THE STUDY OF THE DEMAND FOR THE AGRICULTURAL CONSULTANTS KNOWLEDGE IN LITHUANIA

Ruta Adamoniene, Violeta Silingiene, Algimantas Sakalas
Kaunas University of Technology

Abstract
Employee’s knowledge, qualification, abilities and practical experience determine both individual’s prestige and the success of organization’s activity. Positive results depend not only upon a particular individual but also upon an entire personnel’s harmonious and purposeful work. The analysed in this article problem and actuality is to clear out the demand for the consultant knowledge as well and to present skill improvement model.

Key words: knowledge, qualification, consultant training, skill improvement.

Introduction
Modern-day essential changes in technologies and the tendency of demands dictated by the users became as common phenomenon. Consulting organizations trying to increase the potential of their competitive ability are forced to adapt to the new conditions and change their strategies and tactics. Besides, in the economical life and, at the same time, in Lithuania, the shift to the new farming model goes on. The essence of this model is that in many fields of the economical activity focuses have shifted to the suggestions to afford services directed towards the market analysis and evaluation, training, consulting, users; problems and service quality.

The importance of training is sort of clear for everyone, however, demands for training are not always obvious. For example, the newly employed employee is concerned about his training perspectives, who will train him, what, when and how he will be trained. Who should be paid the priorities? It is possible to determine priority fields for investments only when analysing the demands for training. In order to create the common agricultural training system including the fields of science, studies, continuing professional education and in order to involve into this process agricultural schools of all kinds of levels, scientific institutes, advisory institutions, 44 training centres were established. Because of the raised high aims and requirements the consultant’s constant professional improvement should be supported politically, economically, methodically and scientifically.

Research object – the consultants from the advisory offices. Aim of the study – to analyse the demands for consultants’ knowledge as well as to create the agricultural consultants’ skill improvement model. Tasks of the study: 1) to analyse theoretical and practical aspects of the skill improvement; 2) to determine the demands of consultants’ knowledge for the skill improvement programs.

Research methodology
The following methods were used while preparing the article: scientific literature analysis and summation, logical analysis, the filing, summation, comparison and mathematical data treatment of primary and secondary information.
The main aspects of the consultant’s’ knowledge demand, training and skill improvement

The world’s mankind is meeting the new millennium as a new stormy era of changes and value reappraisal, where the sides of the society’s common life and dynamics change radically. The earlier three traditional production factors – land, labor force and capital refilled with a new knowledge factor, which makes the basis for the human resources and became one of the main goods. Consequently, the knowledge becomes the resource for the business subject and organization of any type, demanding systematic evaluation, promulgation and effective use by paying more and more attention to the people’s training and studying.

Investment is all that encourages man to study and improve and that creates favourable conditions for the gaining of the new knowledge and skills. Investments into the farm are not only investments into modern machinery and buildings – these are investments into the human capital. On the other hand – it is the condition for human existence and high life level. It is possible to reorganize enterprises only then if rightly motivated, acknowledged with the newest achievements, curious, energetic, seeking for knowledge and responsible employees work in the enterprise. It is achieved by correspondingly educating employees of the enterprise after the creation of the stimulus system of the training and skill improvement.

Employees’ training – it is a process during which consultants are provided with knowledge and skills necessary for their work. Training is characteristic to the production and business organizations, when the accepted employees (without necessary qualification) should be taught the basics of their future job.

Improvement of skills – is a process of the renewal and development of the gained professional knowledge and skills. Basically, both these processes are similar, because their course and implementation measures are the same, except their aim. Both the training of employees and the improvement of their skills are parts of the personnel’s training system. Training and improvement are equally important both for the leaders of organizations and for their employees.

Employers’ motivation. First of all they can rely upon competent employees. The modern competence encompasses not only knowledge and skills, but the attitudes as well, which are being formed during the training course. After all, a person can be loath to apply gained skills and knowledge and it is even a much more larger loss for the enterprise than with the case when the employee doesn’t work the way his employer wants him to work only because he does not know all these things.

That it is useful for the organization to train consultants due to the following items: efficiency and productivity increases; expenditure decreases; the necessity to supervise employees decreases and there are less complaints; there are less accidents; quality increases; motivation of employees and morality increases; flexibility is stimulated; the culture of training is improving; there are less qualification shortages; it is possible to plan incomers.

Consultant’s motives to study and to improve one’s skills. The more knowledge employee has the higher its qualification is, the more able he is to do something the more interesting his activity appears to be. The employee having
knowledge for the most cases of life feels much more free, he can always choose, it is much more easier to live for him, his work is evaluated much more better.

**The essence and stages of the training process**

Consultant’s training and the improvement of their skills is a complex systematic process, which stages are connected with each other, endless and constantly repeating. The following five stages make up the process (Fig.1).

![Figure 1. Constituents of the consultant’s training process](source: own research)

**Demand analysis.** It should be cleared out what skills are needful for the improvement of the work quality and productivity; one should be acquainted thoroughly with “potential students” in order to ensure that the training program should correspond to their particular educational level, experience, attitude as well as to their personal interests; to invoke the data of scientific researches for the formation of particular and grounded aims of the knowledge and work results.

**Projection of the training process.** The following items are necessary in this stage: to form training aims and methods, to complete training measures, to determine training content and succession, to choose examples, exercises and practical tasks; to make a training plan following the adults’ training theory; to take the trouble that all training measures to be clearly written and would make up the undivided system of training measures directly targeted towards the implementation of the training aims and to carefully and professionally prepare all program elements.

**The test of effectiveness.** In this stage it is necessary to check the effectiveness of the training program while organizing the session for the representative audience. Final correctives should be done with reference to the control results of the in-between training program’s effectiveness in order to ensure its efficiency.

**Implementation.** If it is possible, “teachers’ training” seminars should be organized in such way, as with the special knowledge it should be explained how the reported material must be conveyed.

**Evaluation and fixation of training results.** The use of the training program should be evaluated with reference to the following criteria: a) reaction – to fix, how the trained ones react to the training; b) knowing – to use such feedback measures as tests before and after the training in order to evaluate their knowledge; c) behaviour – to watch the reaction of direct leaders towards the activity results of the trained ones, at the end of the training; d) results – to evaluate the work results of those trained.
Results of the empirical research
The research of the determination for the improvement of the consultants’ skills and knowledge demand was carried out in the Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service, which (as the developing, modern service-providing enterprise) is orientated towards the user. Service suppliers differ in their skills and personal features and that influences the quality of the service most of all.

Respondents maintains that the main motives of the improvement of skills are on the individual opportunities’ labour market (93%), improvement of one’s knowledge (87%) and Professional possibilities (85%). 20% of the respondents think about the acquirement of the particular educational degree. However, only 1% of all consultants think about the change of their profession. When analysing the respondents’ answers to the questions (if the employees’ motivation measures are applied in their service) it cleared out that the measures are applied follows: psychological measures (40%), material measures (24%), psychological and material measures (35%) skill improvement motivation measures.

During the research one of the tasks was to clear out what kind of knowledge is the most popular among the respondents. It was determined that 64% respondents referred to foreign languages, 56% - referred to the law knowledge, 43% - referred to the shortage of management sciences. The questionnaire of the 2003 shows that 42% of the respondents referred to the shortage of management knowledge, 38% - referred to the shortage of law knowledge, 9% - referred to the shortage of sociological knowledge, 2% - referred to the shortage of the production knowledge and 9% - referred to the shortage of the economical knowledge.

Concerning the organized refresher courses 90% of the respondents answered that they are satisfied with the information they had received. The information on the courses respondents get in the following way: 86% from the specialists of the service centre, 30% referred to the internet and 24% referred to the media. The improvement of skills for the consultants is being carried out in the following way: 88% refer to advisory enterprises and training centres, 25% refer to the state institutions and 20 percent refer to the universities.

When summarizing the respondents’ answers to the presented questions it is possible to maintain that in the advisory service the improvement of the consultants’ skills is carried out constantly, systematically and with expedition. Various methods are used for this purpose, however, the motivation of the improvement of skills as well as carrier development are insufficient. For the solving of this problem the model of the consultant skills improvement from the Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service is suggested. The beginning of its creation is the determination of the demand for the knowledge. The following items should be cleared out while determining it: firstly, what kind of knowledge is under the request, secondly, what are the kinds of the users’ demands, what are the possibilities of the administration. In the motivation of the consultants to improve skills qualification categories of the consultants are arranged and the raised for them requirements are determined. While implementing this model for the improving consultants’ skills (Fig. 2) the improvement of skills should be motivated and the career seeking of the consultants would be solved.
The model of the improvement of the skills of the consultants from the Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service

Demand for consultants → Determination of the demand for knowledge → Demand suggested by the environment

The plan for the improvement of skills

The fulfillment of the plan for the improvement of skills

Evaluation of skills

Assistant Consultant Senior consultant Consultant supervisor Expert consultant

Figure 2. The model of the improvement of skills

Source: own research.

Conclusions

1. The constant training on-the-job becomes the main requirement for the development of the enterprise personnel and the organizations. The training and improvement of the personnel is a complex and systematic process, which stages are inter-connected, endless and inter-repeating. Those studying and interested in the changes should be motivated and should be orientated towards the constantly improving their skills employees.

2. Consultants acknowledge that their administration stimulates them to improve skills, however, not always the improvement of skills is connected with the rise of the work salary or the career seeking.

3. The main motives of the improvement of the skills of the consultants are as follows: the deepening of knowledge, the improvement of professional and individual possibilities on the labor market; the conterminous specializations and the acquirement of the particular educational degree is less relevant and the change of the profession is absolutely unimportant.

4. The model of the improvement of the skills of the consultants consists of the following elements: the determination of the demand for knowledge; the determination of the requested demand for knowledge (by consultants) and the suggested trainings (by the administration), the making of the plan for the improvement of skills as well as its implementation, the evaluation of skills and the conferment of the qualifying degree.
References

ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ПОТРЕБНОСТИ СЕЛЬСКОХОЗЯЙСТВЕННЫХ ЗНАНИЙ КОНСУЛЬТАНТОВ В ЛИТВЕ

Адамонене Р., Шилингене В., Сакалас А.
Каунасский технологический университет

Аннотация
Знания, квалификация, способности и практический опыт работника определяют как престиж отдельного человека, так и успех деятельности всей организации. Политические результаты зависят не только от отдельной личности, но и от гармоничной, целенаправленной работы всего персонала. Цель работы – проанализировать потребность в знаниях с.-х. консультантов и создать модель усовершенствования их навыков.

Ключевые слова: знание, квалификация, обучение консультанта, усовершенствование навыка.