

MANAGEMENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF THE PERSONNEL AND THE PROCESS OF EVALUATING THE TRAINING ACTIVITY AT THE LEVEL OF THE ECONOMIC ENTITIES

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Abstract: *The rapid pace of technology development in all fields of activity contributes to updating the knowledge of employees through continuous training and learning. The standard of knowledge that a trained person must possess changes from one period of time to another, in ever shorter time intervals. Thus, in order to become competitive, economic entities must invest in human resources, the main resource that brings added value over time. The purpose of the training and professional development of the personnel is to help the economic entity, in continuous development, to achieve its objectives by increasing the human and intellectual potential of the employees. Through the professional training of employees, the economic entity will contribute to the development of skills and competences in order to increase professional performances, as well as their development, so that the future needs of labor force for the economic entity are met, as much as possible, from within it. Presently, the issue of making investments in the intellectual potential of the staff and evaluating their efficiency is current and requires a detailed study.*

Thus, in order to determine the economic contribution of the training activity, the economic entities are to carry out the evaluation of the activities carried out in order to identify to what extent this activity led to the achievement of the planned objectives and the justification of the investments made by the economic entity.

Key words: *professional training, professional development, human resource, personnel evaluation.*

1. Introduction

The attainment of favorable results desired by an economic entity from its employees significantly hinges on the training strategy it chooses to adopt. Economic entities that adopt a motivational strategy for staff training, recognize that they can only secure well-

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trained employees if they invest in the development of their professional skills and competences. Organizations also understand that real or potential shortages of skills can threaten their future prosperity and capacity for development. In commercial terms, economic entities recognize that training is a cost-effective investment and the results of the training fully justify the costs.

In order to determine the efficiency of the investments made in staff training and whether the economic entity obtains the expected results in terms of professional training of employees, economic entities must develop a strategy in this field that will result in the process of evaluating the knowledge of the human resources that have been trained.

The elaboration and implementation of a general strategy regarding the increase of the human and intellectual potential through the professional training activity of the employees will contribute to the following advantages both for the economic entity and for the beneficiaries:

- that there are no non-conformities on the part of the clients regarding the quality of the products or services provided by the economic entity;
- in all subdivisions of the economic entity, the activity to be carried out at the time indicated by the managers, without delays or lost time;
- to use judiciously and correctly the materials, machinery and equipment of the organization, in order to eliminate abuses;
- to ensure that all employees respect and apply in practice the rules of work safety and security in order to avoid work accidents within the organization;
- to increase the efficiency and productivity of the subdivisions, in particular, and of the organization, in general, year by year and with the values specified in the strategic plan [Lock, D.].

Therefore, professional training brings significant advantages to the economic entity, if it is approached correctly and systematically by senior managers. The advantages of the trainings can be determined by **evaluating the training and professional development activity**. The evaluation is the attempt to obtain information on the results of a training program and to establish the value of the training, based on this information [Ivanchevich, J., Glueck, W.]. The evaluation consists of comparing the objectives with the results obtained in order to see if the training has achieved its purpose.

Through the evaluation of the training activity, the objective is to measure the changes in the knowledge, skills, competences or behavior of the trained, as well as their efficiency and labor productivity. From the point of view of costs, the evaluation of the training tries to determine to what extent the training has achieved its objectives as economically and efficiently as possible in terms of time, money, human resources.

2. Research Methodology

The aim of the paper is to highlight the role of professional training of employees and the need to evaluate the training and professional development activity of the staff trained by the economic entity. For an explicit presentation of the study, the following objectives were set:

- Identifying the effects of staff training for economic entities;
- Characterization and highlighting of the evaluated elements in the process of training and professional development of the staff;
- Identification of the information necessary for the evaluation of the training and

In order to achieve the objectives, the study of the specialized literature, synthesis, analysis, induction, deduction was used. Research methods are located in an order based on analysis and critical thinking.

The results obtained regarding the elements and information necessary for the evaluation as a result of the staff training can be of real use in the evaluation process within the economic entities.

3. The Evaluation of the Training and Professional Development Activity

The necessity of evaluating the training and professional development activity is made in order to verify the effectiveness, i.e. to what extent this activity led to the achievement of the planned objectives.

In Hamblin's opinion [Hamblin, A.C] – training can cause a chain reaction within the organization and for each decisive stage a specific evaluation strategy can be chosen. Table 1 shows the effects of training and evaluation strategies. The economic entity may adopt different evaluation strategies depending on the aspect of the training, thus:

- If the economic entity wants to determine the reactions of the trained employees to the training, it adopts an evaluation strategy focused on the reactions of the persons involved in the training process. In this context, the scientist in the field Kirkpatrick [Kirkpatrick's Model] – mentions that the reactions measure the impressions and experiences of the learners towards the professional training process.
- If learning itself is to be assessed, then a learning-oriented strategy can be adopted. This will allow the senior manager to evaluate how much has been learned, while analyzing the training methods applied, the content of the training programs, the instructors' skills in training, etc.
- If senior managers want to evaluate work behavior in the post-training period, a strategy oriented towards work behavior is adopted to see to what extent it has evolved and changed compared to previous periods. By evaluating the behavior, an attempt is made to identify the real changes in performance, after the employee's return to the workplace.
- If the purpose of the training program is to increase production volume then the behavior must be evaluated before and after training in order to clearly see the difference. Parallel to this, other behavioral criteria can be evaluated that can tell us about the effectiveness of training programs, namely: absenteeism in the workplace; the tensions created by the learner within the work team, the level of accidents at work, etc.

Table 1

Effects of training and evaluation strategies

Event	Evaluation strategy	The central element
Instruction	Focused on training	Training resources
Learners' reactions	Focused on reactions	learners
Learning	Focused on learning	learners
Changes in work behavior	Oriented towards work behavior	Learners and supervisors
Change in work behavior	Organizational development	Corporate organization
Impact on the final goals of the organization	Cost-benefit analysis	Financial considerations

Source: retrieved after: [Койл, Д.].

A special role of the senior manager is to adopt a strategy focused on cost-benefits, in order to estimate to what extent, the financial expenses, incurred for the professional training, were justified. If, as a result of the evaluation after the professional training, there will be a tendency to increase the labor productivity, which will contribute to the increase of the income to the extent that the economic entity registers a higher profit compared to the period up to the mentioned activity, then an efficient professional training program can be found.

The elements of the training and professional development process that need to be evaluated are quite varied and involve time and skills from those who will carry out this activity (evaluators). Each evaluated item involves other problems for the assessors when they have to determine the effectiveness of the training and professional development activity. Figure 1 shows the elements to be evaluated following the implementation of a training programme.

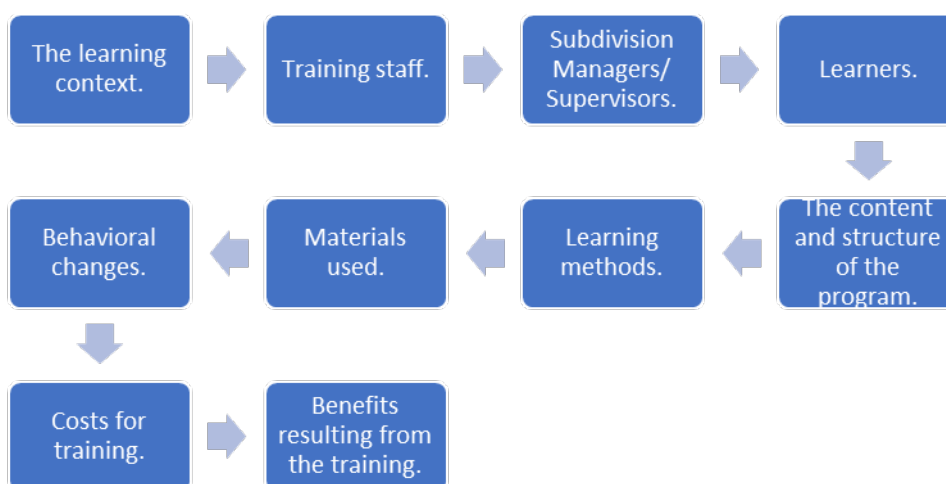


Fig. 1. *Elements evaluated in the process of training and professional development*

Source: Developed by the author

According to Figure 1, the evaluation of the staff training programme is a rather important activity for the economic entity and, at the same time, quite responsible for those who achieve this. In this respect, in order to see what is the real value of the training program, it is necessary to calculate:

1. costs if the training had not taken place;
2. the actual costs of the training, shown in figure 1;
3. the benefits of training in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and productivity, as referred to in Figure 1.

So, **The value of training = (1) - (2) +(3)**

The variety of problems based on the assessed elements can be classified according to the following criteria:

1. Depending on the learning context:

- The attitude of senior management towards training and professional development.
- The training and professional development policy of the personnel promoted within the organization.
- Standards of behavior for different categories of employees, depending on their education.
- The impact exerted by the other employees on the people who participated in the training.

2. Depending on the qualification of the training staff:

- The level of professional training competence of the training staff (instructors).
- The qualification level of the training staff.
- The necessary experience for training people with higher education.

3. Depending on the skills of supervisors:

- Knowledge of their responsibilities with reference to the professional training of subordinates.
- Their mentoring or counselor qualities.
- Their behavior towards trained persons.

4. Depending on the selected trainees:

- The criteria for selecting people for professional training.
- The needs and reasons for participating in professional training.
- The knowledge level of the trainees before the start of the training program.
- The learning styles accepted by the students.
- Their system of norms and values and the connection to the organizational culture.

5. Depending on the content and structure of the program

- The premises that were the basis for choosing the content of the training program.
- Correspondence of the objectives of the training program with the training needs of the trainees.

- The ratio between the theoretical and the practical part of the training program.
 - The logic and consistency of the material presented in the training program.
 - The influence of the professional training program on the personal development program.
- 6. Depending on the learning methods**
- Diversity of learning programs applied during the training program.
 - The degree of efficiency of the methods selected for professional training of trainees.
 - Successful application of professional training methods by the training staff
- 7. Depending on the materials used**
- Auxiliary materials used in the staff training program.
 - Use of auxiliary material for learners.
- 8. Depending on behavioral changes**
- The diversity of changes observed in the learners' behavior.
 - The level of positive change in the learners' behavior.
 - The methods applied to evaluate individual progress during the training program.
- 9. Depending on the costs for training**
- Amounts allocated to external training.
 - Expenses for the use of spaces, equipment and necessary materials.
 - Expenses for the salaries of instructors and learners.
 - Consulting fees.
- 10. Depending on the benefits resulting from the training**
- The level of increase in production volume.
 - The level of labor productivity increase.
 - The level of increase in the quality of products and services.
 - The degree of improvement of the organizational climate.
 - The degree of increase in job satisfaction.
 - The level of reduction in supervision from superiors.

In the conditions of the organizations from the Republic of Moldova, the evaluation of the training and professional development of the personnel must take into account, besides those elements that have already been mentioned in table 1 specific to a concrete training program, a wealth of information regarding the organized courses, the number of trained trainees, the training days, the training costs, etc. Figure 2 shows the information indispensable for the evaluation of the training and professional development activity of the staff.

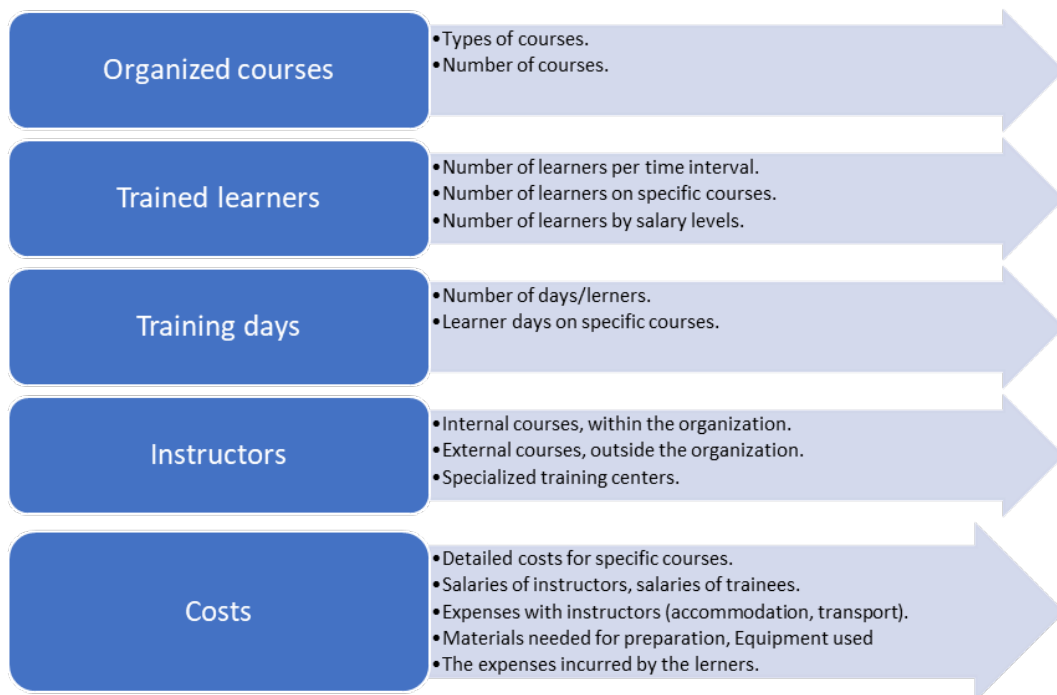


Fig. 2. *Information necessary for the evaluation of the training and professional development activity of the staff at the organizational level*

Source: Adapted from [Хеларин К.; Бірцă, А.].

Depending on the information we want to obtain, we process and interpret in the process of evaluating the training activity, we distinguish three forms of evaluation shown in Figure 1:

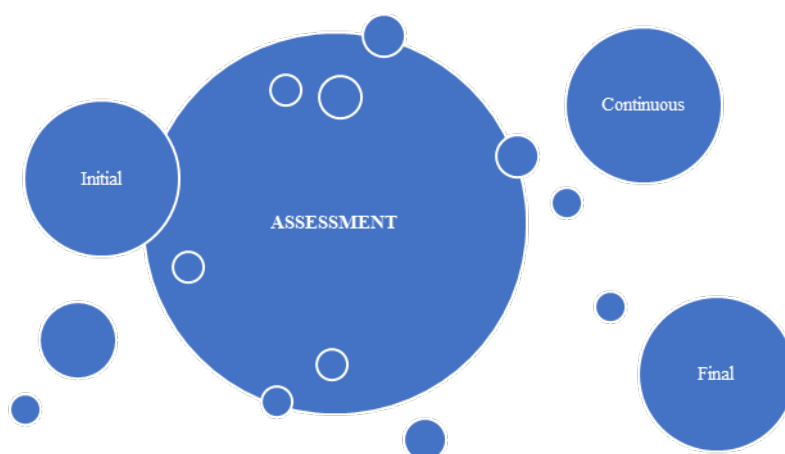


Fig. 3. *Forms of assessment*

Source: Developed by the author

In order to carry out an effective evaluation of the professional training activity, it is recommended to observe the following three stages [Moldovanu I.]:

1. The initial assessment that is carried out at the stage of the training process in order to know the work tasks, professional skills, competences at the initial stage of the trainees being carried out by the course trainer.

2. In the process of carrying out the training of the staff, the continuous evaluation is carried out with the purpose of monitoring the training activity and, if necessary, to optimize the course according to the learners' knowledge and to obtain partial results about the way of involvement and learning during the training.

3. At the final stage of staff training, decisions are made about improving future activities or complementing them with other sources. This evaluation is carried out by evaluators who can be both internal, who are part of the economic entity, and external, who are outside the organization or team, at the end of the training activity, obtaining the final results.

Based on these stages, the evaluation report of the personnel training activity is to be carried out.

If the evaluation of the training activity is carried out by an internal evaluator, advantages such as: better knowledge of the participants in the training process can be highlighted, which makes it possible to evaluate the entire process, to identify changes in knowledge, behavior in the training process, highlighting strengths and weaknesses. At the same time, it can be mentioned that the internal evaluator can be more subjective by reacting emotionally, collegiately compared to the external evaluator who has a neutral, more objective attitude.

Thus, based on the evaluation report of the training activity, the human resources manager in cooperation with the general manager will be able to identify strategies for training and staff development.

In order for the training and professional development to be as effective as possible, it is necessary to:

1. First, let there be a motivation from learners. In this case, it is a matter of self-motivation or motivation as a result of encouragement or stimulation on the part of managers or mentors.

2. Secondly, the organisational culture must encourage training and professional development by highlighting the fact that the organisation must develop a culture designed to encourage this activity.

3. Thirdly, training and professional development must meet the needs of the trainee. For the most part, people are able to learn in the most diverse circumstances if they know that their needs for fulfilment, growth, recognition and social utility are met.

4. Conclusions

Staff training is a fairly important activity to ensure the competitiveness and success of the organization. Personal development is an open field for senior managers in local

organizations to which they must orient themselves in the future. Although according to the Labour Code, the volume of financial means allocated for vocational training must constitute at least 2% of the salary fund of the economic entity, according to statistical data in the Republic of Moldova, economic entities do not comply with article 213 (3) investing in human resources an insignificant percentage [Codul muncii al Republicii Moldova].

Within the economic entities it is necessary that in the development strategy of human resources to be included the training of the employees through the prism of the economic entity but also the personal development from the individual employees. For the beginning, it is opportune to consider the employees with the highest performances within the organization, who want to develop a career in the given organization and who care about the values of the organization.

The training of the staff contributes to the achievement of the following objectives:

- improves individual and organizational performance in terms of results, quality, overall productivity, etc.
- increases the commitment of human resources, stimulating them to identify with the mission and objectives of the organization.
- increases the impact on change management, facilitating a better understanding of changes both at the level of the economic entity and as a whole in the field of activity, thus providing employees with the updated knowledge necessary to cope with the new situations.
- increases the possibility of attracting employees with a high quality level because they emphasize the level of knowledge and professional skills of new employees. In addition, the organization provides them with opportunities for learning and development, increasing their level of competence and improving their skills, which gives them job satisfaction, higher salaries and opportunities for career advancement.
- contributes to the development of a favorable organizational culture, oriented towards improving performance.

Any professional training activity involves a certain financial effort on the part of the entity, therefore, it is necessary to evaluate what are the benefits obtained from the professional training of the staff. Thus, all the elements of the training activity can be evaluated, namely:

- training programs;
- methods and techniques applied;
- instructors or trainers, etc.;
- assessment of trained learners.

Most obviously, professional training is expressed by the attitude adopted by the trained persons in the next period, as well as the difference in results in the pre- and post-training period.

Therefore, the evaluation of training and professional development is an integral part of the training and professional development process. Following the evaluation, we can ascertain the surplus value that was added to each person participating in the professional training. The surplus value can be realized through the professional

knowledge acquired, the professional skills obtained, the additional skills development, which allows increasing the value of the employee within the organization.

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