

# HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONAL FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

**Cibela NEAGU**

Universitatea „ARTIFEX” București

**Cezar BRAICU**

Universitatea „Spiru Haret” București

**Aurel NEAGU**

Academia de Poliție „AL. I. Cuza” București

## ABSTRACT

*Professional formation in organizations is a planned process that aims to change the three psychological attitudes, knowledge, abilities / skills / capabilities - with the clear purpose of achieving high performance in an activity or a range of activities. The paper presents the required levels of professional formation needs and the main stage that asks for an organizational professional formation program.*

**KEYWORDS:** *professional formation program, informal and formal surveys, professional formation objectives, professional formation needs, professional formation program evaluation*

## 1. The concept of staff professional formation and development

While we witness an informational explosion, long life education and efforts for a permanent renewal, the staff professional formation and professional development, as a general process of accumulating knowledge from all the emerging fields, needs to become a key element in the activity of every company.

Due to the increase of technical level in companies, the employees' professional formation and professional development have turned into a strategic factor and a source of competitive advantage for all the companies. To greater and greater extent, production has a non-material side, and the products modernization and their sale indeed ask for an intensive use of competencies that the employees in a company really have acquired.

If we take a look at the specialty literature, we see a large number of definitions regarding the staff professional formation and professional development. As M. Armstrong believes, „professional formation is a formal and systematic change in the behavior, with the help of education-derived learning, of the education activities and of practical and theoretical experience.’

G.A. Cole defines professional formation as an activity meant to acquire knowledge and skills that are specific to a certain profession or to performing a definite operation.

The personnel development aims to improve the professional performance of the employees and to develop their intellectual potential, so that they will assume greater responsibilities in the future.

This type of development is an unavoidable process for any company, since a percentage of knowledge and abilities loses its value or becomes obsolete in time. The staff professional knowledge, particular to their employment place holds the top spot in the wearing out process. And this is just natural, obvious, as the company evolves in time by adopting and implementing new technologies, new labor methods, management styles, approaches to find solutions to problems – and the knowledge used to be valid a few years ago is now out-of-date.

The professional competence of the employees may be achieved by a constant and regular process of professional formation and development, relying on the personal qualities of each individual. For a greater efficiency, professional formation needs to be specialized, to focus on the individual and his/her actual activity.

The reason behind this professional formation is to enhance the employees performance related to their positions, and also to take on better labor practices. Professional formation in organizations is a planned process, seeking to change three psychological categories, such as: attitudes, knowledge, abilities/skills/capacities – with the clear purpose of achieving high performance in an activity or a range of activities. The staff professional formation is the equivalent word of the ‚professional formation‘, usually found in the specialty literature. The same meaning has ‚training‘, a word borrowed from English.

The professional formation advantages are in a great number:

- The employees are motivated to enhance their skills, and therefore their morale will be lifted up;
- The staff fluctuation will slow down, which leads to decreasing costs for recruiting and selection;
- The feeling of satisfaction for that position will be more visible, as the respective employees implement everything they have learned;
- The employees become more flexible and more innovative while dealing with the changing environment;
- The promotion prospects are rising up for the employees and the line of position succession is set up.

## **2. Levels of identifying the needs for professional formation**

Being conditional on the methods and sources used to find out the needs for professional formation, any analysis needs to consider the following levels: the organization, employment place and the tasks involved, as well as the individual.

- a) *The organizational level.* This analysis gives careful consideration to all the aspects in the organization. A key element in the organizational analysis is described by the compatibility of the professional formation program objects with the organization objects and strategy.

Further on, a list of such elements<sup>1</sup> included in the analysis shows below:

- What are the effects of the professional formation program upon the organization strategy?
- Is the professional formation program compatible with the organization objectives and future plans?
- Which is the exact sector within the organization that needs professional formation?
- Among the organization sub-units, where would be the professional formation program most successful?
- Does the organization possess the resources required for the implementation of the professional formation program?
- Which of the professional formation programs should have priority?
- Is it possible that the professional formation programs negatively affect units or employees who have not enrolled in such programs?
- Will the professional formation program be accepted by the supervisors and subordinates of the people involved with these programs?

At the organization level, the needs for professional formation derives from:

- The implementation of new work procedures or technology;
- The grooming of employees to be promoted;
- The replacement of 'quitters';
- The orientation and integration for new employees.

b) *Level of tasks.* This analysis refers to the tasks and responsibilities at the employment place, as well as to the level of knowledge, abilities (able to be performed) and attitudes (how to apprehend the position) required for performance.

The professional formation specialist has to carry out an analysis of each specific task, upon consulting with the experts in that sector of activity (for instance, highly qualified employees, people in the top hierarchy).

Some of the questions that need to be addressed to the experts are listed herein<sup>1</sup>:

- What is the difficulty level of that specific task?
- Can the necessary abilities be learned at the employment place or acquired by professional formation?
- What are the consequences of an inaccurately fulfilled task?
- What knowledge, skills, information, equipment, materials are needed to carry out that task?
- What are the steps to be taken so that the task is fully performed?

c) *The individual level* involves the identification of the employees in need for professional formation, as well as of the methods that need to be used, for each and every individual. The evaluation interviews will target the recognition of the employee's principles, weaknesses and the

plan of how to overcome them by an adequate professional formation. In this case, the evaluation sheets for the employee's performances are the starting point for establishing the need for professional formation.

Should a difference between the current performance and the desired one is noticed, this thing would not automatically take us to the solution of professional formation. In other words, if an employee has the potential to do his work correctly, but his performance is below expectations, it could be about the lack of motivation. And here, the solution is to work and insist on the reimbursement system.

In a nutshell, professional formation is not a solution for all the efficiency issues in an organization.

Professional formation is not a solution when:

- Abilities are the ones to lack, and not the motivation or the proper work conditions;
- The employees have the ability and the desire to learn;
- The organization management gives encouragement and favors the personnel professional formation and the implementation of knowledge thus acquired.

### **3. The stages of the integrated system of professional training**

The professional formation process is mainly intended for the new employees and also for the ones who attained a privileged status by length of continuous services (as in an organization). It needs to be well grounded, in the sense that it has to match the specific needs of professional formation, to closely follow a plan (program) and to start from a correct selection of the participants, giving a fair chance to all the employees to improve their performance through this process.

Thus, the stages that are included in the integrated system of professional training for the staff are as follows:

- A. The identification of the professional formation needs for the staff;
- B. The formulation of the professional formation objectives;
- C. The drafting and teaching the professional formation program;
- D. The assessment of the professional formation program.

A. *The identification of the professional formation needs for the staff.*  
This stage requires the pinpointing the professional formation needs, by wording the objectives and distributing the resources.

To establish the professional formation needs is not an easy step to take. Various methods and data collection sources are being used, before the decision of professional formation debut is made. In other words, information from the below sources will be used for the identification:

- The verification of the organizational documents (eg: the results of the management staff forecast, request for professional formation, performance evaluation tests, employment criteria, personal files, etc.)

- The informal and formal surveys. When for an informal status (work advice, counseling), the professional formation needs to be provided at all cost, assuming that the need for professional formation is shared by all employees. The surveys also cover the informal discussions, the consultations with the managers and the laborers and the experts in certain fields. Practice shows that the most widely used method is the dialogue with the managers, a dialogue where they express whatever they consider being the most interesting needs of the organization in terms of professional formation and that they will be able to provide the required support.
- The analysis of the alert statistical indicators, such as: the fluctuation of the production level compared to the costs evolution, the number of accidents in the workplace, the evolution of the absenteeism rate, of delays, the level of claims, of the disciplinary actions, the number of rejects, etc.

The choice of one or the other among the methods and resources above depends, to a certain extent, by the purpose of the professional formation program.

#### *B. The formulation of the objectives.*

The professional formation objectives are defined as those work conditions that the employees will get to become familiar with and be able to carry out by the time the professional formation program ends.

The objectives emanate from the analysis of professional formation needs. They will intend the acquiring of such knowledge, attitudes and skills by all the participants in professional formation, and also their successful implementation in the daily activity.

These objectives may be classified as follows:

1. Objectives of professional formation – what kind of principles, concepts or techniques need to be learnt in the professional formation program, who should learn them and when to be taken in;
2. Organizational and departmental objectives – what impact will it have the professional formation upon such phenomena like absenteeism, staff fluctuation, costs reductions and productivity growth;
3. Objectives at the individual level – what impact will be upon the individual's behavior, his performance strength.

The objectives of the professional formation programs are set up for each position, adjusted to the person to be trained and state the expected performance of that person. Not any professional formation program can take you straight to reaching the ideal desired objectives, but each of them is able to bring its fair contribution to this goal.

*C. The drafting and teaching the professional formation program.*

Having the found objectives in mind, a professional formation program will be drafted in such a way that it will satisfy the professional formation needs. A program like this needs to mention:

- The place, time and its duration;
- The topics to be addressed;
- The professional formation methods (theoretical background, interactive style among the groups, etc.)
- The resources needed (material and human).

The professional formation at the employment place may consist in verbal explanations, practical demos or a simple observation on how a task is being accomplished.

But this professional formation is not an easy and smooth path, difficulties may occur, like:

- The good employees are not necessarily good instructors;
- The labor conditions may be improper for the best conveyance of the skills;
- The demo may interrupt the work flow;
- The professional formation at the employment place is limited to the activities where the mistakes of the people-in-professional formation may be tolerated (do not cause any accidents or damages);
- The environment where the professional formation takes place affects its efficiency.

The place where it happens may be a special one within the organization, an outside specialized center or other various spots that are appropriate for this activity.

*D. The assessment of the professional formation program*

Upon concluding the professional formation program, management needs to assess the extent to which the desired objectives have been reached and evaluate its efficiency. Since this program represents an investment – the costs include expenses made for materials, instructor time and the production losses during this period of time – a real gain has to be seen.

In a nutshell, management has to assess the professional formation program in order to decide whether it may satisfy the needs it has derived from, in the first place.

Professional formation will be considered successful if it has made a change of behavior for the employees and helped them accumulate new knowledge and skills; if the employees apply at their place what they have learnt and whether the financial and time resources have been realistically distributed.

The drafting and implementation of an integrated system of professional formation involve certain advantages on the companies part, such as:

- The maintenance of a sufficient and proper range of skills among the employees;

- The development of knowledge and abilities of all the employees;
- The consolidation of the professional performance;
- The increase in the services quality level;
- The raise of the employees motivation level.

### **Conclusions**

Considering all the above, several conclusions can be made:

1. The staff professional formation and development designates a must-to-do activity, which contributes to the growth in the companies' competitiveness.
2. In comparison with the investments in other capital forms, the investments in human resources bring many social and economic advantages to the companies.
3. The financial resources invested by the companies for its staff professional formation are extremely reasonable.

### **References**

1. Aurel Manolescu – *Managementul resurselor umane*, Ed. Economică, 2002
2. Cibela Neagu – *Managementul firmei*, Ed. Tritonic, București, 2004
3. Dan Anghel Constantinescu (coord) – *Managementul resurselor umane*, Ed. Nationala, Buc, 1999
4. Georgeta Pânișoară, Ion Ovidiu Pânișoară – *Managementul resurselor umane*, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2005
5. M. Bocoș – *Instruire interactivă. Repere pentru reflecție și acțiune*. Ed. Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj Napoca, 2002
6. Robert Mathis, P. Nica, C Rusu – *Managementul resurselor umane*, Ed. Economică, București, 1997
7. Radu Emilian (coord.) – *Conducerea resurselor umane*, Ed. Expert, București, 1999