

THE NEED OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR MANAGERS IN THE COMPANIES FROM TIMIS COUNTY

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Abstract: *Business environment in our country, as well as worldwide, is currently very aggressive in terms of competitiveness and totally unpredictable. Therefore, in such an environment, managers have difficulty in implementing successful strategies or the adoption of methods and techniques to enhance efficacy. However, there must be concern for the development of viable strategies that can ensure, even in an environment as turbulent as that of the Romanian economy, survival and effectiveness of organizations. Moreover, in a turbulent economic and financial environment, with unexpected developments, there are risks not only large but also development opportunities hard to imagine a stable economy.*

In this context, we believe that for Romanian managers is the best time to initiate supported actions with the aim of implementing management methods and techniques whose application can provide organizations a considerable increase of economic efficiency, regardless of the existence of disturbing factors come from outside.

The paper presents results of a study aiming to identify the real needs of vocational training for managers of companies in the Western Region of Romania, in order to design their training programs, in partnership between business and academia.

Keywords: *training managers, Romanian companies from Timis county, business environment.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, more than ever, managers are called to solve the problems facing the economy at the beginning of the third millennium, and on this basis, to solve many social problems of humanity.

Also, the business world moves today in a very rapid pace and less ordered. This has a direct implication: in any business, managers need to become extremely efficient. In such an environment, very aggressive in terms of competitiveness and totally unpredictable, managers encounter many difficulties when they implement successful strategies or when they adopt methods and techniques to enhance efficacy.

In terms of managerial efficiency, these circumstances compel managers to become as effective as possible. The manager profession requires the systematic training of skills in many developmental areas.

Contemporary society is a knowledge-based society, an information society. In such a society, human capital is recognized as the fundamental factor of overall progress, and experts agree that long-term investment in human capital has strong propagation and training effects at individual, organizational, national, regional and international level.

Business environment in our country, as well as worldwide, is currently very aggressive in terms of competitiveness and totally unpredictable. Therefore, in such an environment, managers have difficulty in implementing successful strategies or the adoption of methods and techniques to enhance efficacy. However, there must be concern for the development of viable strategies that can ensure, even in an environment as turbulent as that of the Romanian economy, survival and effectiveness of organizations. Moreover, in a turbulent economic and financial environment, with unexpected developments, there are risks not only large but also development opportunities hard to imagine a stable economy.

In this context, we believe that for Romanian managers is the best time to initiate supported actions with the aim of implementing management methods and techniques whose application can provide organizations a considerable increase of economic efficiency, regardless of the existence of disturbing factors come from outside.

The manager profession is a very complex profession, requiring for a person to be effective in many activities. There is an old controversy between experts: always ask the question: "Managers are born or can be created through education and training?" We believe (like many other experts, in fact), that while talent and natural inclinations play undoubtedly an important role, becoming manager is the result of a professional and personal transformation process.

Based on these considerations and based on the managerial skills mix (designed by Daniel Katz, American specialist), including cognitive skills, communication skills and technical skills, needed for every manager, according to managerial level), (Peterson & Van Fleet, 2004), this study aims to identify the real needs of training for managers in the companies from Timis county, in order to improve their management performance and increase the efficiency of firms from which they come.

2. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted on a group of managers (middle managers and top managers) belonging to firms in activity (from medium and large companies category) from Timis county, working in different economic areas: industrial-production (37%), trade (36%), services (27%). To this end was used as a research method the survey, and as a research tool, the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was constructed to contribute to the following specific objectives of the study:

- to identify the frequency of use of modern management tools and methods;
- to identify the tools used for planning activities and substantiate decisions;
- to identify means of coordination, evaluation and management control for efficient use of labor;
- to analyze and to evaluate training programs for managers at companies participating in the study;

The questionnaire was distributed by e-mail to the companies agreed to participate in the study, members of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of the four counties.

Finally, were received for 85 of validated questionnaires completed by managers of the top and middle hierarchical levels.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

After processing the information drawn from surveys and interpretation of results were the following conclusions:

In the investigated companies, the main tools used in planning activities are budgets (in 72% of the companies investigated), production and sales plans (53%), investment plans (42%), and marketing plans (34%). As sources for gathering information to develop strategies and plans, in most companies investigated (69%) are used as primary sources of information (especially information gathered by the firm) and secondary (information collected by third parties and made public).

Regarding the timeframe for doing the planning, the overwhelming majority of firms (95%) are practiced short and medium term planning (up to 3 years) and less long term planning, indicating uncertainty about the future of business and its instability and also a possible lack of managerial capacity of long-term forecasting.

76% of respondents believe that the most difficult and complex decisions are decisions under uncertainty and that their share in all decisions is increasing in the last three years. These responses highlight once again the continuing instability and unpredictable business environment in Romania in recent years.

In the methods and tools used in the management decision process, only 39% of managers said they use scientific methods of decision making (Decision-Tree method, cause-effect diagrams, and multi-criteria lists) (Powell & Baker, 2010). This result shows that most of the interviewed managers still use empirical methods in the process of the decision, and these methods are inadequate in the context of current business environment and in the situations encountered in business management complexity.

Managerial control tools used in the companies investigated are diverse, which indicates that the management function of control and evaluation is well represented in the companies investigated, being implemented by various scientific tools, such as: cost analysis (77% of firms), performance appraisal of employees

(74%), quality inspection of products / services (61%), analysis of activity reports (71%). In order to estimate and evaluate the effectiveness of business, the companies use several types of performance indicators. All managers interviewed said that the companies they come from, economic and financial indicators is the main category of performance indicators used. The explanation for this result is related to economic legislation in force in Romania, which requires all firms to report quarterly, half yearly or annually such indicators.

Regarding the management systems implemented in the companies investigated, in order to increase business efficiency and competitiveness, we have recorded the following results: the quality management system was implemented in 77% of the companies investigated, environmental management system - 38% of firms, and health and safety at work management system - 33% of firms. Regarding the new management systems, as Kaizen Management (Masaaki, 1997) and Lean Management (Mann, 2005), the results show that these systems are less known by the managers interviewed and are not implemented in the companies investigated.

Regarding training programs for managers in the companies surveyed, the responses of managers surveyed on the number of management training courses, attended by the time the survey results are worrying. A considerable proportion (25.43%) of respondents managers said did not participate in any training in management, until the questioning. On willingness to participate in other future trainings, managers surveyed are divided into two groups: those who believe that a leading position requires training and retraining throughout their careers - they said they would like to attend the short courses in their work area or in management area (83.4% of managers surveyed); those who believe that training is concluded with the requirements for a position of leadership - they do not necessarily want to pursue such programs in the near future (16.6% of managers surveyed).

When asked what would be the first three areas of interest where would participate in training in the near future, the managers surveyed are interested in the following areas: management (91%), economics/finance (39%), and communication - PR (49%). In the course of management topics, respondents indicated an interest in topics such as Lean management system (77%), Kaizen management system (69%), and quality management system (39%). Based on responses to questions about the importance of different skills / abilities that a middle or top manager of a company must have (Peterson & Van Fleet, 2004), we can conclude that in the opinion of managers surveyed most important skills are: communication skills (83%), cognitive skills (44%), and technical skills (55%).

4. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Following analysis and interpretation of study results, we conclude that in the companies investigated, there is a particular concern for developing and

practicing scientific management activities. This is largely due to managerial experience and successful results achieved by the multinational companies present in our country and which includes some of the companies investigated. There is also an interest in planning, organizing and coordinating activities with scientific methods and tools, as evidenced by the existence and use of various types of plans and various means of control and by the implementation of management systems to streamline business firms. However, the concepts or methods that emphasize long-term vision of managers and their ability to react and respond to business constraints (for example: social responsibility issues, the use of modern management systems, the use of scientific methods to substantiate decisions under uncertainty, etc.), are less known and represented in the companies investigated.

Manager profession is a very complex profession, requiring for a person to be effective in many activities. There is an old controversy between experts. He always put the question: "Managers are born or can be created through education and training?" We believe (like many other experts, in fact), that while talent and natural inclinations undoubtedly have an important role, becoming manager is the result of a professional and personal transformation process. Therefore, training programs and professional development of managers have a key role, the more that managers act in the context of a business environment so aggressive and unpredictable as the present.

The study results show that these programs leave much to be desired in terms of rigor and systematic way of organizing them. Romanian managers should be aware that in the current business environment, being manager is a major responsibility that requires a conscious and continuous process of learning and personal transformation. Therefore, under such conditions, investment in training and professional development of both managers and all employees is an absolute necessity, an investment with long-term effects, and not just an expense, as we show in other studies (Lut & Mitariu, 2010). Therefore, we believe that vocational training programs for managers should be intensified, and the mix of training methods should be improved to match the real development needs of managers throughout their work and in order to increase the economic efficiency of organizations from they come.

The results of this study were forwarded to businesses environment and also to academia, in order to provide a starting point in a partnership between the two parties. This partnership wants to support improvement training of managers, organizing programs and courses in this regard. Although the research was conducted on a relatively small number of companies and has no national expansion, we believe that it is very useful in identifying real training needs of managers. Such research may be the basis for other research undertaken at national level and also can be the basis for designing national training programs for managers who come from both, private and public companies.

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