

LIFELONG TRAINING - INTERFACE OF A SUCCESSFUL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN ROMANIAN ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract:

Nowadays people are more and more preoccupied with lifelong training and development. They are interested in building a career and in accumulating experience and knowledge in various fields. There are multiple benefits, both external and inherent, that support participation to professional development programs, more precisely to lifelong training, mainly for the person that is being formed.

The development of professional competences is considered a priority in lifelong training, and the acquisition of social and basic competencies has become a "must have" aspect for business evolution and development of its human resources.

Key words: *lifelong training, continuous professional training programs, human resource management, organizations*

JEL classification: *M12*

INTRODUCTION

Just like in the fashion and hairstyle business, the ideas regarding management often come and go. Sometimes the most appreciated concept nowadays about management does not survive long, before being replaced by the next "big idea".

However, significantly, a constant theme dominates for more than two decades: the most prosperous organizations are concerned with the efficient use of people, of how to lead and organize effectively their human resource management.

From the organization's perspective, the human resources are its employees and the human potential available for that business. People come in organizations with a wide range of qualifications, skills and knowledge that may or may not be useful to the business needs.

Some people identify with the organization and are motivated to help achieve the objectives. Others regard the company as a vehicle designed to meet their own goals. Some people are overloaded and others not used to capacity. A major component of the human resource in Romanian organizations is the entrepreneur, he is the one who founds the organization, directly manages it and supervises it closely. In some organization the entrepreneur can be manager, as well as in an executor position.

Orientation towards a knowledge-based society requires investment in human resource development in order to encourage employees to acquire new skills and accept the occupational continuous development. At the same time, it is important to promote quality training offer and to ensure its relevance in relation to skills, knowledge and individual needs.

Accumulation of knowledge and skills may enhance the labor market position, while at the same time increasing productivity. Rapid changes in all areas cause a more dynamic spectrum of needs for new skills.

Nowadays people are more and more preoccupied with lifelong training and

development. They are interested in building a career and in accumulating experience and knowledge in various fields.

Employees' participation in training programs brings benefit to the person directly involved in the acquisition of skills, as well as to the entire organization. The reasons that support this participation to professional development are multiple, external and inherent to the person (employee) that is being formed.

Regardless of the nature and share, the personnel category (top management, middle management) in which the employee is part of, his age or seniority in the organization, the participation in training programs is a practice to which employees, as well as employers, manifest increasingly more interest.

ROMANIAN DIRECTIONS AND OBJECTIVES IN LIFELONG TRAINING

Having as premise continuous professional training policies at EU level, Romania has developed strategies, policies and courses of action that are consistent with them and adapted to the Romanian social and professional context.

We consider to be relevant the National Development Plan 2007-2013 which establishes the following objectives with impact on professional training: optimizing the correlation between qualifications, labor market needs and the quality assurance system in the training of adults with the European model, a better development of entrepreneurship education in professional training of adults, providing a sufficient number of professional training programs providers, optimal geographical coverage of the training offer (urban and rural environment), increasing the degree of labor market inclusion of disadvantaged groups. At the level of Romanian lifelong training market, another important program National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 draws directions for Structural and Cohesion Funds programming for our country, linking national development priorities and the ones at European level. One of the main elements of the NSRF aims to develop human resources through intervention measures such as:

- development of the counseling and guidance system for participation in education and lifelong training opportunities;
- supporting education and training systems by: increasing flexibility, transforming schools into centers of resources and continuous education, creating new and more complex learning opportunities for young people and adults;
- placing in the center of new policies and directions items such as: increased adaptability, entrepreneurship, stimulating investments in human capital and lifelong learning;
- combating social exclusion and promoting social inclusion
- of different vulnerable groups, disadvantaged categories in labor the market (for example unemployed, people who have left early the education system) by creating different professional training programs;
- development of certification standards of lifelong training quality and a national framework of certifications, carrying out actions that increase professionalism and status of trainers.

LIFELONG TRAINING IN ROMANIA

Private sector providers of continuous training

These institutions provide specific training (qualification perfection) for certain industries, as well as a series of training/ perfecting courses for the general public in related fields (qualifications, language courses, management and so on). Furthermore, some of these institutions have a role in setting some quality standards in continuous

training.

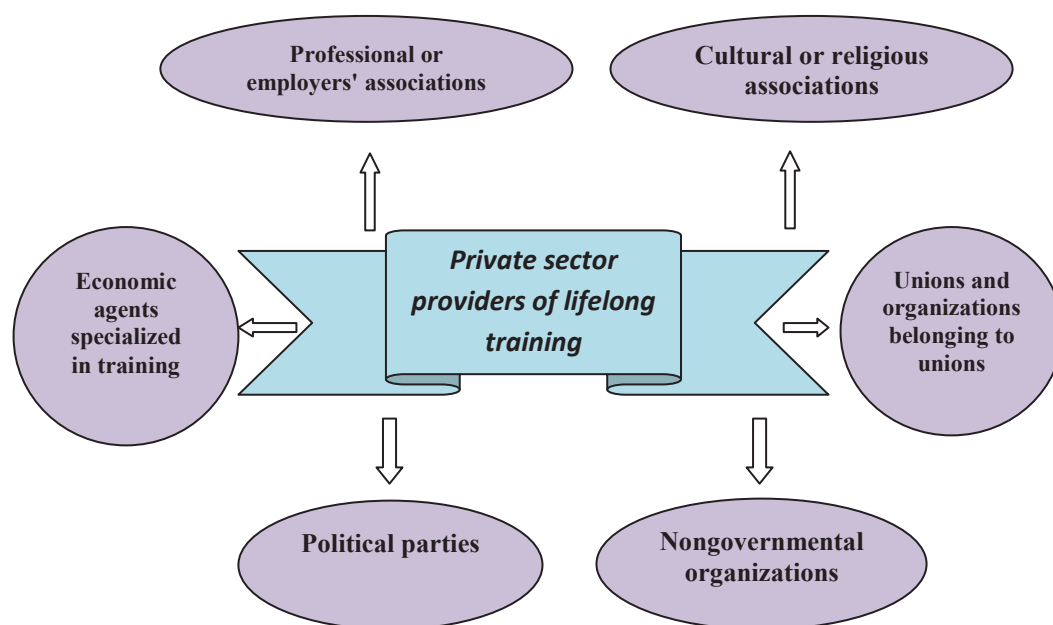


Figure no. 1. The providers of lifelong training from the private sector

According to the National Institute of Statistics, in 2010, the rate of participation to continuous training courses was 30.8% higher than in 2005, when the participation rate was 20.6%, the highest values were registered in financial intermediation, with a percentage of 63.7%, real estate transactions, with 34.5% and the manufacturing industry, with a percentage of 33.1%.

On age groups, the highest participation rate of 34.4% was registered for young people under 25 years, 31.3% for those aged 25-54 years and 20.5% over 55 years. If we take in consideration the specific economic activities of the company, the highest rate of participation is also found in financial intermediation, in which 94.4% of those under age 25 and 61.1% of those 25-54 years have participated to continuous professional training courses, for those of the over 55 years category the highest participation rate was registered in companies from the metallurgical industry.

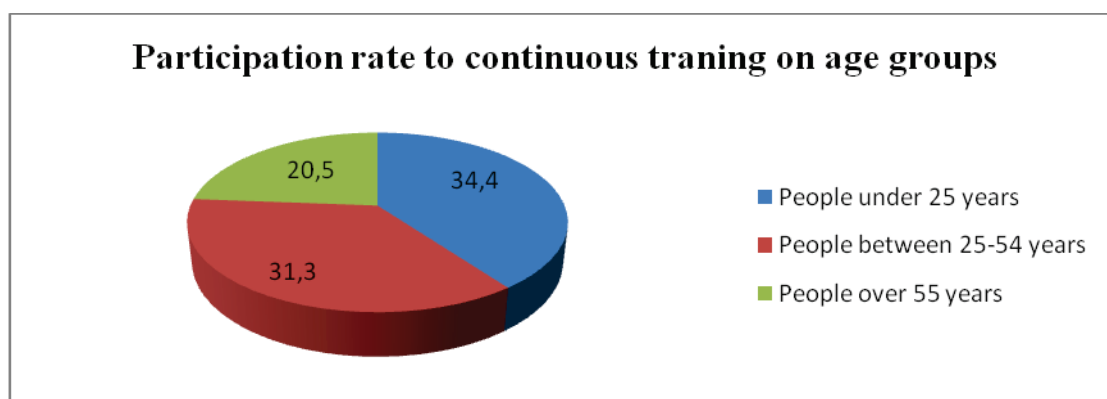


Figure no.2 Participation to continuous training programs on age groups in 2010

On areas of training, social sciences, and economic, financial and legal sciences record the highest time spent in training (27.0% of total time). In relation to ownership, in private companies the training courses in industrial and construction field outrun those in the social sciences, economic, financial and legal sciences (28.7% compared to 25.9%). Depending on the size of companies, most of the time was allocated to training

courses in services, in small and medium enterprises, and training in the field of industrial and construction activity in large enterprises.

Most companies finance, sometimes from a special budget, the participation of their available human resources to trainings in different areas.

An increasing number of companies elaborate development strategies (long, medium or short-term) in which prevails the professional development of employees.

In order to have consistency and continuity in the entire professional development initiative, most companies have established HR departments, or at least they have appointed a person responsible with this activity, and with competences in this field. Some companies have their own training centers that carry out training programs or facilitate the participation in such programs.

Possibilities of stimulating employees' participation in continuous professional training programs

Employees participation to continuous professional training programs is considered a necessity, mostly due to the effects of the economic crisis that force companies to cut personnel in order to reduce costs; that is exactly the reason why these courses are welcomed, because they give employees the chance to re-qualify, in various areas.

The main stimulant regarding employees participation to continuous professional training programs is to maintain the current job, in other words, for employees in this situation participation is a mandatory condition.

Other types of incentives used by employers could be:

- (potential) hierarchical advancement after graduating the program,
- co-financing training participation, or even full financing,
- increasing retribution.

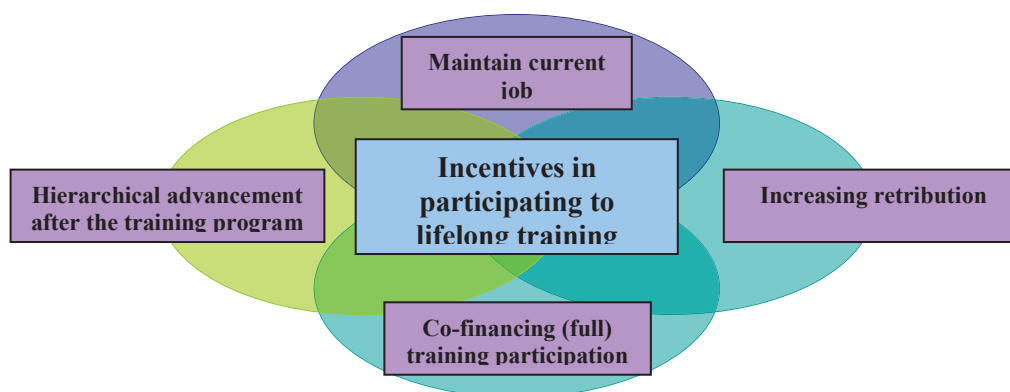


Figure no. 3 Incentives in participating to continuous professional

Obstacles in participating to continuous professional training programs

The main obstacles in participating to continuous professional training programs, invoked by some employees, are: high participation fee and inappropriate placement in time of the courses in relation to individual personal budget time (wrong timing).

Other obstacles regarding training participation target:

- great distance from the place where the training is organized,
- lack of flexible training offers (at distance, online),
- inappropriate certification methods (lack of a certificate at the end of the course, or a certificate which is unrecognized by the company),
- lack of experienced trainers for some courses organized in specific areas.

CONCLUSIONS

The participation to different continuous professional training programs tends to be increasingly more supported by employers through various mechanisms.

Most large companies finance, sometimes from a special budget, the participation in training programs of their available human resources. However, a significant number of employees remain outside any continuous training opportunities.

Nowadays employees in any industry are increasingly more preoccupied with lifelong training, their skills and experience in a certain field of activity are not enough, because due to cost reductions, employers are seeking the most qualified employees that can perform several activities, so the tasks of two or three employees become the tasks of a single employee, in most small companies affected by the economic crisis. This is exactly the reason why allocating a special budget destined for training, to which each employee to have access according to specific training needs, could represent an important motivation for increasing training participation, and for obtaining a smaller number of employees that are multi-qualified.

Development-oriented companies (large companies) invest more in lifelong training than the ones oriented towards maintaining the same standards (small companies). Human resource training strategies could occupy a forefront role in the following period, therefore, it is expected that in the coming years, continuous professional training to benefit from a major support and a favorable framework for development.

The development of professional competences is considered, or should be considered, a priority in lifelong training, and the acquisition of social and basic competencies has become a "must have" aspect for the evolution of the company's activity, as well as for the development of its human resources.

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