

EVALUATION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF LOCAL PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

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Introduction

A special place in the process of professional training of civil servants, although it does not appear as a special stage, is the identification of methods that highlight their training needs². In fact, in our opinion, the analysis of methods for identifying the training needs of employees in local public institutions should be a major and constant concern for the management of these organizations, because depending on the type of method used we can highlight various issues related to these needs.

Regarding the way and methods of identifying the training needs of civil servants, we can say that public organizations have at hand an extremely wide and diverse range of methods. In this sense, among the methods for identifying training needs we can list:

- application of questionnaires to employees;
- employee performance evaluation reports;
- proposals submitted by the heads of the functional departments;
- analysis of employee job descriptions;
- offers submitted by various professional training providers;
- proposals submitted by beneficiaries of vocational training;
- recommendations made by various government agencies or government training centers;
- recommendations formulated by different specialized governmental or parliamentary commissions.

Regarding the types of methods used to identify the training needs of employees (whether they are employees in public institutions or private organizations), some specialists³ consider that, in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, there are two main classes of methods for analyzing these needs. namely:

1. methods focused on identifying problems;
2. the methods related to the comparison of the individual competencies with those necessary to fulfill the service tasks.

The first type of method focuses on identifying any type of problem or deficiency recorded by the employee regarding his professional performance or performance, while exploring and analyzing whether these problems or deficiencies are due to a lack or "deficiency"

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² I. Alexandru, *Tratat de administrație publică*, Editura Universul Juridic, București, 2008

³ A. M. Bercu, *Pregătirea profesionala si cariera personalului din administrația publică*, Editura Universitară, București, 2009

in terms of the level of knowledge or skills held by him, respectively which of the professional knowledge and skills need to be improved.

The second class of methods based on the comparison of the profile of individual competencies, is a much broader and more complex approach, much more useful for an individual or group of individuals who are new employees in an organization. In essence, the methods involve identifying the degree of "matching" of the profile of individual skills of an employee with the skills that are necessary to perform in good conditions the activities assigned to him. Once there are strategic changes that require new knowledge and new professional skills from employees, this class of methods identifies much better what new knowledge and professional skills are needed to be acquired by employees, without resorting to changing roles and positions. in the organization. Also, when these methods identify a "discrepancy" between the knowledge and professional skills held by an employee and those necessary to perform his activities, this discrepancy must be transposed in terms of "learning objectives" (what the employee needs to know and what must have skills to perform the duties of the service in good conditions)⁴.

Evaluating the results and effectiveness of the training program

One of the most problematic and contested aspects related to the professional training of civil servants (from local and central administrations) is the evaluation of the results and efficiency of the professional training program.

In fact, the problem of evaluating vocational training is a permanent and constant concern for managers of public institutions worldwide, due to the relatively high consumption of resources (financial, material, human, time) that such programs require. Over time, training programs and courses have become profitable business sources for many organizations, and the effectiveness of these courses remains relatively low.

From the definition point of view, the evaluation of vocational training programs is a process of establishing the value and benefits (merits) that a vocational training program has / brings for all parties involved (participants, lecturers, organizations, etc.).

Also, the term for the evaluation of vocational training tends to define, in a comprehensive way, all the activities related to the highlighting of the positive and negative aspects regarding this type of training, in particular the highlighting, on the one hand, of the aspects related to the learning process. , teaching and learning methodologies and methods, and on the other hand the type of knowledge and skills that participants must acquire.

Due to the fact that the values and benefits brought by vocational training are the main component of any evaluation process of these programs, the discussions and divergences related to the evaluation of vocational training are multiple. Different parties involved in the training process may have different visions and interests related to the training process, and these visions and interests may take the form of protecting the interests or image.

At the same time, some experts⁵ argue that the rationale for evaluating vocational training

⁴ A. Manolescu, V. Lefter, A. Deaconu, *Managementul resurselor umane*, Editura Economică, București, 2007

⁵ I. Alexandru, *Tratat de administrație publică*, Editura Universul Juridic, București, 2008

is more about operational arguments and less about strategic issues, information related to this type of evaluation being used more for evaluating individuals and improving the training process and less for strategic decisions. on investment in human resources.

In our opinion, the ambiguity regarding the degree of effectiveness of vocational training courses and programs can be partly explained by the fact that the performance and results of these types of courses cannot always be quantified financially.

There is no satisfactory calculation formula that allows accurate and clear highlighting of values or gains from attending training programs, leaving a fairly high dose of uncertainty about the success of such programs.

The importance of evaluating any training program lies in the need to clearly demonstrate the "values" earned in relation to the money "spent". In other words, what are our earnings and benefits (as an individual, department or organization) that we record after graduating from vocational training programs. In the form of a question, any training program should answer the following questions: "Was it worth it to participate and spend time and money on the training program?" or "Have the results and performance of my work improved to such an extent that it was worth spending money and time on?"

Evaluating a training program is not an easy task, because, as mentioned above, it is not easy to quantify the direct results and benefits that such a course brings to employees and employers. Evaluating a training program is much easier when the outputs (outputs) of such a program are clear and easy to identify, such as: reducing the number of typing mistakes or increasing the packaging speed of electronic products. On the other hand, the evaluation of a training and development program of managerial skills for civil servants in management positions is much more difficult, because the success of the public organization is not only or necessarily related to the managerial skills acquired after such courses but also by others. factors (political, economic, socio-cultural factors).

One of the most well-known and familiar methods of evaluating courses and training programs is represented by "post-graduation" opinion polls, surveys in which graduates of these types of programs fill in a specific questionnaire on the day of graduation. by evaluating the different aspects of the course. Thus, according to this method, graduates of a vocational training course, using an ordinal scale (for example a 5-level scale, in which level 1 represents the "totally unsatisfactory" level and level 5 - the "totally satisfactory" level), will complete a questionnaire in which they will express their opinion on the different aspects of the course: how to conduct and sustain the courses, the teaching methods used, the quality and diversity of the pedagogical materials used, the usefulness and relevance of the examples offered, etc.

The advantages of this method consist in the great power of highlighting the quality of different aspects of the course or training program, which is useful for those who design and implement such courses. On the other hand, the disadvantage of the method is that, in general, the questionnaire used rather assesses the course attended and less the level of knowledge or skills acquired (degree of learning) following participation in the course.

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Regarding the methods of evaluation of professional training, five forms of evaluation of such programs are identified, namely:

- evaluation of the program or professional training course for employees (method of the “post-graduation” survey);
- evaluation of the degree or level of accumulation of new knowledge and skills by employees (aspects measured directly by tests or examinations or indirectly by the degree of behavioral changes);
- evaluation of the results and performances of work and activity after graduation of training courses and programs;
- evaluation of the changes occurred in the results and performances registered by the organization;
- evaluating the change related to the contribution or contribution of the employees, after graduating the courses and training programs, to the achievement of the objectives and goals of the organization.

At the same time, a proposed model considers that the evaluation of professional training can be done on 4 levels of evaluation, namely⁶:

1. the level of evaluation of the initial reaction of the participants towards the training process;
2. the level of evaluation of the learning process (to what extent the participants have acquired the knowledge and skills taught);
3. the level of behavioral evaluation (to what extent the course produced among the participants a behavioral change useful for carrying out certain activities);
4. the level of evaluation of the results and the impact of the professional training (to what extent the course had a positive and expected impact on the increase of the results and performances of the employees).

Last but not least, in an attempt to synthesize a way of evaluating vocational training, it

⁶ A. Gorun, D.R.Mateiu, H.Gorun, Elements of public administration, jurisprudence and administrative law - vol. 1,2, Cluj-Napoca, 2002

was concluded that the performance or efficiency of an employee training program can be measured both at the individual level and at the level of the group or organization. In all these cases the main aspects taken into account for the evaluations are related to: (1) the behavioral changes of the employee; (2) the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired by the employee.

In general, we believe that the process of evaluating vocational training should answer the following questions⁷:

- What are the purposes of the evaluation?
- What are the parties involved in the training process?
- What are the methods and techniques of data collection?
- What are the methods of analyzing the resulting data?
- Who are entitled to benefit from the evaluation results?
- What resources do we need to carry out the evaluation?
- How often and what are the evaluation periods?
- What are the measures to improve the training process?

The following methods are indicated as survey tools and methods likely to be used for the evaluation of learning methods and teaching methodologies:

- face-to-face interview with each of the participants;
- questionnaire regarding the diagnosis of the participants' attitudes;
- written factual test;
- observing practical and interpersonal skills;
- group or brainstorming analyzes.

Instead, the following methods are recommended for assessing the level of knowledge and skills⁸:

1. formative evaluation - this method provides “feedback” type information not only to the persons participating in the course but also to those who deal with the teaching of the course, even during the professional training process;

2. normative and criterion evaluation - the normative method consists in comparing and highlighting the different levels of standards (norms) reached by different groups of participants in the same period. The method related to the criterion evaluation also consists in a comparison of the performance level of the different groups of participants according to certain evaluation criteria (speed in thinking, way of expression, certain type of skill - typed quickly and without mistakes);

3 self-assessment (self-assessment) - the method consists in the fact that each participant will evaluate himself without any intervention or outside influence. The advantage of the method is that the participants are the ones who know best what to learn and how much to learn. Therefore, they are most entitled to make the assessment (they have a certain authority in this regard). The danger of this method is that, under certain conditions, students may be either too

⁷ T. Andrei, M. Profiroiu, A. Profiroiu, *The need for professional training of public administration staff*, Bucharest: Economic Publishing House, 2010.

⁸ I. Verboncu. *Management and performances*, University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2008

lenient or too severe with themselves in relation to certain standards.

4. individual “face-to-face” evaluation (pairs) - this method consists of a free discussion (informal rather than formal), between each participant and the evaluator. Also, this variant can be modified in the sense that the persons who have taught the professional training courses can also participate in the discussion. The advantage of this method is that in individual "face-to-face" discussions you can clearly identify whether the subjects tend to exaggerate or distort the facts or reality. Thus, we can consider that this method leads to an extremely honest and faithful assessment of reality.

5. competence-based assessment - this method consists, in fact, in testing the skills (knowledge and skills) acquired through professional training. This test can be in the form of written tests or in the form of a colloquium and aims to survey, in general, as we mentioned, the degree to which participants, following training courses, have acquired certain knowledge or skills. Also, a variant of this method is the evaluation of the activity undertaken by the graduates of the professional training courses, in the sense of comparing the results of their work before the professional training and after the professional training. The advantage of the method is that evaluation refers to the results produced by the learning and training process, which generally means increasing or improving the performance and results of employees.

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