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**Zmiana warunkiem sukcesu.
Innowacyjność w doskonaleniu
i rozwoju przedsiębiorstwa**



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Wstęp

Podjęcie tematyki innowacyjności wynika z wyzwań współczesnego zarządzania oraz stanowi naturalny efekt wcześniejszych prac, które dotyczyły mechanizmów doskonalenia przedsiębiorstw oraz budowania ich trwałej konkurencyjności.

Wyzwanie, jakim jest kształtowanie innowacyjności organizacji, dobrze wyrażają słowa Linusa Paulinga, dwukrotnego laureata Nagrody Nobla, który powiedział, że „najlepszym sposobem na to, by wpaść na dobry pomysł, jest wpadanie na mnóstwo pomysłów”. Zachęcając do dyskusji o rozwijaniu innowacyjności służącej doskonaleniu i rozwojowi przedsiębiorstw, oddajemy w Państwa ręce kolejny numer Prac Naukowych z cyklu „Zmiana warunkiem sukcesu”.

Jak zawsze proponowana problematyka jest zróżnicowana i zarówno podejmuje zagadnienia dotyczące zarządzania w ujęciu teoretycznym, jak i przedstawia wyniki badań empirycznych.

Innowacyjność organizacji w dzisiejszym świecie ma kluczowe znaczenie dla rozwoju nie tylko ich samych, ale również gospodarki. Wprowadzanie „odpowiedzialnych” innowacji może przyczynić się do doskonalenia przedsiębiorstwa. Dzieje się tak dzięki roli, jaką w procesach doskonalenia przedsiębiorstw odgrywa koncepcja społecznej odpowiedzialności biznesu, co przekłada się na dostarczanie zrównoważonej wartości, łączącej aspekty: ekonomiczny, społeczny i środowiskowy. W kolejnych artykułach autorzy stawiają kolejne pytania. Czy postęp innowacyjny wymusza zmianę kultury organizacyjnej przedsiębiorstw? Jaka jest rola menedżera w dostarczaniu innowacji przez zespoły wiedzy? Jakie warunki sprzyjają kreatywności i twórczości w firmach o wysokiej tolerancji niepewności?

Kolejna grupa artykułów dotyczy wpływu technologii na wdrażanie zmian organizacyjnych oraz innowacyjnych. Ciekawym przyczynkiem do dyskusji mogą być badania, w których autorzy rozpatrują model biznesu jako siłę motoryczną aktywności innowacyjnej przedsiębiorstw oraz – w sytuacji odwrotnej – przypadek, gdy innowacyjne technologie wpływają na kształtowanie modelu biznesu firmy.

Wierzmy, że tematyka innowacyjności jako źródła doskonalenia i rozwoju kształtującego kierunki zmian w przedsiębiorstwach stanie się dla Państwa wartościowym źródłem inspiracji w pracy naukowej.

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Szkoła Główna Handlowa w Warszawie

EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES OF FORMS TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE COMPETENCES – CASE STUDIES

MIERNIKI SKUTECZNOŚCI FORM PODNOSZENIA KOMPETENCJI PRACOWNIKÓW – STUDIA PRZYPADKÓW

DOI: 10.15611/pn.2016.457.12

Summary: The references analysis, carried out prior to the research initiation, indicates that there is a gap, both in the science and practice related to the effectiveness of the measures of training and other forms improving staff competence. Training effectiveness measures are used as an element of the evaluation system that takes place immediately after training completion; however, cyclic and comprehensive testing of various forms of staff competence and development improvement is rarely observed. The models documented in the references are by D. Kirkpatrick, Ch. Hamblin, J. Phillips or even C-I-P-O and rather selectively or just partially used by companies, thus not necessarily giving solid results. The task of this article is to present the research results based on the analysis of primary data about the effectiveness measures of forms improving employee competence. The research completed in 2013 used the case study methods, based on large enterprises. Only one case, from each service and commercial sector discussed, will be presented (10 in total). They have been chosen based on wider information delivered from the respondents. The author attempts to present comparable tables for each of the enterprise.

Keywords : effectiveness, employee, training, measure, development.

Summary: W literaturze można zauważyć pewną lukę w zakresie prowadzenia badań nad skutecznością i efektywnością form podnoszenia kompetencji pracowników. Działania dotyczące skuteczności szkoleń są stosowane jako element systemu oceny, który ma miejsce bezpośrednio po zakończeniu szkolenia, aczkolwiek cykliczne i wszechstronne badanie różnych form kompetencji personelu i doskonalenia rozwoju jest rzadko stosowane. Wybrane modele, np. D. Kirkpatricka, Ch. Hamblina, J. Phillips lub nawet C-I-P-O, są często selektywnie stosowane przez przedsiębiorstwa. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest zaprezentowanie wyników badań przeprowadzonych na podstawie analizy podstawowych danych dotyczących skuteczności działań w zakresie form podnoszenia kompetencji pracowników. W badaniu przeprowadzonym w 2013 r. wykorzystano metodę studium przypadków. Do badania wybrano duże przedsiębiorstwa z sektora usługowego. Zaprezentowano 10 przypadków. Wybór padł na przedsiębiorstwa, których respondenci dostarczyli najobszerniejszych i najcenniejszych z punktu widzenia badania informacji.

Słowa kluczowe: skuteczność, pracownik, szkolenie, kompetencje, rozwój.

1. Introduction

The references analysis, carried out prior to the research initiation, indicates that there is a gap, both in the science and practice related to the effectiveness measures of training and other forms of improving staff competence [Żukowska 2014]. Training effectiveness measures are used as an element of an evaluation system that takes place immediately after the training completion; however, the cyclic and comprehensive testing of various forms of staff competence and development improvement is rarely observed [Rasmussen et al. 2012; Forth et al. 2005]. The models documented in the references are by D. Kirkpatrick [Kirkpatrick 1994], Ch. Hamblin [Woźniak, Kozioł 2012], J. Phillips [Phillips et al. 2003] and even C-I-P-O [Kunasz 2006], and rather selectively or just partially used by companies, thus not necessarily giving solid results.

The task of this article is to present the research results based on the analysis of the primary data concerning the effectiveness measures of forms improving employee competence.

2. The synthetic approach to selected efficiency measures of competency improvement forms

The measures indicated in the introduction shall be presented at this point in a really synthetic way. This is due to the fact that they have already been presented more comprehensively in the authoress' earlier papers. The measure most frequently used is the D. Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model that consists of four levels. The response level should provide an answer to the question of whether "the participants liked the training course". To verify satisfaction, contentment or knowledge of the information acquired during the training course, surveys or in-depth interviews with the training course participants are used. The quality of the activities may be measured thanks to observations with the use of checklists. The second stage is the level of learning in which we should check whether the participants acquired knowledge, skills and if they have modified their own attitudes. Measuring knowledge with the use of tests before and after training appears to be an effective instrument here. It should be checked at this point whether the level of knowledge and skills has grown and whether it is actively used in the workplace. In the third step a test is undertaken to observe whether or not the participants use the competences acquired during the training on the behavioural level every day and if the use of the acquired knowledge and experience is present. At the last stage of the results it is checked if the actual training has been effective, i.e. if it has actually been translated into the growth of the enterprise profits [Kirkpatrick 1994]. In fact, this is the most important, most measurable element of the efficiency measure, however, it is the most difficult one. This is due to the fact that during the test other factors that could affect the change of profit should be taken into consideration [Mayo 2002].

The next model is Ch. Hamblin's model that constitutes the expansion of D. Kirkpatrick's model by the fifth level, also called the ultimate target model. Moreover, Ch. Hamblin assumes that the formulation of the training targets prior to starting it is a key factor, at the same time admitting the omission of this phase should any difficulties impeding their definition be encountered [Woźniak, Koziół 2012].

According to the authoress of this paper, both D. Kirkpatrick's model and Ch. Hamblin's model seem to be very good and, if applied by organizations, they would allow for obtaining reliable data in a reasonable way, in terms of the enterprise commitment. A disadvantage of both methods (otherwise called models) is principally the necessity to carry out all the stages thereof. This may represent a difficulty for the people carrying out the measuring. However, only if the method is fully applied may it bring reliable and measurable results and information. Nevertheless, companies mostly apply the first two stages of the methods, omitting the further ones. In such cases, the model is not applicable.

According to the authoress of this paper, Ch. Hamblin's model appears to be really valuable, when one refers to values and targets. The principal advantages of the methods include, no limitation of the clarity and transparency of the proposed stages, a fairly high intuitiveness of the methods, a kind of simplicity, particularly in the initial stages or implementation of the financial indexes as an additional element, giving a wider opinion on the scope of the topic under analysis.

Another instrument used for measuring the efficiency of professional training is the C-I-P-O model. C stands for context and is based on gathering and processing data on the organizational situation, its needs, difficulties, problems, with a particular stress on the areas of no activity, I – investments, is the moment of gathering information that is to serve for the selection of the optimum training techniques and methods. P, i.e., process, is based on the aggregation of the participants' opinions on the training itself and its course. The last stage is O – the results representing the foundation for the training result analysis. The results assume three dimensions of effects – direct, indirect and long-term. The direct effects may be noticed already immediately after the training completion, referring to changes in attitudes, behaviours or knowledge. The indirect results are focused on the effect of implementing the skills within the workplace. The easiest way is to test it using a control group. The last – long-term results apply to the impact of the indirect results on the entire organization [Kunasz 2006] whereas, testing on the control group is based on comparing the efficiency of work of the people who attended the training to that of the people who did not.

It is worthwhile noting, however, that the measure, although providing reliable results, is rather time-consuming and engaging for the organization. Therefore, it is very difficult to be applied and at the same time it seems to be of little use for the organization.

J. Phillips' model is also a noticeable measure. The evaluation of the training participants is used here. Their task is to define the financial benefits from the training

for the organization, including the identification of some substantial improvements that may be implemented in the enterprise after the training [Philips et al. 2003]. Due to the estimations reported by the training participants and the risk of their subjectivism, this model is often criticized. It is worth considering, however, as a method supplementing another method of evaluating the training efficiency, selected by the organization.

3. Materials and methods

The empirical study includes 40 in-depth interviews within large and medium-sized businesses. Small and micro-businesses have not been included into the empirical research, based on the results of pilot studies showing the data to be marginal and not contributing anything new to the study. Interviews were conducted via telephone or in person in 2013. The form depended on the preferences of the business undergoing the study. However, the research form did not affect the final results. Many times, the interviewers received more detailed data during a phone interview, rather than during a personal visit. The interview was also in the form of an unstructured interview. The respondents were the managers.

The study included 17 medium-sized and 23 large businesses; however, for the purposes of this article, only mini-case studies on selected large businesses will be presented. The middle sized businesses will be presented in the second article. Only one case, from each service and commercial sector discussed, will be presented (10 in total). They have been chosen based on the wider information delivered by the respondents. Based on the fact that all businesses participating in the in-depth questionnaire based on the survey chose to remain confidential, in order to develop the empirical material, only the industry sector and the synthetic business description were used, therefore, not allowing their later identification by the reader. There will be very synthetic enterprises description, as an introduction, and then there will be comparable data presented in tables.

4. Test results

4.1. Enterprise – service and commercial sector (medical industry)

The company has been operating on the European market for many years, and meets all the requirements of the EU, which, nowadays, all emergency medical companies are subjected to. It has also been operating in Poland since 1993. Being one of the leading private medical companies, it provides high-quality medical services in all branches located throughout 7 major cities of Poland. It employs a highly skilled staff, has the latest ambulance models and state of the art diagnostic tools, which all branch locations and clinics are equipped with.

4.2. Enterprise – service and commercial sector (media industry)

The company has been operating on the Polish market for several decades. It collects, edits and transmits information from Poland and abroad. The company prepares news services for media, institutions, government offices and business owners. It consists of several editorial teams specialized in business, politics, science or sports. The news is developed by both, expert editors with many years of work experience, as well as by the new, young and talented reporters.

4.3. Enterprise – service and commercial sector (pharmaceutical industry)

The company, whose mission was to create modern, high-quality services for the pharmaceutical industry, was founded in 1990. It is a valued distributor of pharmaceuticals with a Polish nationwide sales network. Besides medication, the company offers medical equipment, herbs and cosmetics. The subsidiaries are responsible for drug distribution to pharmacies throughout the entire country.

4.4. Enterprise – service and commercial sector (assembly industry)

This company has been operating on the market since the nineties. It provides specialized and comprehensive services for the installation, removal, packing and relocation of machines and industrial facilities around the world.

4.5. Enterprise – service and commercial sector (distribution of plastic materials)

The company was established in 1990 and offers a wide range of plastic materials designed for the advertising, construction and industrial sectors. The company is a well-knit team, which constantly works on increasing its competence. The management ensures the employees continuous personal development and improves on the existing work methods. It employs more than 250 people in Poland.

4.6. Enterprise – service and commercial sector (apparel industry)

This Polish company producing leather accessories was founded in 1990. The business deals with direct distribution, with a dynamic development of export activities, as well as Internet sales. Currently, the brand can boast about the Eastern market expansion, mainly to Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Business growth influenced the creation of a modern logistics centre, with a storage warehouse, customs warehouse and Quality Department.

4.7. Enterprise – service and commercial sector (hospitality industry)

This company offers comprehensive business and hospitality process services. It has been operating on the Polish market for the past several decades.

4.8. Enterprise – service and commercial sector (finance industry)

This company has been operating across Poland since 2003 offering financial intermediary services. For the past two years, they have also been dealing with brokerage operations. The enterprise is classified as a large, privately owned company, with 100% of Polish capital bond.

4.9. Enterprise – service and commercial sector (shipping/delivery industry)

This company has been present in Europe, including Poland, for over a decade, and its main operation is document and parcel delivery. It has a large number of branches throughout Poland and deals with more than one and a half million packages per month. Despite high competition, the company keeps a strong market position due to having various service offers, supported by advanced interactive tools that manage items for shipping. As the company has many branches, it employs more than a thousand people throughout the country, and therefore is classified as a large, private company, with Polish capital only.

4.10. Enterprise – service and commercial sector (cosmetics industry)

This company has been operating on the European market since the seventies, however, in Poland it has only been functioning for the past decade. The business does extremely well throughout several continents, thanks to a selection of high-quality innovative cosmetic products. The company belongs to a group of large, privately owned enterprises, with a 100% involvement of foreign capital.

5. Discussion

Summarizing the results obtained from these case mini studies, it can be concluded that there are certain differences in the approach to personnel policy, especially in the staff training policy of large enterprises. Large companies often recognize that training contributes to work efficiency increase as a result of developmental activities, essentially understood as activities that will increase employee competence.

Moreover, large size companies use other forms of competence improvement, rather than just traditional training. This includes, in particular, coaching and mentoring.

It should be noted that personnel policy is closely linked to improving staff competence.

In the vast majority of cases, the Board of Directors is of the opinion that during the recruitment process it is better to opt for a potential employee who does not require an immediate competence improvement, and rather of someone who can be quickly implemented into his/her job position without additional training.

They carry out training needs analyses, based on which future competence development solutions are created.

Most companies strongly benefit from closed-type training, which is tailored to the company's specifics, and are very happy to use funds offered by the European Union.

However, upon reference analysis and research results, it can be assumed that the vast majority of companies do not perform any training effectiveness and/or job position effectiveness analyses. Moreover, their observations on efficiency are more intuitive, rather than confirmed by the efficiency measures test results. The management is not able to indicate whether or not they use any efficiency measures of competence development forms. Even if it seems as if they do, they are unable to indicate them. Nor are they familiar with any methods of efficiency measures of forms improving competence used in references. At this point, it should be noted, that the specific percentage values indicated by the respondents were, however, intuitive. They are based on their impressions and assumptions, rather than on any reliable data. For this reason, the percentage values indicated in this case study (as previously emphasized) are of a declaratory and discretionary nature.

Based on the interviews, one can assume that the actual effectiveness measures are frequently used; however, companies are often unaware that the tools are used, in fact, the effectiveness measure tools. It should also be mentioned, that these are usually tools consistent with the tools occurring in the first, and sometimes the second, stage of Kirkpatrick's Model. There is no indication of using the higher levels of Kirkpatrick's Model. Other methods are not diagnosed whatsoever. The fifth level of Hamblin's model, J. Phillips or the C-I-P-O are absent as well. Moreover they used selected levels of Kirkpatrick's Model only to review training. Coaching and mentoring are not measured.

Managers rarely consider professional training as having a minimal effect on the efficiency of job positions, business performance or the company itself. On the contrary, they recognize that such trainings directly translate into the business's overall performance, however, this statement is solely based on their assumptions rather than by the verified, existing data. Usually, the information obtained is literally interpreted. For example, if they know that their employees have participated in training and shortly after an increase in profit is observed, they recognize these events as being directly related.

Also, potential employees with no or little experience and/or level of competence that is yet to develop, are least likely to be hired.

It should be emphasized, that managers gave vague opinions. One can assume, that this primarily resulted from having an insufficient knowledge of the subject, which is: the efficiency measures of competence development forms.

6. Conclusion

The measures that currently appear in the literature, such as those presented in this paper, i.e. the model by D. Kirkpatrick, Ch. Hamblin, J. Phillips or even C-I-P-O, are extremely expanded, which may suggest that the managers have serious problems with their applicability. Moreover, there is a vast research space left concerning the possibility of the analysis of the needs of how the efficiency measures of training and other competency improvement forms should be constructed in order to be useful in business practice as well. It has also been noticed that the measures which are mainly used concern training courses, while there are no solutions that could verify the efficiency of coaching or mentoring, i.e. other forms mentioned by the respondents.

To conclude, one can notice the need to promote the use of the efficiency measures of forms improving staff competence, as well as the need to design simpler measures which the company will be able to easily implement. It would be an item analysed in further research.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Case studies comparison vol. 1

Enterprise – represented sector	Crucial HR elements connected with staff development	Competences profiles and recruitment characteristic	Level of education		
			primary education	secondary education	tertiary education
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.1. Service and commercial sector (medical industry)	Exists employee training needs assessment which stimulates organization of staff training courses. No employee evaluations system.	Exists specific job descriptions and competency profiles. The latter are used by the executive team when selecting new employees.	10%	55%	35%
1.2. Service and commercial sector (media industry)	Exists employee training needs assessment which stimulates organization of staff training courses. Applies employee assessment, using the 180 degree review method.	Has specific job descriptions, which are applied during the recruitment process of new employees. Requirements for the newly hired are as follows – work experience, home and world knowledge, ability to work in a team and foreign languages proficiency.	2%	22%	76%
1.3. Service and commercial sector (pharmaceutical industry)	Exists employee training needs assessment which stimulates organization of staff training courses.	Uses job descriptions, applied during the recruitment of new staff. Candidate's experience, diligence and communicativeness are extremely crucial. Information about the potential employee is verified with past employers.	5%	30%	65%
1.4. Service and commercial sector (assembly industry)	The company does not analyze employee needs and organizes only essential training. By utilizing the assessment interview, the owners evaluate employees and establish further actions. Exists employee evaluations system.	Uses job descriptions, applied during the recruitment of new staff. The company prefers candidates already having a satisfactory level of competence, who do not require immediate skills development training. Information about the potential employee is verified with past employers.	20%	25%	55%
1.5. Service and commercial sector (distribution of plastic materials)	An assessment interview is applied by the company as a form of employee assessment. Creating a plan, addressing all the needs of individual departments. Exists employee evaluations system.	Exists competence profile and job descriptions. Recruiters pay little attention to candidate's competence on admission, and rather consider his/her further development.		75%	25%

Table 1, cont.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1.6. Service and commercial sector (apparel industry)	Training needs are analysed and all test results are summarized forming a plan of action, including competence development. Exists employee evaluations system.	Exists competence profile and job descriptions. Recruiters pay little attention to candidate's competence on admission, and rather consider his/her further development.		80%	20%
1.7. Service and commercial sector (hospitality industry)	Is a detailed analysis of training needs. The company addresses employee needs through analytical career and development path studies, as well as examining the demand for participation in trainings, mentoring, coaching, etc. Exists employee evaluations system.	Exists competence profile and job descriptions. Recruiters pay attention to experience, competence and conscientiousness of new staff.	15%	65%	20%
1.8. Service and commercial sector (finance industry)	Exists employee training needs and improve its staff competence. The above analysis is closely related to other forms of strategic analysis of the HR. No employee evaluations system.	Exists specific job descriptions. Lack a formulation of competency profiles Recruiter pays attention on experience of the applicant and their competence. Some other essential features required of candidates aspiring to work in the company are the desire for personal and professional growth and extreme creativity.		30%	70%
1.9. Service and commercial sector (shipping/delivery industry)	Exists employee training needs. Having annual employee evaluation system.	Exists job descriptions and competence profiles. Recruiter pays attention on matching potential employees with existing job descriptions and profiles. Candidate has necessary experience, is communicative, committed with positive attitude.	20%	20%	60%
1.10. Service and commercial sector (cosmetics industry)	Exists training needs analyses. No employee evaluations system.	Exists job descriptions and profiles. Recruiter pays attention to adjusting candidate to the profile. Previously acquired experience is not of such importance. Crucial competence is creativity.	20%	45%	35%

Source: own elaboration.

Table 2. Case studies comparison vol. 2

Enterprise – represented sector	Forms of employees competences development	Training effectiveness measuring tools	Effects
1	2	3	4
1.1. Service and commercial sector (medical industry)	Training	No training effectiveness or job position effectiveness measuring tools	Significant increase in business efficiency and performance. The group of clients has expanded.
1.2. Service and commercial sector (media industry)	Open and close-type training, post-graduate studies	Surveys of training effectiveness measures. Utilizes sales effectiveness measures.	Increase in the number of customers. Increase in the company's efficiency and its performance.
1.3. Service and commercial sector (assembly industry)	Training	Forms of development effectiveness measures and training effectiveness measures (based on the first 2 phases of Kirkpatrick's Model).	Increase in the number of customers, effectiveness measures and company's overall growth.
1.4. Service and commercial sector (pharmaceutical industry)	Training	Surveys as to the training effectiveness measures	Contribute to an average increase in business performance and its efficiency or the number of new customers.
1.5. Service and commercial sector (distribution of plastic materials)	Training, coaching	The lack of training effectiveness measurements	Low potential customers or business performance improvement
1.6. Service and commercial sector (apparel industry)	Training, mentoring	The lack of training effectiveness measurements	Average impact on improving business performance or client number increase
1.7. Service and commercial sector (hospitality industry)	Training, coaching	Forms of development effectiveness measures and training effectiveness measures (based on the first 3 phases of Kirkpatrick's Model)	Staff development highly (up to 70%) contributes to the company's overall growth, as well as to the growth of business performance and client number, although not to such a great extent.

Table 2, cont.

1	2	3	4
1.8. Service and commercial sector (finance industry)	Training, coaching	The company occasionally measures the effectiveness of a given job position, although such tools are incorporated in the company's strategy.	Competence development forms, only in moderation, translate into the overall efficiency of the business and staff involved in the training. Little impact on business performance and potential increase in the number of clients
1.9. Service and commercial sector (shipping/delivery industry)	Training, especially close-type training. Executives, managers, and operational staff are the ones mostly involved via training. Such participation is a form of a reward given only to employees with satisfactory results.	Measuring the effectiveness of trainings attended by the employees, by evaluating their newly acquired knowledge. Tool used to measuring the effectiveness is employee testing.	Increase in business efficiency, as well as (up to 80 %) an increase in the number of new clients.
1.10 Service and commercial sector (cosmetics industry)	Training, coaching	No training effectiveness	Efficiency increase (up to 60%). Little influence on business performance or the number of new clients (only 25%)

Source: own elaboration.