition. The use of marketing tools allows the designing of educational products according to the existing reality in the environment where is the consumer of educational services who will benefit from them. There must be a link between the coordination of developing the programs, casts and the distribution of educational services to the consumers.

The strategic marketing means at length shaping the future actions of the company. In the mind of the company strategic management, the idea that establishing objectives is closely connected to elaborating strategies clearly appears. The strategic marketing is integrated to the generic process of strategic management and subordinated to the vision and mission of the company. An important role n this direction has the defining of market and business fields inside which the marketing objectives and strategies are to be established. Recent evolution of marketing suggests a shifting of weight centre in the marketing process.

The change is from market orientation to customer orientation. The economic organization is interested now to know and care for its most important customers in the best conditions. Getting a new customer becomes a challenge and is not left to chance.

The institution has to develop a strategy specific of the permanent training – part of the general strategy – which has to take into account the specific characteristics such as:

1. Permanent training aims at a high number f adults who are well motivated and who already have work experience;
2. It is necessary to supply the logistics needed which involves a high technological level. Therefore there must be big financial investments, much above their financial possibilities;
3. It is necessary to use also extra-budget resources in order to finance the activity;
4. The institution must make proof of the efficiency of its activities and opportunities;
5. There must be set up a specific structure, a center or department of permanent training which will coordinate the activity performed by each institution in its domain of activity.

The offer of adults' permanent training is more easily adapted to the needs of trainees when the following facts are taken into account:

- Establishing the amount of professional training that is necessary due to the permanent contact the institution and the responsible for professional training have with the labour market;

[29] Dragos Mihai Panagoret, Andreea Anamaria Panagoret, Camelia Coporan, *The Impact of Educational Management on the Educational Process Quality in the Context of School Education Descentralization,* Valahian Journal of Economic Studies, vol. 5 (19), pp. 45-50, issue 2, 2014

- Identifying the different public categories that are aimed at and the forces they are dealing with (situational analysis);
- Using different communication and promotion strategies aimed at different public categories;
- Monitoring the relations with the public on medium and long term periods; analyzing its own image and applying the marketing programs(research, segmentation, positioning and repositioning, strategical planning);
- The reflection of the marketing strategies in conceiving the educational programs.

Price:

- A very flexible element of the mix
- The educational institutions are too keen on costs; they do not take into account the emotional value, too
- Before deciding upon the price, the management must determine the role it has in the marketing strategy

Area distribution:

- It is not balanced; there is a small number of supplies especially in the rural area
- The distribution according to the supplied program is not balanced; the greatest number of programs is represented by the qualification programs
- There are some educational institutions that are authorized to be professional training supplies (yet their number is small)

Promotion:

- Mass-media campaigns, seminars, conferences, training programs
- The program aims at employees, employers, those responsible for decisions on different levels (national, regional, local) and regards the benefits of the professional training on career development
- Career counseling – link between the educational system and training
- Using the trainers as selling force
- Direct marketing
- Exhibitions and fairs

Active involvement in reducing and preventing unemployment for the categories that have difficulties in social and professional adaptation. Developing the network of the permanent professional training supplies and stimulating their certification. Supporting the entrepreneurs in adapting their standards to their own demands. Developing partnerships between schools, economic agents and other factors involved in adapting the curriculum to the market needs. Promoting the flexibility and adaptability on the labor market by adapting the educational and the permanent professional training systems to the changing demands of the labor market, developing flexible programs to certify the competence enquired at the work place.

The conclusion is that a high level of education people get when graduating general training or speciality training courses is not enough as the knowledge they acquire during these school years become obsolete very soon. Therefore we live in an age of globalization and witness the appearance of new types of relationships between a company and its environment. Both the existence and evolution of the 3-rd millenium company are marked by the impact of informational and telecommunicational technology.

In order to fully use the benefits of the training courses regarded as a continuons process, both the Romanian manager and the Romanian employee must equally go the long way from perceiving it as a necessity to approaching it is a priority. The organization managing team must not only be convinced of the necessity of this activity but also support it accordingly, by creating and maintaining a propitions atmosphere of systematic and permanent education/training, in order to permanently increase the professional level of their subordinates.

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