

EVALUATION OF EMPLOYEE TRAINING IN RETAIL BUSINESS

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Abstract

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Technological development and growing competition on the market asks for continuous improvement of knowledge and skills of employees, not only for securing their work places but also for increasing the companies' competitiveness and economic development of the society. Company education is one of the main instruments, how the enterprises can improve their position in the market. The main criterion of success in business are in present especially employees' skills. The main objective of this paper was to evaluate the most important topics, which are used for improving skills and working outcomes of employees in retail and wholesale branch. Their possibility for getting feedback was also commented and controllability was further checked. When we summarize all findings, the most important competencies of workers in retail and warehouse business are qualification (shopping skills and knowledge of products), behaviour (obliging attitude to customers, ability to compliment the customer of his/her choice), working reaction (ability to do daily tasks quickly, safety, precisely and punctually), neatness (well and clean dressed employees, different groups of workers are distinguishable from each other). Next step after the list of main competences in retail and warehouse business was creating questionnaire, which should serve for researching quality of company education and its possibility to improvement. This questionnaire can serve for all companies in this field, which want or need to evaluate their company education.

company, education, warehouse business, retail business, employee, skills, learning

Technological development and growing competition on the market asks for continuous improvement of knowledge and skills of employees, not only for securing their work places but also for increasing the companies' competitiveness and economic development of the society. According to some authors, the investment into education and development is a decisive factor of company performance and economical growth (Jeffrey, 1995; Winterton, Winterton, 1997; Mabey, Ramirez, 2005). The education in global view is not any more a process limited to the ages between 3 and 24 but it is a lifelong learning process.

As a consequence more importance should be attached to the educational system of continuous professional training since well educated people with better qualification adapt more rapidly to technological changes and assure economic adaptability and growth of productivity on the long run (Gut, 2008).

Tendency of company education comes usually out of the status of maternity field of the corporation. Need of education is for example different in chemical companies, where the progress of industry is not as great as in computer enterprises (Plamínek, 2010). Evaluation of educational needs should come from the competency models, which each company should have (Hroník, 2006). Criteria, which are recommended (Wágnerová, 2008) are:

- rather objective than subjective,
- in relationship to work and work description,
- behaviour, not characteristics,
- must be in competency of the evaluated person,
- in relationship to specific function, not global,
- employee must be informed about these criteria,
- differ according to employee category.

Companies perform some educational activities, but to have the impact on real economical situation, some feedback must be given. We can say that

giving and getting feedback in this field is the most important thing, but it is the most difficult, too. Usually the educators and also students do not want to be evaluated, due to their position, shame and unwillingness to get any feedback. The lack of evaluation comes also from the fact, that some (or even the majority) of learning outcomes are not measurable (Vodák, Kucharčíková, 2011).

Outcomes of education can be checked in many ways. Traditional dividing is mentioned below:

1. Evaluation of the students reaction ("happy questionnaires")

Evaluation in this step finds out information about attitudes of students to learning, but it does not deal with the content, which students really acquired. It is more evaluation of experiences than assessment of new abilities and capabilities. This part serves only to increasing effectiveness of time spent with teaching and learning (Vodák, Kucharčíková, 2011).

2. Evaluation of skills size

In this level is measured quantity of knowledge, which was transferred from the teacher to student. We find out, which new competencies, skills, capabilities and knowledge students acquired, or how did they change their working attitude. But we don't still evaluate, if the student really uses this new skills in working praxis (Vodák, Kucharčíková, 2011).

3. Evaluation of the change of working behaviour, using knowledge in praxis and transfer of skills into praxis

This phase observes impacts of educational process and learning outcomes into work praxis. Rate of using knowledge and new competencies in working praxis is measured (Vodák, Kucharčíková, 2011).

4. Evaluation of learning outcomes in measurable indicators

Especially cost efficiency is observed. This level is targeted on outcomes, which can be quantified, for example number of selling, quality, accomplishing tasks (Vodák, Kucharčíková, 2011).

Some authors (Vodák, Kucharčíková, 2011) add changes in corporate culture as a top of company education. In this level changes in company values are monitored. Very important is behaviour in relationship to internal and external customers and suppliers.

Trade business is really specific due to the measurability of learned skills in praxis. The examples are: rate of customers served in time unit, dividing working tasks among workers and the quickness of doing each task, contentment of customers and many others (Toman, 2011).

METHODS AND RESOURCES

The main objective of this paper was to find the most important topics, which are used for improving skills and working outcomes of employees in trade business. Their possibility for getting feedback and controllability was also checked. These topics can be transferred into questions and to serve as the basis for questionnaire. In the next step, the evaluation questionnaire was created. While processing this paper we came out of the hypothesis, that workers in the shop are one of the main factors, which can influence shopping behaviour of customers.

As methodology was used study of technical resources, which handle this problem, mainly analysis and comparison of foreign databases and conference collections is used. Also interviews with managers from supermarkets were held, as a support from trade branch. All this knowledge were synthesized into topics and the questionnaire was created. The questionnaire was proceeded from the above mentioned five level evaluation model. For assessment of satisfaction is most suitable Likert scale (Kozel, 2005), which should be statistically processed by reliance measuring by Cramer coefficient (Budíková *et al.*, 2010).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The quality of services that retailers use to support their merchandise offering is shown to be a critical component for continued growth and increasing customer loyalty (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1996).

Additionally, some researchers argue that one key factor enabling retail organizations to maintain competitive advantage is the capability to deliver high quality service to customers. These relationships are important as high quality service translates into increases in customer satisfaction, retention, and eventually, profitability (Sureshchandar, Rajendran and Anantharaman, 2003).

Customers base their quality expectations on some combination of their assessment of service and their past experiences (Berry *et al.*, 2001).

Workers in sale participate (Záboj, 2009) on making shopping atmosphere very strongly. They impact customers not only via number of persons in purchase, which is the ability to ensure sale transactions in capacity, but also their qualification (ability to serve the customer on professional level, including counselling activities), behaviour and tidy look. Choice, education, placement, management and control of employees are the main content of personal management in retail or warehouse.

According to Zamazalová (2008) for customers are the most important factors while buying things:

- Product (quality, functionality, range of products, availability);
- Price (level, payment conditions, maturity);

- Services (accuracy, reliability, swiftness, simplicity of attendance, treatment, competences);
- Distribution (placement, working hours, services provided);
- Image (reputation, certainty, stability).

Lancefield (2004) amends, that especially in warehouse trade is needed employee safety and often education connected with it.

When we focus on the point of services, we can follow Toman, (2011) who presents, that each shop assistant must satisfy customers' need of safety and appreciation. The need of safety is primarily connected with product, but need of appreciation is linked with services. For each customer is very important, that the shop worker cares of him/her and wants to discuss about his/her choice. Next very special need for customer is a desire to be complimented for his/her good choice.

This idea is supported by the portal businessinfo.cz (2011), which stated the complexity of the work of shop assistant is connected with combination of continual support of customer in the shop and doing necessary tasks joined with his/her profession. Shop assistant has to care of customers, he must be flexible, assertive, correct, representative, quick-witted and skilful.

When we summarize above mentioned findings, the most important competencies of workers in retail and warehouse business are:

- qualification (shopping skills and knowledge of products),
- behaviour (obliging attitude to customers, ability to compliment the customer of his/her choice),
- working reaction (ability to do daily tasks quickly, safety, precisely and punctually),

- neatness (well and clean dressed employees, different groups of workers are distinguishable from each other).

As support for this paper were done 2 interviews with 2 managers from one supermarket chain, which has its origin in Germany. This supermarket chain has over 200 subsidiaries in the Czech Republic. Their educational activities start by research, which is done in chosen shops. Both customers and employees are asked a question, where they see their disadvantages (employees) or what they want to be improved (customers). This research is usually casual and it does not cover the problem in its complexity. It is done about once a year and one-day-lasting educational activity is held.

This is the case, why this paper aims to create the questionnaire for choosing the main factors, which can be improved among employees in warehouse and retail branch for increasing customer loyalty. The questionnaire contains all important factors, which are stated above and are evaluated among customers as most pleading and influencing their shopping habits.

This questionnaire is to be supported by Cramer coefficient of reliance or averaged. Values higher than 2,5 are to be supposed for further attention and educational activities in these fields should be held.

Also after the education takes place, its outcomes should be evaluated. All factors are necessary to be stated in measurable data (e. g. knowledge about products – understanding tests, punctuality and accuracy – quickness of solving one customer). Other criterions, such as neatness or behaviour to customer shall be observed in longitudinal period.

I: Questionnaire for customers

1. Are the workers always clean dressed?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Can you usually distinguish shop assistants from the rest or workers in the shop?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Are the workers always prepared to give you an advice about products?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Has the shop assistant ever complimented you for your choice?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Are the workers usually helpful, when you need advice or assistance?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Are the shop assistants able to influence your product choice?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Is there usually any worker in the place, when you need advice or help?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Are the workers usually quick while serving you?	1	2	3	4	5
9. Are you always served punctually and precisely in the cash desk?	1	2	3	4	5
10. Do you usually have to queue, although there is enough workers in the place?	1	2	3	4	5

Source: processed by author

Legend: 1 Strongly agree, 2 Partly agree, 3 Cannot assess, 4 Partly disagree, 5 Strongly disagree

SUMMARY

The investment into education and development is a decisive factor of company performance and its economical growth. The main objective of this paper was to find the most important topics, which are used for improving skills and working outcomes of employees in trade business. These topics were transferred into questions. In the next step, the evaluation questionnaire was created. While processing this paper we came out of the hypothesis, that workers in the shop are one of the main factors, which can influence shopping behaviour of customers.

The main methods for processing this paper were analysis and synthetics of technical sources, especially from databases and conference papers. The questionnaire was created by Likert scale, which measures strength of agreement with a statement.

Workers in sale participate on making shopping atmosphere very strongly. They impact customers not only via number of persons in purchase, which is the ability to ensure sale transactions in capacity, but also their qualification (ability to serve the customer on professional level, including counselling activities), behaviour and tidy look. Choice, education, placement, management and control of employees are the main content of personal management in retail or warehouse. The most important factors, which should be workers in retail and warehouse educated in are: qualification, behaviour, neatness and working reactions.

While evaluating the impact of held education, it is strongly needed to have data in measurable form. For example the knowledge should be tested in understanding test or punctuality and swiftness shall be measured in time for solving one customer. Other factors can be observed in longitudinal way.

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