

## **TRAINING IN A COMPANY BY MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

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### **Abstract:**

The paper deals with the role of training the employees in the company and about encouragement by the management to the systematic model of training and to the analytical model of feedback information of such training of employees. Having made a general conclusion we have transferred, summarized and quoted the theory of the professionals from the field of management knowledge and with this transfer of systematic training and analytical model of knowledge we verified it in the practice of the employees. Our attention was focused to the presumed hypotheses which were then further evaluated in the research chapter by means of questionnaire inquiry, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Individual conclusions regarding the deductive results of the questionnaire inquiry are the following: the members of the project group proposition is a "Reflexive model of training" or shorter discussion training of management and the successful implementation of the knowledge of employees in practice. The employees are the greatest capital of the company therefore they should be in the process of training while the transfer of knowledge into practice is of major importance.

*Keywords: management of knowledge, training, systematic and analytical model, questionnaire inquiry, deductive research method, project proposition, reflexive model of training.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The professional problem, which is the subject of this research, is evidenced mainly in the attitude of the employees towards the changes in performing their jobs or services, demanded by the global environment and the targets which are directed by the a company. The indicator of the inefficiency is incapability of transition from the old practice of routine and non-creative operating of jobs to the new strategy. The main problem is mostly information feedback of knowledge for training the employees and their materialization into practice. We wish to verify the encouragement of the management to the systematic model and analysis of feedback implementation with the aim that the employees would really change their way of thinking.

Based on the lack of conscious of the employees regarding the strategy changes the problem will be highlighted and verified through the results of the questionnaire inquiry. Following the acquired results we will come to the conclusions whether it is necessary for the employees to change their way of thinking which would consequently have impact on the performance of their working tasks. Due to permanent changes of the environment, globalization, changed habits of clients, total liberalisation of the market in 2011 it will be suggested that on the basis of the training the employees should start implementing the modifications in the new company strategy. We will also propose shorter educational training? courses and various models of encouraging the awareness of the employees; maybe shorter tutoring by means of reflexion. After some time the management will try to get feedback from the employees whether they had tried to implement the professional knowledge in their work. Positive feedback information could mean a better results at work which would have impact to the change of the strategically oriented a company.

## **2. MANAGEMENT AND THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE IN TRAINING PRACTICE**

### **2.1. Characteristics and activities of knowledge management**

Tavčar (2011, p. 11) established: “knowledge is a key to success only if we know how to create and use it properly.” We think that the technology advances faster than we are capable of coping with all knowledge spheres. Therefore it is of great importance that the companies organize education for the employees. The statements, important for the education of the organization and management, are: the organization should be aware of the importance and role of learning, the employees should be aware of the demands for education, learning is a constant process which is planned, organized and evaluated. “Learning means each form of activity of an individual or a group of people by which changes in their behaviour which refer to their social, business and working acting are achieved.” (Možina, 2002, p. 17). Knowledge management means transfer and realization of knowledge in practice. Management is present in each organization and its role is to anticipate the targets and future results which should be achieved with the assistance of the co-workers. “Companies try to find competent people, leaders, who radiate confidence, can demand respect and loyalty because they know what they are talking about and they act in accordance with their beliefs. Modern managers encourage learning and personal development, they learn through working and then transfer their knowledge to the co-workers and implement it in practice“ (Možina, 2002, p. 39).

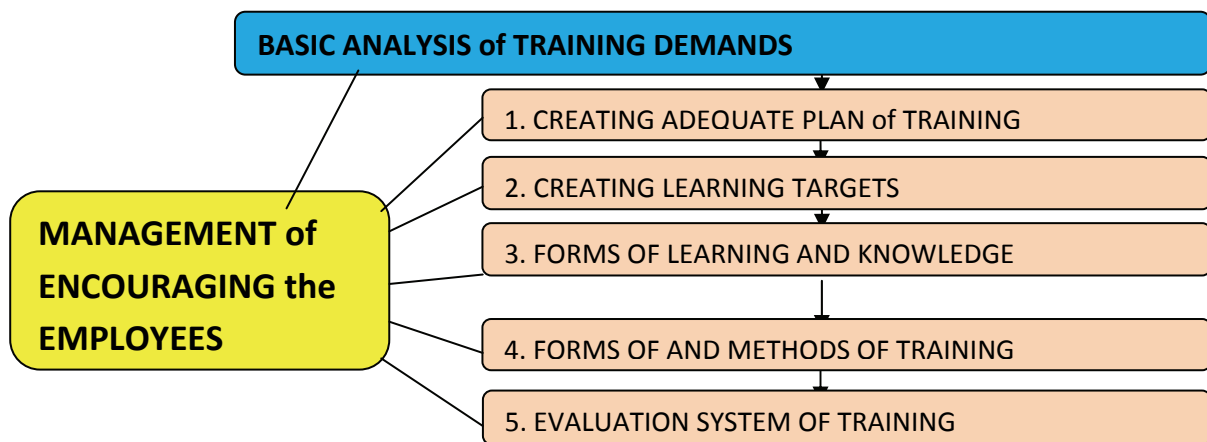
## 2.2. Training

Vuković and Meglič (2006; Dermol, 2010, p. 37) are of the opinion that “education is a long-term process of developing knowledge, skills and opinion.” Transfer of knowledge as training is a continuation of professional education. Further training; Dermol established: “Training is not only a single transfer of a hypothetically missing knowledge but also a process of complementing, changing, and systematization of knowledge, skills, capabilities and habits of the employees.” Development of the individuals; Musek-Lešnik and Dermol (2008, in Dermol, 2010, p. 39) say: “During the professional development the individual increases his knowledge, improves skills, and capabilities for the implementation of his profession.” But it is also true that, in the case of lacking knowledge the company cannot survive in the market (Žajdela, 2011a, p. 21). The companies which are capable of finding knowledge, protect it and spread it among the employees, increase and exploit it are more successful. Learning only is not sufficient any longer, the learned knowledge is to be reflected in operating.

## 3. SYSTEMATIC AND ANALYTICAL MODEL OF TRAINING

Systematic model of training is the most widely spread model of training. Training can reactively respond to the present company strategy demands. Proactively oriented training in companies follows the strategy and demands of the company and thus we can speak about permanent training models where the opinion that trainings should be a regular practice in companies is prevailing (Vuković & Meglič, 2006; Dermol, 2010, pp. 51–52).

**Figure 1:** Theory of systematic



Based on the analysis of the working post a company can precisely define the knowledge, skills, and characteristics of a working post and educational demands for the same (Lipičnik, 1998, p. 94; Urh, 2006, p. 75). Companies and managers try to establish what reaction can be expected from the employees to be successful at work. Hozjan (2005, pp. 109–111) states; “Professional socialization passes through a training process of an individual to enable him for the performing of certain job which on one hand goes more or less planned within the systematic professional training, while on the other hand a professional socialization is exercised more or less planned and guided within the working process.”

### 3.1. Creating informal training

Application of theoretical knowledge in solving practical problems when encouraging practical experience, finding the approach of new possibilities of learning, tutoring in transfer of feedback information (Urh, 2006, p. 77). Among the professionals who are dealing with people in companies, Hozjan (2005) establishes: By training the employees not only the knowledge acquired at lower levels of development of an individual is complemented but the knowledge acquired in the educational system of the employed is very applicative. Frequently the motifs of the employed for training are conditioned by precise tasks at the working post.

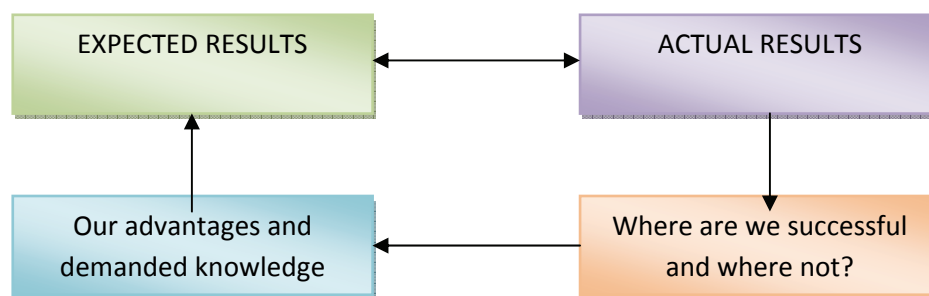
#### *Creating learning targets*

Some cognitive learning targets according to Bloom (Richey, 2000; Dermol, 2010, pp. 58–59); knowledge in a sense of knowing the terms, procedures, understanding, connecting the application of the acquired knowledge for solving tasks and problems and transfer of learning for use in the new situations – analysis of procedures, reports, projects.

The importance of informal *education and knowledge* Hozjan (2010, p. 9) establishes: “Thus the informal and occasional learning are becoming the essential facts of successful development of lifelong learning or education in the society of knowledge. [...]; The education policy of the European Union is based on the results of learning or to express it with the EU terminology on learning results. Further on there is a division to tacit knowledge, including the insight, intuition and hints, (hard to be expressed and shared with others), and explicit knowledge which gives data in numbers and words, specifications, instructions (Becerra Fernandez, 2004, p. 25). According to Nonaka companies play a key role in mobilization of the tacit knowledge, possessed by the individuals and provide a forum for creation of the “knowledge spiral” which passes through socialization, combination, externalization and internalization. Thus it is possible to develop a perspective which is above the simple meaning of the organizational learning ( Nonaka, 1994, pp. 34–35).

### 3.2. Analytical model of training feedback

**Figure 2:** Analysis of feedback



Source: Možina, 2002, p. 32.

#### *Feedback for learning*

A very useful information for understanding people, our advantages and disadvantages, is the analysis of feedback of training, or diversly said, a comparison of real results with the expected ones. The analysis of the feedback shows which fields should and individual have to improve, where to enforce his capabilities or to acquire new knowledge. It also shows gaps

in the knowledge of an individual. The fact is that everyone can acquire as much capabilities or knowledge on any field as to avoid being ignorant on that field. A lot of employees, especially those with a lot of knowledge in one field, express an underestimating attitude towards the knowledge from other fields or even believe that with their “cleverness” they can substitute real knowledge in practice. The role of feedback is important because of the actual and expected results of training. It shows what is done well or wrongly and gives insight to the obstacles which prevent us to exploit all our advantages (Možina, 2002, pp. 32–34).

### **3.3. Encouraging and innovating new learning habits of a learning company**

The company culture and efficient internal communication also have impact to the transfer of knowledge among the employees. Where there is no sharing of knowledge there is no creativity but the meaning of creativity is mostly in application of knowledge with which the company creates value (Žajdela, 2011a, p. 21). Synergetic effect and transfer of knowledge enable employees to create more than an individual could be able to do. With a possibility of education and personality growth a company becomes more competitive on the man power market. Jay Liebowitz says (2006, pp. 3–4); knowledge management deals with four basic sorts of capital. The first being human capital and intellectual potential of the employees and management; the second is a structure capital which means rights to the intellectual property and to certain data basis. Social capital deals with knowledge which the employees acquired from the clients and customers. The fourth is the newest kind of capital, i.e. the competitive capital which refers to the knowledge learned from the competitive companies. All four sorts of capital together form management of knowledge which is important for the creating and planning the transfer of knowledge of the employees.

## **4. DEDUCTIVE RESEARCH METHOD**

### **4.1. Purpose and targets of the research**

The purpose of the research is to take, resume and quote, on the basis of general conclusions, the theories of well established authors in the field of management and to verify them, with this transfer of knowledge of systematic and analytical model, in the practice of the employees. By means of the questionnaire inquiry we wanted to verify both models of training in the a company, who wishes to remain anonymous. The Celje Post Office Unit employs 684 people of which a sample of 300 was interviewed anonymously. The company vision is to maintain the position of the most important and the biggest provider of post office services and related logistic services in Slovenia even after the liberalization of the post office services market which is included in the implementation strategy for the period 2007–2015.

For this purpose basic research questions were set, representing four basic hypotheses. Having concluded the inquiry we processed the empiric data by means of the statistics SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) programme. The primary data of the inquiry were processed using the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

The target of the deductive results of research is individual drawing the conclusions of the analysis inquiry research and the proposition of the project group “Reflexive model of training” or shorter education and discussions among the management about the success of implementing the knowledge of the employees in practice. Thus, after certain time feedback could be obtained form the employees to verify whether the newly acquired knowledge was

applied in their work. Positive feedback would be a greater success at work which could have impact to the change of strategy of the company.

### *Evaluation of the key results of the research*

H1: At least half of the interviewed employees will, when asked about the encouragement of the management to the policy of training strategy in the X company, tick the mark 3 or more on a scale from 1 (very low) to 5 (excellent).

**Table 1:** Encouragement of management to training evaluated by employees

Evaluation	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cummulative
Very bad	15	5,0	5,0	5,0
Bad	32	10,7	10,7	15,7
Good	147	49,0	49,0	64,7
Very good	72	24,0	24,0	88,7
Excellent	34	11,3	11,3	100,0
Total	300			
Arithmetic mean	3,26			
Standard deviation	0,97			

H1 is confirmed. At least half of the employees questioned about the encouragement of the management to training for the strategy development of the a company will tick a value 3 or more on the scale from 1-very low to 5-excellent.; 49 % ticked good, 24 % very good and 11,3 % excellent. Out of 300 who participated 254 confirmed the first hypothesis, which is 84.3 %. That means that the management of the a company encourages the employees to change their opinion from the old routine practice of operating to the new demands of the strategy for the new targets in the a company.

H2: The questioned employees will, when estimating the »systematic model of training«, attribute the highest mark to the training as a condition to obtain the company strategy targets.

**Table 2:** Evaluation : »systematic model of training«

Evaluation of training	N	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Incentives for training	300	3,38	0,87
Development of employees	300	1,71	0,86
Actual assignments	300	3,27	1,05
Demands for learning	300	3,43	1,03
Learning as condition to reach aims	300	3,52	0,97
Upgrading of knowledge	300	3,44	1,10
Planned –written training	300	2,99	0,93
Forms of learning and training	300	3,02	0,95
Responsibility to training	300	2,19	0,87
Role of the mentor	300	3,21	1,15

H2 is confirmed. The questioned employees attributed the highest value 3.52 to training *as a condition to reach targets of the company strategy*. The arithmetic mean of all variables was 3.02, average standard deviation was 0.98.

H3: The questioned employees will, when estimating the »analysis model of training«, attribute the lowest mark to the feedback of training in the practice of the company strategy.

**Table 3:** Evaluation : "analytical model of training"

Evaluation of feedback information	N	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Informal knowledge in practice	300	2,63	1,11
Indicators of knowledge	300	2,67	1,10
Real and expected results of training	300	2,60	1,18
Assistance in solving lack of knowledge	300	2,64	1,10
Training of deficient knowledge	300	2,27	0,95
Transfer of knowledge strategy in practice	300	2,78	0,77
Success of new training	300	3,74	0,81
Awarding new knowledge	300	2,51	0,71
Group discussions after training	300	1,83	0,91
Participating in new strategy	300	1,90	0,92

H3 is not confirmed. The questioned employees attributed the lowest evaluation of 1.83 to the incentives of the management to group discussions after training. The arithmetic mean of all variables is 2.56, the average deviation is 0.96.

H4: There is a strong relation between the average evaluation of the »systematic and analysis model of training«.

**Table 4:** Average evaluation; Spermans coefficient

Rank A	Rank B	Rank A – Rank B	D <sup>2</sup>
3,02	2,56	0,46	0,21
Total			0,21

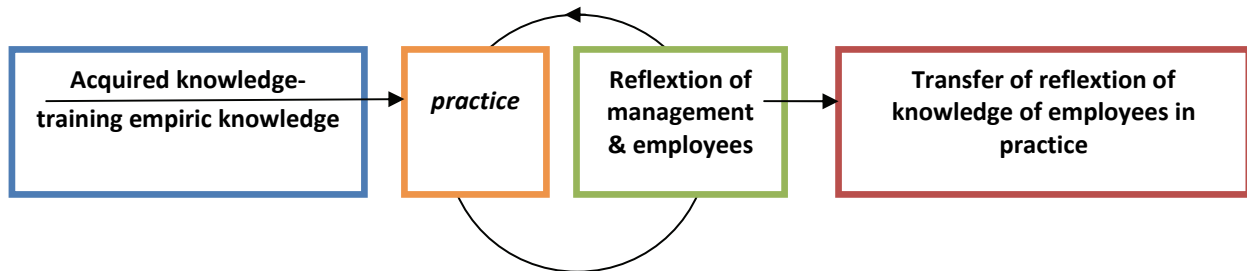
H4 is confirmed. Spearman's coefficient of correlation is positive,  $r_s > 0$ , so a strong correlation between the systematic and analysis model of feedback information of training is evident. It was proved by Spearman's coefficient of correlation, which is a statistic indicator of the rank of correlation between the two variables, or it represents a quality of the description between the variables, performed by a function.

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6 \cdot \sum D^2}{n \cdot (n^2 - 1)} = 1 - \frac{6 \cdot 0,21}{300(300^2 - 1)} = 1 - \frac{1,26}{26999700} = 0,99$$

Spearman's coefficient of correlation includes the values from the interval [-1,1]. In our case the coefficient, calculated between the ranks of the variables (frequency) from the table 4.2 and 4.3 is positive (0.99;  $r_s > 0$ ), which indicates to the proportional ratio of the ranks.

## 5. PROJECT PROPOSITION »REFLEXIVE MODEL OF TRAINING«

Figure 3: Reflexive model of training the employees



Source: according to: Bečela, M. Supervizija – refleksija poklicne poti.

On the basis of the deductive research by means of the questionnaires given to the employees in the a company we are suggesting a refelexive model of training. Analytical model of education indicated 91,3 % - the encouraging of the managent in the a company is not sufficient enough - accordng to the analysis of the feedback information about the knowledge applied in the practice. For theat purpose the project group is suggesting to apply reflexive model of training.

The expression reflexion originates in latin *refleksere* meaning to reflect, to consider or to rejudge; in philosophy reflexion is defined as thoughtful follow-up of the conscious activity and its achievements where employees and their practical/theoretical relation of acting and thinking are in the centre. As the management is acting in favour of the professional training, and within that reflexion represents a process of empiric learning, based on the practice analysis which directs the acting and thinking of an individual. Though mere reflexion does not include only practical experience but also the theoretical experience of training the emmployees. The expression reflexive practice of training defines a period after training to acquire empiric knowledge in which an individual developed and reached certain reflexive techniques of the problem, used them at his work, his professional development of training. (Bečela, M. Supervizija – refleksija poklicne poti). Reflexion as an active process in the discussion, used by the managers in the a company, is including interactive ideas of the employees, originating from their existing knowledge, beliefs and opinions. With reflexive thinking a doubt or confusion of the employee can emerge before solving a practical problem due to uncertainty in the transfer from the old routine practice into the new strategy of the a company. Therefore we are suggesting to apply a group reflexion of the employees (maybe weekly) in order to discuss together with the manager the lack of knowledge and to gain motivation for the transfer of reflexive knowledge into practice.

### 5.1. Shorter training, discussions of success, application of knowledge in practice

According to the above mentioned model reflexion can be practiced in groups in a form of a discussion. We are proposing a weekly group reflexion of the employees with their leader, controller and manager. In practice, different definition of the expression reflexion led to the formation of various forms of reflexion. Though, among these forms we can find one of the common targets, i.e. manager becoming a reflexive practician. Schön's model of reflexion distinguishes between the reflexion in acting and reflexion after acting. Both forms of thinking are forms of trial where a practician or manager "builds" a problem and then the



context of solving it. Among the methods of tutoring a practitioner or manager we can expose the following methods: loud thinking, group discussions, brainstorming, techniques of questioning one another, De Bono method of “Six Thinking Hats” and creative ideas of the employees in the a company. The model espouses the thinking practitioner – managers with provocative mentoring. This is the principle of understanding the situation on which the practice is based – we cannot improve the situation as a whole unless we improve the interpretations of individual problematic situations of the employees, transfer of routine practice into new strategy. A successful practitioner manager has to develop a capability of understanding the situation. In the empiric practice a wisdom of common sense is becoming of greater importance.

The company has special indicators which measure the application of knowledge in practice; the employees are informed about real and expected targets of work for training; the employees take part in solving problems on those fields where there is no knowledge; the workers are seeking feedback in order to improve work.; the acquired feedback is usefully applied at work and shared with others within the company. New knowledge attributes to the general success of the company which provides certain rewards; management encourages group learning of discussions; based on feedback we also take part in deciding for the new company strategy. Manager is to discuss the company goals with the employees as they are a constituent part of working tasks for the implementation of the strategy and represent success of the employed and elimination of problems.

Based on the results of deductive conclusions we propose a model of “weekly reflexion of training” as informal experiences of the employees which are weekly integrated in order to solve the problems. The manager keeps the evaluation reports about the success of the discussion which could serve as a statistics comparison for the next discussion. The question is the time interval for the implementation of the acquired knowledge strategy of the employees in the a company. Such acquired knowledge is kept in the heads of the employees, remains in the company and can be recalled again.

## **6. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION**

Incentives by the management, team work, successful collaboration, participation in decision making, solving of conflicts and problems, these elements altogether form the implemented strategy which permanently directs an individual to adapt his behaviour and to form a way of thinking and attitude towards work and then to transfer his knowledge into practice of the company. A company can reach targets of a new strategy by systematic model of training and by efficient analytical model of feedback about training. Considering the mentioned researches, the participants in this research propose a reflexive model of training, i.e managers are those practitioners who on the basis of the problematic situations “build“ a problem and the context of solving it. Together with the employees and by means of the weekly method “tools in accepting the newest knowledge” which deals about training and learning from the problematic situations, they give the employees a possibility of considering and creating silent knowledge in order to propose solutions for the exposed problem.

People who educate themselves and learn are more successful in performing their tasks in project teams and in average, they have better wages, promotion is faster and their working posts are less endangered. It used to be said: ”big companies absorb the small ones”, nowadays it is said that “fast companies overcome the slow ones”. Documents of the European Union, strategies, memorandums, resolutions, plans, targets evidence that Europe is

determined to become a world power in the field of knowledge, new knowledge, new solutions which “should solve” our global economy (Žajdela, 2011b, p. 18). Maybe the deductive conclusions, which the members of this project team reached in this paper, could by short discussions be an incentive to the management to try to implement new approaches of reflexive knowledge in order to reach the strategy of the a company through the practice of the employees.

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