

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF EMPLOYEES IN "ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION OF UŽICE" - EPS

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Abstract: *Holders of survival and development of any business system are the staff, including a large number of experts of different profiles, who have knowledge, skills and experience in the function of development and improvement of the business, making it attractive for employment of the young and talented people, especially.. The staff with more knowledge and skills are a powerful generator of development. Therefore, the development of quality human resources through different types of education and training must be given the necessary and sufficient attention.*

This paper defines the role of education and training in “Electric Distribution of Užice” which is an integral part of the largest employers in the Republic of Serbia “Electric Power Industry of Serbia”, as a complex company with multiple areas of work: production, distribution and supply and trade of electricity.

Key words: *Human resources, quality of personnel, education and training of employees, educational concepts, techniques and training methods.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the birth, the development of man begins with the learning and preparation for life and work, with education. Since the birth, the future of each person begins with the education and lasts to the end of his life. Therefore, the concept of lifelong education is being more and more applied in the developed world.

Our civilization has evolved by transferring knowledge and experiences from generation to generation. Each epoch left behind its own recognizable trail. Each next generation was considerably facilitated by the understanding of social and natural changes and flows.

The society has transformed itself for several decades - changing its view of the world, its basic values, its social and political structure, art, etc. Today's society is at a time of radical and rapid changes. Value in modern society is created by "productivity" and "innovation", and basically both are applications of knowledge in the process of work.[6]

Serbia wants to become a part of the EU and the developed world and tends to join the EU's vision, based on smart, sustainable and comprehensive economic development with a high level of employment, productivity and social responsibility.[2] The accepted goal is to achieve genuine European knowledge in different areas, supported by world class and knowledge infrastructure, in which all participants (teachers, students, researchers, research institutions and companies) have benefits from the free flow of people, knowledge and technology. The Japanese ethics of collective responsibility will be implemented - the individual must not let others down - and will lead to efficient teamwork, the exchange of ideas between the workforce and administration, commitment to detail in order to avoid mistakes and disadvantages.[5]

In order to preserve company and its market position and increase its competitive advantage, it must be able to create new knowledge, rather than simply relying on existing ones. Therefore, continuous training is very important in the development of individual and organizational performance. The process of strategic training of employees and their development encourages creativity, inventiveness and provides to the organization a completely new form that enables uniqueness and diversity. In this paper, on the example of “Electric Power Industry of Serbia”, a system of providing the necessary knowledge of personnel will be shown.

2. “ELECTRIC POWER INDUSTRY OF SERBIA” AND “ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION OF UŽICE”

The public company “Electric Power Industry of Serbia” is the largest company in Serbia with about 30,000 employees. The mission of “Electric Power Industry of Serbia” is to secure the supply of electricity to customers under the most favorable conditions, with the continuous improvement of the services quality, improvement of environmental care and enhancement of the welfare of the community. The vision of the “Electric Power Industry of Serbia” is to be a socially responsible, market-oriented and profitable company, competitive on the European market and with significant influence in the region, recognized as a reliable partner to domestic and international companies.

The main activity of “Electric Power Industry of Serbia” is to supply of around 3,500,000 users by electricity and electricity trade. It, also, performs activities of electricity generation, distribution of electricity and distribution system management and exploitation of lignite.[8] The goal is the customers continue to recognize EPS as a stable and competitive supplier, which can only be achieved by quality and new services and constant communication.

"Electric distribution of Užice" is part of the complex system of "“Electric Power Industry of Serbia” and one part is the Distribution System Operator "EPS Distribution of Užice" belonging to the Distribution System Operator "Electro Serbia", Kraljevo and together with the plants there are 147 employees. The second part of the distribution is the "Technical Services Department Užice", which belongs to the "Technical Center Kraljevo", Kraljevo and together with the plants there are 247 employees.

3. POLESE AND ACCESS TO TRAINING AND EDUCATION OF EMPLOYEES

All market-oriented business systems are changing on a daily basis by adapting to competition and a humorous environment.[1] Therefore, it is imperative, in a developed world, to move towards a knowledge society, which promotes the concept of lifelong learning and education and the high quality of human resources. Knowledge in such a society becomes the most important factor of development, it forms the basis of a competitive advantage of a company and ensures its long-term progress.[3] As knowledge, skills and abilities of employees are not forever, they are very susceptible to obsolescence, and formal education becomes insufficient, its application is outdated, and it needs to be improved and modernized. Therefore, it is very important to introduce continuous training of employees in order to constantly develop them by raising their quality by achieving the following general goals: working success, acquiring knowledge from new technologies, innovating existing technological knowledge avoiding obsolescence of knowledge and directing new employees.

There are two approaches to education in the world: traditional four-step model of training and modern concepts of education. A description of these two approaches is shown in Table 1.

Those who do not implement the concept of lifelong education suffer the consequences both as a business system and as each individual - employees in the business system, which are described in more detail in Table 2.

Table 1. Approaches to training and education

APPROACHES TO TRAINING AND EDUCATION	
Traditional four-stage training model	Modern concepts of education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation: what level of knowledge is gained, what are the goals, the motivation of the participants 	1. The concept of "business-to-business" education, characterized by the correlation between the objectives of the individual and the business system. The goal of the concept is to develop employees to train for work, skills, problem solving, acceptance of responsibilities and cooperation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration: presentation of certain stages of work by teachers, understanding by the participants, approaching the task (problem) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform: mimicking work tasks until a satisfactory performance is achieved 	2. Concept of the "learning organization", by which the business system constantly adjusts to changes in the turbulent environment, transforming the methods of work and continuously trained personnel.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion: Exercise of independence with success control and assistance from "trainers" 	

Table2.The consequences of poor or unsuccessful employee training[7]

THE CONSEQUENCES OF POOR OR UNSUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE TRAINING	
For business system	For employees
Low productivity	Increased frustration, discontent and stress
Problems achieving the required level of quality business, products and services	Lack or complete loss of motivation
Discontent of buyers and stakeholders	Unsuccessful attempts to realize successful activities
General dissatisfaction of employees	Loss of self – confidence, optimism and faith in oneself
Lack of constructive solutions, collaboration and teamwork	Dissatisfaction with the work it does

Modern lifelong education follows seven basic **Techniques and Training Methods:**

1. Training at the workplace by giving the necessary instructions on how to do the job.
2. Training outside the workplace (training in special centers or training organizations).
3. Combined training of employees where a part of training realization is carried out in the business system, and the other is outside of it.
4. Informal learning through the performance of tasks at the workplace with colleagues.
5. Training "apprentice" so that individuals are trained thanks to a combination of school and workplace training.
6. Simulated training using the right equipment at work.
7. Training for specific purposes through directing and educating employees on some specific topics of importance for the business system business.

4. EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN „ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION OF UŽICE“

It is an indisputable fact that knowledge has a strategic importance for the business system because it increases its value. It is not just about knowledge in the purpose for the knowledge itself, but about knowledge as needed, applicable knowledge, knowledge and innovation to create a competitive advantage, but all this can have a real effect on the quality of work only if they are aligned with the needs of the organization, its goals, as and the goals of the employees themselves.[6]

Continuing education is an imperative for survival, and especially for the development of the business system. Therefore, business systems need to learn faster than competition, but also to appreciate where the developed Europe is¹. The logical order is knowledge - creativity - innovation - a competitive advantage.[4] Education and training of staff in the modern world, and especially in complex business systems, which refers to the entire "Electric Power Industry of Serbia", takes place in the time of rapid changes. Formal education becomes insufficient, its application is outdated, it needs to be improved and modernized. And not only: formal education does not offer the development of personal skills, which are necessary in everyday business, and which are only combined with professional knowledge to give real effects.[9]

Investing in employee development is the way to achieving the company's strategic goals. Aware that exclusively continuous, planned and expedient investments in innovating knowledge and skills can increase work efficiency and improve business, great attention is paid to various types of professional development of employees (legal regulations and internal acts, provision and continuous improvement of quality, protection of the environment, protection health and safety at work, training for job realization, etc.).[8]Also, in a successful business system, awareness-raising programs aimed at the full satisfaction of the buyer, stakeholders, employees, owners of capital and the state are successfully realized. In the “Electric Distribution of Užice” all this elements are covered by the Education Improvement Plan and Training Plan, which includes the following steps:

¹Europe 2020 predicts 40% of the total number of jobs will require a lower level of qualifications, 50% average level of qualifications and only 10% of highly skilled and qualified persons.As key competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) to be developed during secondary vocational education and continuous adult education, in line with the concept of lifelong learning, they are: communication skills, language skills development, mathematical knowledge and basic knowledge in the area of science and technology, electronic communication, social communication and entrepreneurial spirit.

1. Analysis of training and education needs, through which it is necessary to determine which skills are necessary and what type of training for each job;
2. Analysis of tasks at each workplace in order to determine which skills are needed and propose training with the goal of employees acquiring the skills necessary for successful work;
3. Performance analysis, by which the results are checked (effect: employee absenteeism, accident at work, employee complaints, damaged goods, customer complaints, product quality and the like; Verification of work knowledge, skills, presence; Examination of attitudes; Individual daily newspapers employees; Case studies.) and determine whether they can be improved by training or other means (such as moving employees to a new post)and
4. Setting up measurable and concrete training objectives and expanding knowledge.

Systems of training programs in the "Electricity Distribution of Užice" include three types of programs:

- ✓ *basic*, which encompass all the knowledge necessary for taking a managerial role,
- ✓ *innovative*, containing extensive knowledge and novelties from specific areas of work or management covered by the basic program and
- ✓ *programs according to current needs* (ad hoc programs), which represent a set of specific knowledge from the relevant area that relates and affects quality, management or successful work in the appropriate period.

In addition to this kind of education, there are other types of advice, such as counseling, consulting services, research reports and others.

Within the basic programs, employees are provided with various types of training (for example: training in the introduction of new staff, professional training in the form of continuing education and acquiring a higher level of professional skills, specialization for specific area of work, acquisition and renewal of necessary licenses and the placement of professional exams, etc.).

In the framework of innovative programs, employees are offered various ways of improving knowledge and skills by organizing various computer courses, online language courses in English, participation in significant professional meetings in the country and abroad and leaving for study trips. Management of the EEO and MME take part in the CIRED and CIGRE Serbia consultations, every year, which are part of the International Committee for Large Electric Networks and “Electric Distributions of Užice”, information and training through the "EPS Energy" magazine, which is published once a month and informs employees about current affairs and events in all parts of the company from production, distribution and supply electricity, etc.)

Programs according to current needs (ad hoc programs) include training: internal, by engaging own experts (employees from the EEO and MM Maintenance Department organize various trainings, firstly on protection and safety at work and the use of personal protective equipment, self-education by reading and interpreting the magazine "Cekos", "Economist", "Službeni Glasnik" and others used in certain areas and sectors), or external, with providers that provide education services on the market (employees from the Economic and Financial Affairs Department attend various seminars when it comes to some changes in the field, or, for example, the changes in the tax system, etc. Seminars are mostly attended by service managers who, in turn, transfer the acquired experience to direct executors of the work - to the referents).

The task is to provide capable, dedicated, satisfied employees with whom business plans can be implemented. Care for employees and their motivation, career development and development, are the basis for personal and company advancement. The development of corporate culture and the affiliation of employees to the company [8] is especially fostering. Regular, direct and open communication of staff with management through e-mail and meetings is of great importance.

5. CONCLUSION

The essence (the greatest driving and creative force) of each business system is its employees, whose allows their abilities to be used for the benefit of the business system. This is also a basic prerequisite for Serbia's inclusion in the global economy, which implies that employees are educated and able to adapt to a turbulently changing environment.

Knowledge and skills are of strategic importance for "Electric Power Industry of Serbia", in order to create a competitive advantage and increase its value. Therefore, "Electric Power Industry of Serbia" increasingly invests money in the education of its employees and understands that employee training is not an expense but an investment. It is an investment that contributes to the development of individuals, increasing employee productivity and overall business success.

Education of employees in "Electric Power Industry of Serbia" is a very complex process and requires quality realization of each individual phase.

"Electric Distribution of Užice" realized the importance of continuous professional training, which ensures continuous upgrading of skills and knowledge of employees, in accordance with its needs. Knowledge created

through the educational process and ongoing training related to the economy can most significantly benefit people's lives.

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