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HR Related Issues in Logistics

Competencies - training

Summary: While production of products became more focused, logistics service providers activities are getting to be more complex, diversified. It means that logisticians' work requires more competencies than before. This paper focuses two issues of human resources: (1) competence requirements in logistics systems, (2) case studies available for training purposes.

Keywords: HR in Logistics, Competencies, Case study

1. Requirements in logistics systems

Most visible trends in logistics systems were in last decade:

Enforcement of supply chain approach. This means that logisticians have to have more attention on the whole process than they did in the past. In this context the objective is not only the successful movement, storage and supply of receiver but the business success of the whole system.

Restructuring of jobs. As a consequence of the above mentioned trend, the content of jobs is changing. Now jobs were created and the content of traditional jobs has been changed.

Elements of these trends are in interaction with each other. A consequence of them is that jobs in logistics became more demanding.

1.1. Jobs in logistics

There are many classifications for jobs and occupations. Some examples: NACE, SOC, ISCO.

A consortia of European organisations (universities, consulting companies, professional organisation, union) developed a job structure which fits better to the existing tasks in logistics systems and gives a better respond to the challenges in supply chains. This NOVALOG nomenclature can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Novalog nomenclature

Group 1: Formulating & implementing logistical strategy
Supply Chain Manager Logistics Manager Logistics Analyst Logistics Engineer Logistics Controller Logistics IT-Specialist Logistics Supervisor
Group 2: Purchasing/ Materials Management

Materials Manager Packaging Manager Purchasing/ Procurement Manager Purchasing Officer Purchasing Clerk Stock/ Inventory Controller
Group 3: Production Planning and Control
Production Planner and Controller
Group 4: Warehousing
Warehouse Management Warehouse Manager Warehouse Supervisor Administrative Operations Order Processing Clerk Warehouse Operations Warehouse Operator Forklift Driver Order Picker Warehouse Supporting Activity (examples) Maintenance Supervisor Maintenance Operator

1.2. Derivation of the necessary competencies

When we try to determine the necessary competencies the starting point is the set of objectives which is supposed to be achieved by the organisation. This analytical logic can be seen on Figure 1.

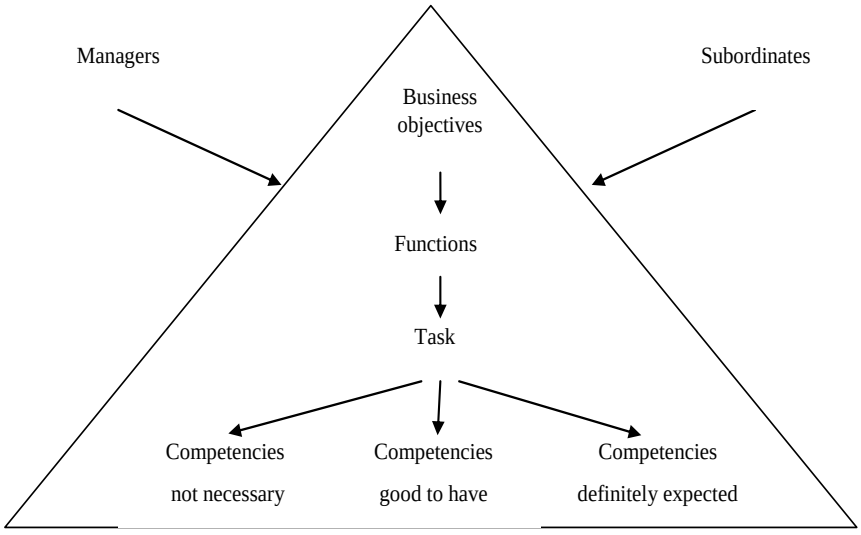

Figure 1. Derivation of the necessary competencies.

Other – more practical - way is to ask the managers about their competence expectations in connection with logistics jobs. We developed a questionnaire which was filled in by 80 logistics managers.

The third way we used is document analysis. We collected more than 600 job descriptions and examined their content.

2. Competence profiles

Table 2. shows the result of our competence analyses.

Table 2. Necessary competencies in logistics

Managerial competencies
1 reliability 2 fairness 3 cultivated appearance 4 firmness 5 independency 6 communication skills 7 organisational skills 8 problem solving ability 9 elaborateness 10 result orientation
Subordinate competencies
1 reliability 2 fairness 3 cultivated appearance 4 firmness 5 independency 6 communication skills 7 organisational skills 8 problem solving ability 9 elaborateness 10 result orientation

3. Training

There are many ways to develop competencies. One effective method is using case studies. They are also good for sharing ideas among training organisations and disseminating results. In Hungary we were involved in two projects in which we developed case studies.

3.1. Innovation cases in logistics training

During NOVALOG project we gathered cases from different European countries. The structure of cases:

- Title of the case
- Country
- Innovation type
- Job / Function
- Innovative elements
- The innovative elements.

We interpreted innovation in a broad term. Innovations can be

a. Organisational innovation. This category refers to organisations facilitating the execution of a job / function studied, specific structures of training supplied or to specific conditions relating to its development.

b. Political innovation. Political innovations refer to policy initiatives in the field of employment and training by social partners, national, regional or local policymakers or other public bodies. These policies facilitate the execution of the jobs/functions studied or support or create training provision.

c. Technical innovation. These are distinguished on the basis of the tools used for training purposes.

d. Training contents and / or pedagogical approach. Training contents refers to the subjects and area covered by the training. By the pedagogical approach we refer to the way the educational process is organised.

e. Other types of innovation.

Cases from NOVALOG project and more about the whole project can be seen at www.novalog-project.org.

3.2. Intermodal transport case collection

The ITS-IT (Intermodal Transport Services - Information Tool) project objectives:

- Targeted and reliable information for the development of an efficient and sustain-able transport system.
- Presents intermodal transport services supply.
- Development of planning and decision making tools for transport operators and shippers.
- Support training (trainers' database, curricula development.

In the frame of ITS-IT we presented cases for intermodal transportation.

Training modules dedicated to intermodal transport are designed for the dispatchers on one hand, and the logistics and transport managers on the other hand in relation with training organisations and universities. Innovative cases and good practices of European shippers and carriers experiences already have been described.

Outcomes of this work are:

- Best practice collection
- Trainers database
- Training modules

The structure of best practices:

- Identification of the best practice
- Alternative all road solution
- Technical aspects
- Economic aspects
- Environmental aspects

- Lessons learnt

We worked out best practices in Hungary about:

- Baja Harbour
- Gönyü Harbour
- Budapest Intermodal Logistics Center
- Kombisztár
- Szeged

More about ITS-IT project can be seen at http://www.viacombi.eu/its-it_eng.pdf.

Further cases from other projects at: http://www.eia-ngo.com/category/best-practices

3.3. Training database

During NOVALOG project we also set up a database about the available programs in different countries.

For each programme, the available information are:

- Country
- Title of programme
- Brief listing of subjects
- Job/Function
- Type of training:
    - Target group
    - Conditions for entry
    - Objectives of course
    - Duration/length
    - Conditions of issue of diploma/certification
    - Standing of qualification
    - Language of delivery
    - Format of course
    - Company placement
    - Course fee
- Contacts

Training database operates on internet at http://www.novalog-project.org.

4. Conclusion

Like in the other areas, human factor is vital in logistics jobs. As logistics activities become more complex, job requirements are widening. Beside the vital professional competencies, general competencies are getting mere emphasize. There are more ways to determine the profile of necessary competencies. Our recommendation is to use all of them.

Case studies are effective tools for competency development. They are available from many sources.

5. Sources

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