

Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013

Leonardo da Vinci

SINAPSI PROJECT

< French Needs Analysis >

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SMEs's CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

METHODOLOGY

Our European analysis is partially based directly on the CVTS2 made in 1999 and indirectly CVTS3 made in 2005 (i.e. available analysis by country for CVTS3).

For measuring the relevance of our data regarding 1999 and comparisons with the result of 2005, we used the criteria of the percentage of participation in CVT (i.e. all enterprises) during these years (comparisons with CVTS 1 are not relevant due to differences in coverage, definitions and methodology).

For all forms of CVT, there is a difference of only 4% between participation in CVT in 1999 and in 2005 (all organisations), e.g. relevant data.

SYNTHESIS OF THE STATE OF ART OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING (CVT) IN EUROPE (abstract of analysis from CEDEFOP, EEO)

Although investment in CVT activities is commonly accepted nowadays as a key element underpinning growth, competitiveness and social cohesion, the available empirical evidence on the issue shows that training opportunities are unevenly distributed among countries and individuals according to their personal characteristics.

There are large cross-country variations in the incidence and intensity of continuing training for adults. Focusing on the results collected from the third Eurostat CVT survey (CVTS-3, preliminary data), it is possible to identify, for instance, a pronounced gap in participation in continuing training courses between the Nordic countries and the southern and some eastern ones

Most of the training is entirely funded by employers. In addition, existing empirical evidence also shows that most formal training provided is quite general and, therefore, provides skills that are transferable across firms

Employer-sponsored training is unequally distributed among specific individuals; those with higher educational attainment or those employed in high-skilled occupations/high in the hierarchical ladder have greater access to learning opportunities than others. Conversely, low-skilled workers receive less training. This is important, as it shows that job-related

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training does not compensate differences in initial education; these differences even increase during working life.

Employees have more opportunities for employer-sponsored training when they are employed by large enterprises, they are young or they are men (although this gender-related difference is not observed in all countries and it is partially due to sector considerations). Employers are also less likely to include immigrants and involuntary part-time and temporary workers when selecting which employees to train.

This confirms the well-known phenomenon that continuing training is unevenly distributed among individuals and enterprises, resulting in several disadvantaged groups compared to other privileged groups in their access to training activities (especially enterprise-financed training activities).

Despite the positive relationship between continuing training activities and growth, competitiveness and social cohesion, market forces on their own lead to under-provision of training opportunities, especially for certain groups of low-skilled and disadvantaged workers (which explains in part their low participation in CVT activities).

This situation comes from a range of market failures, e.g. situations in which markets do not efficiently allocate goods and services.

These market failures comprise situations of labour-market imperfections, capital-market imperfections, and information asymmetries; and they result in several barriers underpinning either the employees' limited demand for training or the employers' limited supply of training (especially for certain groups), that can be summarised as follows:

According to employers:

- employers often lack adequate information on different training-related items (e.g. their specific training needs, available training supply, best ways to organise it, effectiveness of training, potential returns on training investment, etc.), so they ultimately decide to invest their limited resources in other areas (purchase of machinery and technology, improvements in physical plant, etc.), where they may feel that the payoff will be greater, or at least more immediate (uncertainty about return on training investment)
- employers are particularly worried by poaching and 'free-rider' practices, as other enterprises can hire newly trained workers or trained workers can seek out new jobs in other enterprises. These concerns often lead employers either to invest only in firm-specific training for their workers, to cut back on their spending in training or to avoid investing in training altogether. This situation particularly affects smaller enterprises, those enterprises in sectors with many firms or in low-tech industries where skills can be easily transferred to other enterprises
- employers tend to choose training investments from which they expect a high return for the business. This fact may explain why training tends to concentrate on workers who are already highly-qualified or on those who have a main supervisory role in the enterprise, where this perception is reinforced when overhead costs of training are

taken into account. This situation leaves out low-skilled or older workers, plus immigrants and those on involuntary part-time and temporary work. This reason may also explain the relatively low supply offered by enterprises to women compared to their male peers, as employers may expect lower benefit in the case of women (due to career breaks, maternity leave, etc.)

- small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular may lack the economies of scale that can make training more feasible for larger firms. They may also have fewer funds to invest in training and encounter greater difficulties in obtaining both financing for such investments and information on existing supply. In addition to this, smaller firms may not feel the need for training as much as larger firms do, as smaller enterprises tend to be less likely to adopt new technologies than larger ones

Smaller firms, more than larger ones, may also feel they cannot afford to have workers take the time away from their work. Fears about poaching appear to be even stronger among smaller businesses, which tend to have higher employee turnover rates.

According to employees:

- in several cases, employees might be little interested in firm-based continuing training because it is not clear that this training will lead to higher remuneration, which reduces the workers' incentives to invest in their own human capital
- often, those adults most in need of education and training (e.g. low-educated or low-skilled individuals) are also those least aware of that need or of potential benefits from training (cognitive barriers), which results in a lack of motivation. Additionally, these workers may find it difficult to negotiate with their employers about the content and quality of their training need. Finally, they are also particularly affected by financial constraints (low education is often linked with low-income individuals) or personal barriers (e.g. senior workers think they are too old to learn)
- individuals working in large firms may be more motivated to get involved in training as they usually have greater opportunities to benefit through internal promotion or reassignment within the enterprise
- lower demand appears to account for lower training participation by older workers. In such cases, labour-market imperfections affecting the distribution of training benefits and the length of employers' and employees' pay-back periods are perhaps behind this pattern
- time constraints, lack of support services and lack of flexible training arrangements are also important barriers among adults for not being able to undertake learning, especially among those adults with family commitments.
- In fact, this group is less likely to exploit training opportunities available outside normal working hours, since these make them stay away from home for even longer hours (the same argument may apply for part-time employees due to family reasons).

In addition to these two types of barrier, it should not be forgotten that the existence of other institution-related barriers, such as the complex diversity of institutions (firms, trade associations, the public education system and private institutions), may provide learning in a fragmented and not transparent manner, or the inexistence of suitable incentives to reach those most in need.

Enterprises offering CVT, as a proportion of all enterprises, according to class of enterprise size

	10-49 employees	50-249 employees	250 or more employees
B	66	93	100
DK	95	98	100
D	71	87	98
EL	11	43	78
E	31	58	86
F	70	93	98
IRL	75	98	100
I	20	48	81
L	67	83	99
NL	85	96	98
A	68	91	96
P	17	46	78
FIN	78	97	99
S	88	99	99
UK	85	91	98
NO	84	97	100
BG	24	34	62
CZ	62	84	96
EE	58	85	96
HU	32	51	79
LT	37	60	80
LV	49	70	91
PL	36	52	63
RO	8	13	38
SI	35	72	96

Source CVTS2 UE Eurostat

In short

- Large enterprises invest considerably more working time in their employees. continuing training than SMEs.
- Irrespective of the varying level from country to country, the level of working time spent on continuing training is affected by enterprise size.

- There are not many differences between small (10-49 employees) and medium-sized enterprises (50-249 employees).
- The differences are more particularly marked between small enterprises and large ones (250 and more employees).
- The exceptions to the general trend are in Scandinavia. In Denmark, the proportion of course hours in medium-sized enterprises is the same as in large ones. In Sweden, the proportion in the smallest size class (10-49 employees) is slightly higher than in the middle one.
- Before joining the European Union Countries from Central Europe had a highest intensity of continuing vocational training in small enterprises certainly due to the necessity to update their CVT according to European criteria but nowadays, only the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Estonia come anywhere near European criteria of CVT while Poland, Bulgaria and Lithuania are much more behind.

SYNTHESIS OF THE STATE OF ART OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING (CVT) IN FRANCE COMPARED WITH EUROPE

In France, continuing vocational training has a lot in common with similar training programs offered in other industrialized countries and their specific approaches for to political, cultural and economical reasons.

Economical development that occurred in France in the period from the early fifties up to the seventies named "Les Trente Glorieuses" in France, and development of technical processes of production made most advanced countries realize that continuing vocational training is a necessity and it should be included in contractual negotiations between workers and companies.

In 1965, the B.I.T. in its 49 th Conference, took a resolution to give workers special paid vacations to be used for training.

For instance, this resolution has been applied since 1971 in France, since 1973 in Belgium and in Italy, since 1974 in Sweden.

During the eighties, the unemployed people were more and more involved in continuing vocational training and a financial participation has become obligatory for companies (i.e. France, Italy, Belgium, Spain...). Additionally annual plans of lifelong learning programs were elaborated (i.e. France, Austria, Finland...).

In Europe, continuing vocational training is based on the all activities which focus on planned training which is totally or partially covered by employers. This training includes:

- stages inside the company
- stages outside the company
- training for professional situations
- participation in seminars, conferences related to training
- other professional experience in other department/jobs of the company
- self-training (i.e. e-learning...)

In France, the most significant percentage of the total amount of the salaries in Europe is dedicated to the continuing vocational training based, overall, on training for professional situations (like in Germany), while in South Europe internships are more common (i.e. Italy, Spain etc.) and North Europe, (as Germany, Holland, Luxembourg...) conferences are privileged.

This approach to the situation of continuing vocational training can be divided in two main axes:

1°) training with initiative of the employers (strong in France and in Scandinavia, spread in Holland and UK, medium in Germany, Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg and Ireland, weak in Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain)

2°) training with initiative of the workers (strong in Scandinavia, spread in Holland and UK, medium in France, weak in Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain and Ireland)

According a methodological point of view, we have two main criteria for knowing the importance of CVT in a country.

1°) the number of trained people (note that we are considering the CVT actions paid by enterprises regarding the number of trained people)

In France, the number of workers who have benefited from a CVT action was one million per year in 1970 and it increased up to about ten millions thirty years later, in 2000.

However, it is often difficult to really know what the true number is because enterprises declare actions not always connected to CVT, even the real number of CVT actions is high (between 8 and 10 millions).

2°) the number of hours dedicated to CVT

In 1970, an average medium duration of a CVT action was 74 hours corresponding to 78 000 000 hours for 1 000 000 trained people by enterprises.

In 2000, this duration was 40 hours corresponding to 150 000 000 hours for nearly 4 000 000 trained people by enterprises.

This evolution is explained by the fact that enterprises finance shorter CVT actions focused on "maintenance and improvement of knowledge" (66% in 1970 and 82% in 2000), while the State is financing much longer CVT actions (medium duration: 190 hours in 1970 and 275 hours in 2000 for a CVT focused on basic knowledge and social promotion).

In 2005 EUR 25.9 billion was spent on continuing vocational training and apprenticeships. This expenditure has been rising steadily. 40% of this sum (EUR 10 billion) was spent by companies on training their employees and 15% was spent on training of jobseekers. The nation does make a substantial investment in training (1.5% of GNP) and the overall rate of access to continuing training has grown

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constantly since 1974. There has, however, also been a lot of criticism in recent years for the system being too complex, unequal and inefficient. Thirty years after the Delors Act of 1971, on which the French training system is based, vocational training faces the challenge of globalisation, which requires developing the skills of labour force and adapting it to new challenges. It is confronted also with a new demand to protect occupational paths. A reform was introduced in 2003 (the National Intersectoral Agreement, ANI, incorporated into the law of 4 May 2004 on lifelong learning) to address these challenges.

In 2005, 4.5 million adults took part in lifelong training, of which 700,000 were jobseekers and about 3,800,000 employees.

The rate of access of employees to vocational training grew until 1998 (37.7%), then fell by 2003, when it stood at 35.2%, but has since undergone a sustained growth, reaching 41.5% in 2005.

However, this rise in the rate of access masks some variations and inequalities in accessing the training, particularly by economic sector and by socio-economical category and company size:

- 1°) by economic sector, there is a very high rate of access to training among the employees in highly capital-intensive sectors, e.g. in aerospace (88.9%), banking (73.1%) and the nuclear industries (61%), whereas the rate of access is lower in the traditional sectors such as woodworking (19.2%), and clothing and textiles (20.6%).
- 2°) by socio-professional category and company size, the rate of access of a manual worker in a company with fewer than 20 employees is 7.9%, as against 64% for a manager in a company of 2,000 employees and more.

Rate of access to training by social category, depending on company size, in 2004 (%)

Size of company	Manual workers	Clerical workers	Technical and supervisory staff	Engineers and managers	TOTAL
10-19	7.9	11.5	24.1	20.1	12.5
20-49	14.5	12.0	30.8	29.8	19.7
50-249	26.1	29.4	46.6	47.3	33.9
250-499	31.8	35.7	54.5	57.6	42.1
500-1999	35.7	43.3	60.4	63.0	49.2
2000 +	41.7	39.8	65.7	64.1	50.4
TOTAL	29.0	29.3	55.0	53.2	39.0

Source: Tax declarations, no. 2483 – Statistics produced by CEREQ

The access to vocational training is unequal but, even more significantly, the system is far from giving a second chance to those people who left initial training without qualifications. Continuing training does, in fact, seem more accessible to those who already have a high level of initial qualifications.

Rate of access to training by the level of qualifications

Qualification Level	No qualifications	CAP/BEP	Brevet (GCSE equivalent)	Baccalaureate	Higher education
Rate of access to training (employees)	13.6%	23.4%	25.2%	33.7%	44.3%

Source: French Senate Report 2007 and CEREQ

In short:

- companies tend to favour employees in the highest level positions or those best integrated into the company
- these people tend to benefit from longer periods of training,
- this situation has a limited Impact of continuing training on careers
- the outcomes of continuing training initiatives do not seem so prominent as the results of initial training
- the qualification obtained through initial education remains, therefore, key to a career within a company, and to the speed of the return to employment
- France has the highest proportion of hours out of the total number of external participation hours according to providers of continuing training
- In France, only 24% of enterprises are not carrying out either training courses or any other forms of CVT
- Public institutions (State, Regions...) finances VET actions for unemployed people when enterprises pay VET actions for their own workers.

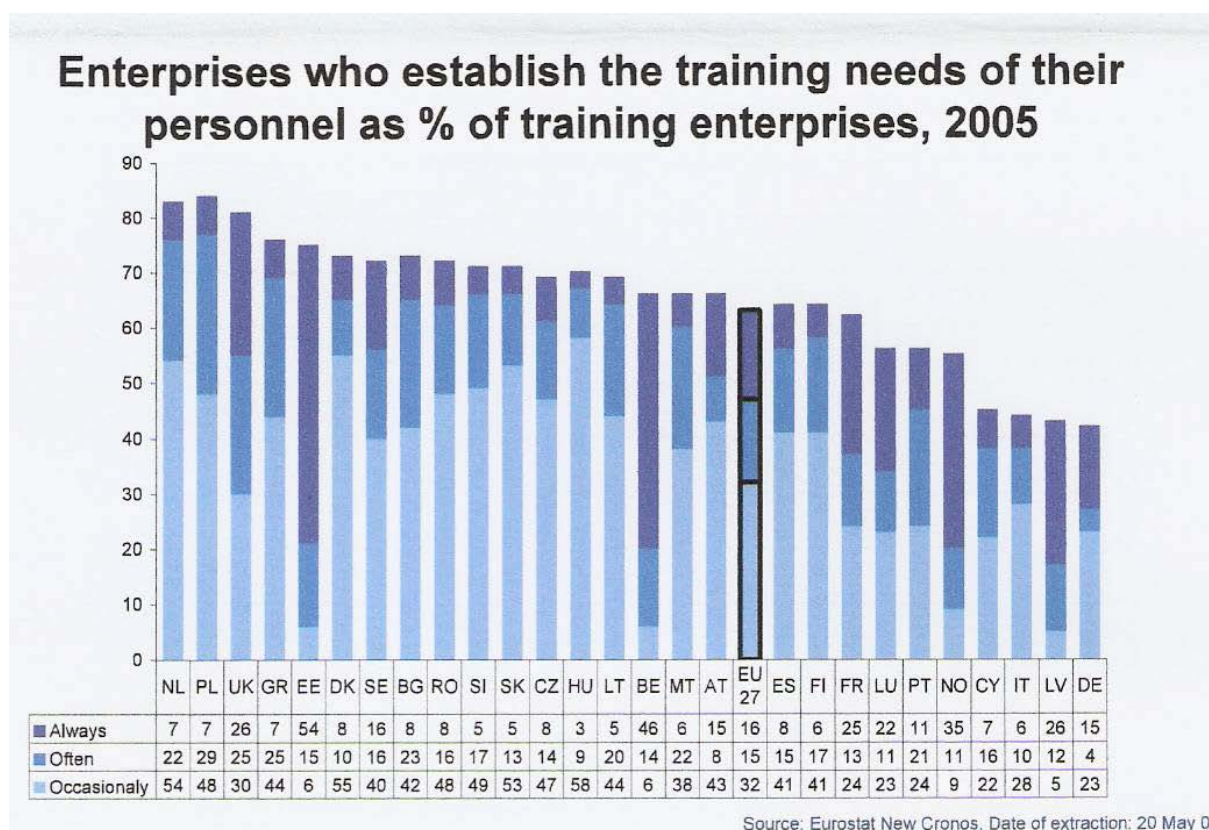
Evolution:

- the Law on Social Modernisation of 2002 established the principle of the validation of work-based experience (Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience / VEA), based on the idea of validating by certification the skills acquired during work and not solely from training
- the 2004 Law introduced the Individual Training Right (or DIF)⁵⁹ and the Professional Development Contract
- the 2008 Law intended to put users in the heart of the CVT reducing inequalities which we described according three orientations concerning the suitability between CVT actions and users, the suitability between cost and quality of CVT actions and the simplification of VAE

N.B.: the 2008 Law will be reduce the difference between large enterprises and SMEs regarding the access to CVT

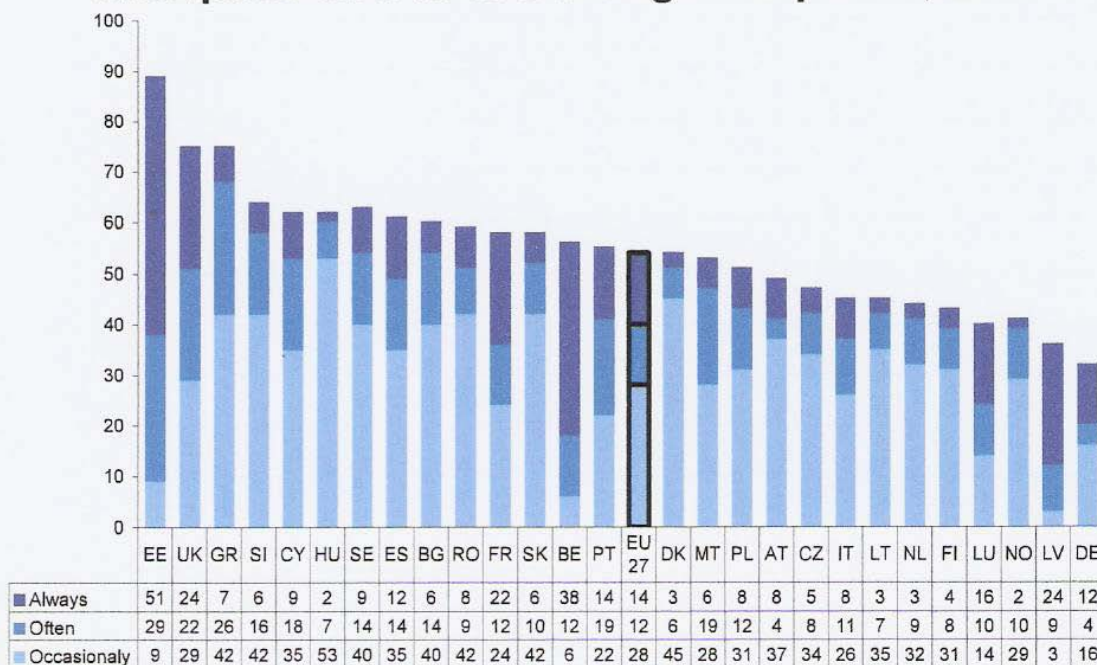
AN APPROACH TO COMPANIES' NEEDS IN EUROPE

Neither of European studies and surveys gave any comparable data on companies's needs but just some basic information.



Even though they provide a training field they do not consider the types of skills needed.

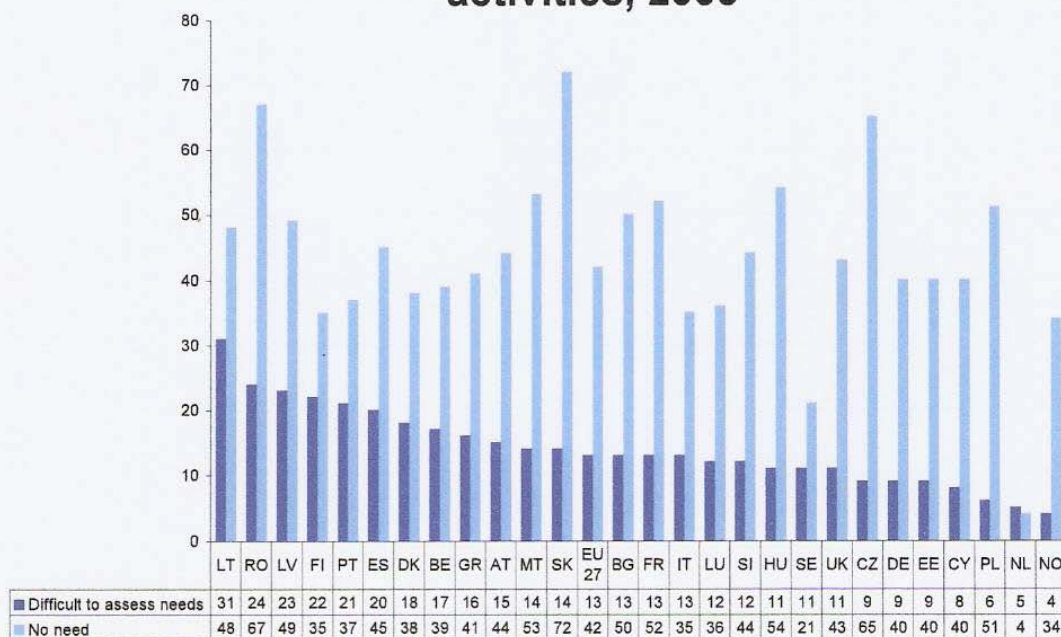
Enterprises who assess the future skills needs of the enterprise as a % of training enterprises, 2005



Source: Eurostat New Cronos, Date of extraction: 20 May 08

However, it is possible to see for what reasons enterprises do not provide CVT courses or other forms of CVT for employees.

Reasons impacting scope of enterprise's CVT activities, 2005



Source: Eurostat New Cronos, Date of extraction: 20 May 08

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The main answer is that employees already have skills competences that correspond to enterprises' current needs (e.g. no need).

Even though it is difficult to assess the CVT needs of enterprises, we can extrapolate interesting data from enterprises offering continuing training according to branches of the economy.

Enterprises offering continuing training, as a proportion of all enterprises, according to branches of the economy (%)

	NACE D	NACE G	NACE J	NACE K	NACE O	Other
B	68	72	100	86	75	63
DK	95	100	100	98	100	91
D	73	83	100	87	89	65
EL	17	18	66	39	12	15
E	38	41	74	41	33	29
F	77	76	88	81	80	69
IRL	90	77	90	90	58	72
I	23	25	71	27	14	23
L	75	75	89	80	80	59
NL	90	87	97	90	88	86
A	73	74	97	87	79	65
P	19	24	67	43	29	18
FIN	77	85	100	86	93	79
S	90	94	100	90	100	84
UK	86	83	94	92	89	86
NO	85	87	98	96	92	80
BG	29	25	47	36	24	29
CZ	70	63	89	77	70	67
EE	60	60	89	70	49	66
HU	34	39	79	48	35	31
LT	41	39	69	54	42	45
LV	53	51	84	60	60	51
PL	35	33	61	55	46	43
RO	12	9	27	21	12	11
SI	53	30	66	60	69	46

Source CVT2 EU Eurostat

Nomenclature

NACE D: Processing industry

NACE G: Trade; maintenance and repair of motor vehicles and consumer goods

NACE J: Credit and insurance industry

NACE K: Real estate activities, renting of movable property, provision of services predominantly for enterprises

NACE O: Provision of other public and personal services

Other: Mining and extraction of stone and earth, supply of energy and water, construction trade, hotel and restaurant trade, transport and communication

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MAIN MESSAGE

Credit and insurance industry is the branch having the highest rate of enterprises offering CVT for all countries with the exception of Slovenia (e.g. 3 percentage points more for the sector of “Provision of other public and personal services”).

The field of “Trade in and maintenance/repair of motor vehicles and consumer goods” and the sector of “Processing industry” come last in nine and eight countries respectively.

This observation confirms the analysis concerning the difference between unqualified and qualified employees who are much more trained.

In the same way, in the most important training countries (e.g. Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, United Kingdom) the proportion of the most training countries offering CVT does not fall below 85% (90% in Denmark) in any sector.

For all forms of CVT, we know the proportion of enterprises that participated in CVT actions in 1999 and in 2005 (i.e. respectively 87% and 91%). So, there had been an increase in the proportion of enterprises that had participated in CVT actions (i.e. courses or other types of vocational training).

There has been a significant increase of attendance at conferences or workshops, and of self-directed learning (11% and 9% respectively).

The main CVT actions were courses to do with personal skills and working life (26%).

NEEDS ANALYSIS IN FRANCE

For valuating as well as possible needs analysis of enterprises and more particularly SMEs, we have performed a survey made by French Chambers of Commerce, in 2008, a survey made by The Region of Centre of France concerning CVT in enterprises, in 2005 and our own survey from our clients since a few years.

THE SURVEY MADE BY THE REGION OF CENTRE

It is a test panel as an example of a region in France for comparing the results of this survey with the national one and our own survey.

GOALS AND METHODOLOGY

GOALS

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The survey made from businessmen, managing directors and human resources managers was focused on three main objectives:

1. To analyze the practices of the companies regarding CVT
2. To analyze the understanding the companies have about the role of CVT and to evaluate their level of receptivity compared to the current stakes
3. To determine expectations and needs of the companies

METHODOLOGY

The survey was performed directly via a telephone interview with a panel representing 800 businessmen and managing directors (also human resources managers when the top management was not available).

A sample was created in order to obtain the best representative of companies of the area according to the sizes of the companies, professional sector and geographical establishments.

The continuing professional training sector is often perceived by companies like complex, even constraining. A questionnaire was created according to these particularities: popularization of the vocabulary, definition of certain terms or concepts. The questionnaire brought certain managers of undertaking (especially in SEMs) to wonder for the first time about certain aspects of training: its bond with the productivity, the perpetuation of young companies, its role in the development of the territories, his relationship with social and professional advancement of workers.

From this point of view, the questionnaire also played a “teaching” role and a sensitization role with the stakes of the CVT.

This synthesis aims to put stress on some of the results of the survey at the same time distinguishing analysis of the practices of training in companies and the analysis of the opinions and expectations of the managers.

THE SURVEY CREATED BY FRENCH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE THROUGH FRANCE

GOALS AND METHODOLOGY

GOALS

In order to answer as well as possible the new stakes of the economy and the society, the Chambers of Commerce undertook, these last years, a great movement of modernization. They set up the States General to engage a territorial and multisector reflection through all France for better knowing the needs and expectations of the companies.

The ACFCI (Assembly of the French Chambers of Commerce), in partnership with the agency Image et Stratégie, wished to interrogate businessmen in order to learn about to know their expectations and requirements for management of competences.

METHODOLOGY

For the realization of this survey were questioned a national sample representative of 500 businessmen of SMEs from 20 to 500 workers. The representative of the sample is ensured by the method of the quotas (branches of industry, size of the company and area). The Interview was made by telephone on the workplace.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEYS

PRELIMINARY METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS

The amount of the total percentage could not be 100% because we excluded all the irrelevant answers regarding our analysis (i.e. for instance, questions directly pertaining to the role of the Chambers of Commerce).

Manager(s) is a keyword which corresponds to businessmen, company heads, managing directors, and human resources directors who participated in the surveys

PRACTICES AND ROLE OF THE COMPANIES REGARDING CVT

MAIN MESSAGE

- the CVT is extensively apprehended as a tool of workers' adaptation to the methods and the working station (for 86,90% of managers)
- surveys confirm the trend of the state of art that we mentioned concerning the practices of training in the companies: the rate of resort to the CVT increases proportionally with the size of the company
- The system penalizes the employees of SMEs. Workers of very small enterprises are almost excluded from the existing devices
- The younger the company, the less training it offers to its employees.
- companies tend to favour employees of the highest level positions or those best integrated into the company and having the best qualification obtained through initial education (directors, engineers and the middle management consume 69% of the CVT actions; Highly skilled workers have a significantly better opportunity of access to CVT actions; Chances of access to CVT actions of unskilled workers are five times less than for managers)
- the companies seek above all the very operational profiles; It should be emphasized that management and commercial schools profiles (25%) as well as schools of engineers' profiles (23%) are also appraised by the companies
- the companies mainly distinguish VCT actions as experience
- the companies translate their needs concerning CVT in top with their sector and their trade

NEEDS OF FRENCH COMPANIES

63% of businessmen perceive CVT actions as an investment but 37% still regard CVT as a legal obligation.

According to most managers, the CVT actions are too general and not enough adapted to companies' needs (53,29% of answers). The two most common reasons given by managers for explaining their opinion are the following:

- The CVT actions do not integrate enough the self-training and the support of trainees (tutoring, tools): 30.24% of the answers
- The difficulty of measuring the contributions of the CVT in the development of the company: 23.05% of the answers. The company has difficulties with to include CVT in a long-term strategy of acquisition and development of competences.

The managers express three priority needs:

1. "To evaluate the effects of the CVT" (32,45% of the answers).
2. "To select a training centre" (32,05% of the answers).
3. "To build the plan of CVT" - i.e. to identify the requirements in CVT, to define the contents and the adapted modes of CVT - (26,60% of the answers).

To improve the effectiveness of the training "en alternance" (i.e. training given partly in an educational institution and partly in the workplace), managers express four axes of progress:

1. To allow a young person to spend more time in company and less in a CVT centre (23.70% of the answers).
2. To organize trainings for tutors (22.40% of the answers).
3. To encourage trainers to spend more time in a company (17.21% of answers).
4. To remunerate the company's tutors (16.88% of the answers).

All in all, managers would like to see prioritized the following three directives pertaining to CVT:

1. To better adapt a school to the world of the company: 52.53% of the answers.
2. To better adapt an offer of CVT to new companies' needs: 28.50 of the answers.
3. To allow employees to advance in their career: 10.90% of the answers.

COMPETENCES MANAGEMENT:

The management of competences is a true priority in the development of companies. It is understood as a principal priority for the majority of companies and then the innovation and evolutions of ICT systems.

Only half of the companies set up a policy of management of competences.

These companies are based initially on their professional federations to set up this policy.

Main conclusions of this survey:

The management of competences arises like an element determining the development of companies for their company manager. For as much, only a small part of companies included it in their practice (more the large companies that the small ones).

The professional federations are the “natural” council of the companies wishing to obtain a policy of management of competences.

For the basic education, company heads seek before all those providing them very operational profiles.

For the CVT, they prioritize those in top with their sector and their trade (organizations and schools of the professional branches...).

The image of a company (the mark, the environment of the company and more largely the quality of life to work) is the major argument of approximately 6 companies out of 10 to attract young people.

The companies following a policy of competences management are also based, in addition to the image of their company, on “the professional prospects evolution” to recruit.

The main courses are:

- English (11% of the total activity of training, in France of which 77% for common English, 9% for business English and 7% for technical English according to Place de la Formation)
- computing and office automation (11% of the total activity of training, in France)
- soft skills as personal development (time/planning management, stress management, to speak in public/ during a conference)
- commercial training
- safety, prevention

N.B.: management training was at the third place in 2007 and at the eighth one in 2008

TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS ACCORDING TO THE SURVEY OF MF & PARTNERS CONSULTING

METHODOLOGY

A Three-year Survey

This analysis of training needs of trainees and companies comes out of a 3-year survey conducted in France in 2006-2008. It is based on the analysis of the questionnaires on we sent to companies directions in order to assess their needs, on the reports on our meetings with the directions of some companies and on the feed-back from training sessions and training department managers.

Year	Number of training courses	Courses designed for big groups and SMBs ¹	Number of trainees by course	Total number of trainees
2006	24	24	8	192
2007	23	23	8	184
2008	25	25	8	200
Total :	72	72		576

MAIN POINTS

Companies needs are frequently expressed in an informal way

It often happens that, for an educator and a trainee to meet, a whole chain of go-betweens have to intervene.

The training manager is in charge of the training needs assessment inside a company. He or she introduces the need to a Client Relationship Manager of a training service company, who in his/her turn conveys the demand to the final service provider, an independent educator or a training centre.

This process is often informal. According to the AFNOR (French Association for Normalization), the demand in vocational training should be expressed as follows: "I wish the trainees who have finished the course to be capable of..."

In reality this request is often sounds like "I want a training course in project management." If this situation suites the service providers quite good, as thus they have a certain breathing space for their commercial offer, it often creates a risk of incompliance of a training course to

¹ Small and middle-sized businesses

the expectations of its participants, and educators often face the situation where they have to adapt their courses to trainees' needs in real time in order to diminish the gap between what they meant to present initially and what was really demanded by the participants.

SMBs frequently express their training needs in an informal way

In small and middle-sized businesses it is often the top managers who express themselves the training need. Their approach is generally practical: « to be able to do this and that... ».

Most frequently small companies have low budgets for training needs and want the best quality-price ratio. So, it is random for them to accept a training course whose benefice is unlikely to be immediate.

They are generally interested in short-termed courses strictly suited to their work scope: one day or a half a day. Due to the small workforce, the absence of one person has a strong impact and, consequently, training needs are secondary compared to production imperatives.

The demand of training is most often made orally. The main advantage in such situations is that the actual educator is generally the direct interlocutor of the company top manager. Thus, he receives first-hand information and can make the client give him the necessary precisions right away.

The inconvenient is that it may happen that the trainees are less motivated by the training as the greatest part of its contents has been defined by their employer.

Big companies express their training needs formally

Only public authorities and big companies "with organizational restraints" usually develop training management procedures in control and, sometimes, guaranty-of-engagement purposes.

Such procedures comprise training needs analysis, preparation of scoping statements, assessment of trainees' and their superiors' implication during training sessions, definition of training goals and progress plan, specific demands for individual follow-up, assessment of starting and resulting levels of trainees competence, immediate and delayed assessment of training achievements, etc.

These procedures essentially aim to verify that training service providers' activity complies with "the best practices", which is often quite useful.

Unfortunately, we noticed that training needs analysis turned out to be quite vague and was limited to making a choice of training courses out of a catalogue, even in big groups with professionals employed for that purpose.

Said procedures may also aim to guarantee trainees and their superiors implication in vocational training process, in the hope to assure better assimilation of new knowledge (see page 24, e.g., preliminary questionnaire filled in before training session).

Demand for post-training follow-up is inexistent

A request for the setting up of a progress plan happens once in a while. The demand for post-training follow-up is much more unusual, insomuch that today we outline this service in our training offers, and in ten years we rendered this service only two or three times, usually for the benefice of our best trainees.

Insufficient assimilation of resulting knowledge

We esteem that the need in post-training follow-up is practically non existent due to the insufficient assimilation by clients-companies of the resulting knowledge and competence of the trainees.

Indeed, when a trainee returns back to work, he or she is rarely asked to make a compte-rendu of training achievements. Some of the superiors judiciously ask the trainees to outline the keystones of the training course for their colleagues in a discovery report or during a knowledge-share session.

In our opinion, these practices are good ways to fix the training achievements, but they are extremely rarely used.

Another factor of said bad assimilation of training results is the fact that, for a progress plan of a training course to be useful, it should be set by the trainee's immediate supervisor.

Unfortunately, the latter is frequently very busy and not anxious to add this task to his agenda, especially when he or she is not expressly asked to do so by the general direction.

When such practices exist, they usually are subject-matter of long formal procedures and how-to-do instructions. In other words, the resulting competence of a trainee turns out to be not so important, when the follow-up practices are too formal.

Satisfying a training need

What is the right training course? How to define if your expectations with regard to the training session are satisfied? It is not as easy as that to give answers to these questions. It is true that if define the success of a training session in terms like "after the training course I shall be able capable of...", to assess the satisfaction level means to test that capacity. "Are you capable of..." and also: "How can I determine if the trainee is capable of...?".

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Issues related to satisfaction assessment

Companies who pay for their employees' continuing training are interested to know if this is a good investment by means of trainees' satisfaction assessment. The latter often takes form of various questionnaires. But is this solution really efficient? Certain factorial analyses of training questionnaires, made several years ago, show that approximately 80% of answers were given in accordance with global level of satisfaction of the trainees.

Thus, we can say that, either a trainee would be globally satisfied with everything, including with things which have no direct connection to the training course itself, like restaurant, either a trainee is unsatisfied in some respect, but this will have a negative impact on his assessment of other features of the training course, such as contents, even if it has nothing to do with the actual reason for his annoyance.

The recent surveys regarding services' consumers affirm this phenomenon. There is a halo effect in consumers answers, consequently, very detailed questionnaires turns out to be of no use. The challenge of the survey was to find out which most important question is to be asked in order to have useful feedback and take into account personal attitude of the service consumer. This question is "Would you recommend this training to your colleagues? Please answer in the form of percentage from 0 to 100 %".

The interpretation of the answers is as follows. If the note is situated between 90 and 100 %, the trainee will recommend the course; if the note ranges between 70 and 90%, the trainee won't recommend the course, but will remain neutral; if the note is inferior to 70%, the trainee is likely to denigrate the course (see page 27, e.g., evaluation form filled in after training session).

Synthesis

Vocational training needs are still too frequently expressed in general « topic » terms. Best practices that exist in this respect are still far from being in general use.

In reality, companies-clients as well as trainees have great difficulty in defining their training needs, and a whole range of absolutely different training offers may be made in answer to one and the same demand and considered as satisfying by the trainees, although the courses suggested does not develop the same competences.

In the same manner, the needs satisfaction analysis shows that one of the main features of a successful training session is trainee's active participation in the definition of training goals.

It is possible to conduct a precise assessment of one's individual capacities and competences, but, being expensive, such an assessment is rarely made. It is generally replaced by self-assessment tests which are not at all reliable, but much less expensive.

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Conclusion

Strangely enough, even if SMBs, having considerable money, staff and time-related restraints, resort less than big companies to vocational training, however, their need in said training is not less important.

Nevertheless, this need has to be directly defined with the top manager.

For that reason, we recommend to favour interviewing techniques instead of written questionnaires that are very often ignored by the companies, either small or big.

In Europe, as much as in France, companies look for vocational trainings which are practical, that is, those which are closely related to the scope of trainee's professional functions.

The process of educational system harmonisation in Europe, for example, the LMD² reform, also implies the harmonisation of continuing vocational training system, which means certain amelioration of the latter, in order to favour successful integration and continuing vocational education of the European workers and citizens.

The functional approach to this issue helps to establish an accurate list of jobs and functions and to define necessary qualifications and competences requested for each management position, including middle-management, at any levels (secretary, administration, commercial, technical positions, etc.) and for any activity field.

Such professional competences are closely related to personal skills of an individual, which may be extrapolated from professional skills and improved as well, independently of each individual personality, but in the manner which takes into account each one's personal and cultural background.

The seriousness of this challenge is of the kind to allow facilitating, almost "automating" of companies' training selection, with the help of a range of possible scenarios, taking into consideration various situations the employees of different levels have to deal with. This approach should also help to speed up training results assessment and to better define their impact.

The French approach draws on knowledge (savoir), skills (savoir-faire) and social competences (savoir-être). Individual competences relate to each other and are difficult to disassociate from the overall occupational profile. Competences can be understood as dynamic processes of learning, developing and passing on knowledge. France has a competence-based qualifications framework. Competences have been derived from job content analysis and serve as a basis for both curriculum development and assessment (e.g., French model competence by CEDEFOP).

Individual competences in France, subject-matter of specific training:

- Partnerships establishment

² Re-organizes the higher education system in three main levels: License, Master and Doctorate.
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- Contract negotiations
- Recruitment
- Staff management
- Team work management
- Work instructions
- Organization of meetings
- Presentation of expositions and shows
- Team work supervision
- Conflict resolution
- Efficient listening
- Team working
- Networking
- Network management
- Stress and stressing environment management
- Meeting running
- Public speeches
- Report and minutes drafting
- Interviewing
- Project defending
- Workshop conception
- Running a workshop
- Knowledge of a team functioning
- Practice of group dynamics
- Generating feedback from team-members
- Teamwork continuity management
- Volunteers' management
- Working with amateurs
- Mediation situation analysis
- Open-house day organization
- Conception of assessment tools
- Coordination between different stages of an event
- Teamwork leading
- Rules enforcement

Preliminary Questionnaire for the Project Management Training

Hello,

You are about to start the Project Management Training. We kindly ask you to answer this questionnaire in order to help us to know you better and to adapt our session to your expectations, individual issues and needs. This information will help your consultant and educator Romain Bami to assess, analyze and synthesize the needs of the participants to the session.

Your collaboration is essential; the information given in your answers will be dealt with in strict confidence and for the needs of the Training session only.

L'ISM and Romain Bami are bound by the Ethical Principles and Standards and by professional confidentiality. We guarantee strict confidentiality of all the information you give us.

Thank you and see you soon.

Best regards,
Romain Bami

Training course name : project management Session date : 2008

Last name: First name : Age :

WORK AND BACKGROUND:

Initial education:

Function:

Phone:

Mail :

◆ You and your business :

Outline your work experience :

Actual position :

◆ Since when have you been manager? :

◆ Give some details on the project you are in charge of (importance, duration, budget, etc.)

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◆ How many persons are involved in the project(s) you manage? What services (departments)?
Maximum number of contributors?:

◆ According to you, what is the most difficult management challenge in a project? :

◆ Please give some organizational details by answering to the following:

1. 'I succeed to structure a project' yes / no
2. 'I know what a WBS is' yes / no
3. 'I know what a Task flowchart is' yes / no
4. 'I know how to divide a project into several elementary parts' yes / no
5. 'I use / have already used planning software tools like MS Project' yes / no
6. 'I know to identify the critical path' yes / no
7. If your task is behind schedule, do you manage to identify the consequences of this delay for the whole project and to reschedule the due date of the project? yes / no
8. How do you follow up on your projects? Using what tools?:
9. Is it one and the same person who is in charge of the project follow-up and of the budget management? :
10. What is most important in your projects, the deadlines and milestones or the budget?:
milestones/ budget
11. Who is in charge of the project resources management? :
.....

◆ What are the main three difficulties of a project management you would like to be able to resolve? :

◆ What are your expectations concerning this session and its contents? Would you like to study any specific issues? If yes, which exactly? :

◆ According to you, this session will be successful and useful if:

**Thank you.
See you soon at the session**

Evaluation Form

Please help us to make our training course better
We kindly ask you to answer to the following questions

Company Name: _____
Your name: _____
E-mail: _____
Phone: _____

Course: **PROJECT MGT TOOLS**

Date: **January 28 and 29, 2008**

Trainer **Romain BRAMI**

Company Training manager: _____

Would you recommend this course to a colleagues or a friend? (0% absolutely no; 100% absolutely yes)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Why? _____

What are we to change in the first place in order to improve the rating?

I. Organization & environment

Reception
Breaks organisation
Study rooms equipment and comfort
Meals

Very Good Good Sufficient Insufficient Bad

With regard to the organization & environment, do you have any ...

positive remarks: _____

negative remarks: _____

II. Course

The contents are up to your expectations
The contents correspond to what announced
Structure et rythm of the session
Study materials and practical exercises
Course duration

Very Good Good Sufficient Insufficient Bad

☐ too short

☐ good

☐ too long

In your opinion, what is the strong points of this course?

Which of them will be of use to you?

III Educator

Presentation skills
Competence and knowledge
Availability

Very Good Good Sufficient Insufficient Bad

How would you describe his additional value to the course?

IV. Group of Trainees

Homogeneity
Motivation
Number of trainees

Very Good Good Sufficient Insufficient Bad

With regard to the group, do have any ...

positive remarks: _____

negative remarks: _____

V. Outcome

Your qualifications improvement
Usefulness for your work
Your motivation improvement

Very Good Good Sufficient Insufficient Bad

Do you think you need to follow (an)other complementary training course(s)? If yes, which is it/ are they?

GLOSSARY

- SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) or SMBs (Small and Middle Businesses) are the same
- Big groups: large enterprises
- Managers: company head for SMEs or managing director etc. for Large Enterprises
- Educator: trainer
- Trainee: trained people/workers
- Employed: employees as employed people
- CVTS: Continuing Vocational Training Survey
- CVT: Continuing Vocational Training as vocational training / training
- CVT action: CVT courses or course (it could be one course or more courses in an action) or all forms of CVT (it depends on the context)
- Consequences of training courses: evaluation of training courses
- Personal skills: individual competences

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