

PART II

ENTERPRISES' BEHAVIOUR

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FACTORS AND TASKS DETERMINING THE NEED FOR UNDERTAKING TRAINING ACTIVITY- THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Abstract

The system of the development of qualification potential is one of major elements of the staff system of an enterprise. Employees who are well-trained and motivated constitute a foundation of competitive predominance of an enterprise. In this context, there was an effort made in this article to specify factors determining the need for undertaking training activity (in the practice of subjects that make decisions) and tasks which are realized by means of the system of development of qualification potential of personnel (for the realization of direct aims). The degree of influence that the system of professional training and improvement has on the efficiency of organization functioning was analysed (in comparison with other functional areas within personnel process). The analyses made within the above presented range of subjects were carried out on the basis of empirical data obtained by a method of enquiry within a group of enterprises quoted on the stock exchange in Warsaw (researching subject).

Key words: Training (M53), Labour Management (M54), Personnel Economics (M5), Economic Development (O1).

Introduction

When there is a need, in a rationally organized firm, in the scope of the development of qualification potential, the system of professional training and development is created in a firm. This system is a derivative of particular personal policy of a particular enterprise. At the same time it marks the boarder in the sphere of training and development of employees. If these actions are intensified and diverged, it implies that this sphere is recognized, the fact which is a reflection of directing the management team of a firm toward the improvement of

employees and indicates noticing prospective factors influencing survival and development of a firm.

The main aim of this study is to present factors which determine (in practice of enterprises) the need for undertaking training activity and tasks that are realized by means of the system of professional training and improvement (for the realization of direct aims) as well as through degree of its influence on the efficiency of enterprise functioning.

The study has a theoretically-empirical character. The sources which have been used are existing theoretical materials included in national and foreign literature that concern issues which have been addressed. The basic source of empirical data is investigation of the systems of professional training and improvement which was carried out by the author in the middle of 2004 and included enterprises quoted on the stock exchange in Warsaw (the research included the years 1998-2003).

The essence and aims of professional training and development occurring in an enterprise

The fact that the issue of professional competences development has been addressed many times in the literature influences the fact that such terms as: education, training, completing one's education, professional improvement and development are identified with one another by some authors and treated as distinct ones by the other.

Taking the majority of approaches into consideration (Kopertyńska, 1999, p. 331); (Anthony, Perrewe, Kacmar, 1999, p. 337); (Penc, 2000, p. 246); (Janiak, Chomałkowska, 2000, p. 42), it should be stated that professional development takes place by means of professional training and improvement. Training consists in teaching the executive workers technical ways of taking actions in offices they hold (Kopertyńska 1999, p.331), whereas professional improvement is viewed as teaching the employees professional abilities necessary in their present and future offices (ibid.).

The system of professional training and improvement has many specific aims within an enterprise. The main aim, which may be defined as human potential development and preparing the employees to perform present and future organizational roles (Janowska, 2002, p.142); (Król, 2000, p. 34), includes (Knap-Stefaniuk, 2002, p. 20):

- indirect aims,
- direct aims.

(Szałkowski, 2000, p. 111) distinguished the following indirect aims of training:

- equipping recently employed persons with specific elements of labour potential, i.e. the acquaintance with the history and current activities of a firm.
- improving and extending hitherto existing professional knowledge, abilities and attitudes of employees in relation to adjusting qualifications to current requirements of an office or with regard to anticipated technological changes and also to the planned (in the future) dislocation of an employee within an enterprise (promotion).
- the integration of personality characteristics, capacities, knowledge and abilities of a particular employee in order to develop competences that can be used without extra learning.
- entering new profession or new professional specialization.

The following issues can be included into direct aims of training – more broadly (Andrzejczak, 2001, p. 122); (Gableta, 1998, p. 88); (Zbiegień-Maciąg, 1996, pp.75-78):

- increasing motivation of the trained,
- the improvement in relations between people and communication within organization
- strengthening loyalty of employees and their integration with an enterprise
- increasing flexibility, independence and availability of employees

- developing abilities of self-control and self-assessment
- personality formation, developing abilities of creative thinking, innovativeness, general knowledge, broadening cognitive and intellectual horizons of employees.
- providing the redundant with help within actions known as so-called outplacement.

Such approach toward the problem which arises in relation to the aims of training activity gives rise to tasks that are accomplished by this system.

All the aims that are fulfilled within the presented area of tasks serve to achieve main aim of every organization which is the most effective usage of available resources along with taking all favourable conditioning, changes and opportunities occurring in its internal and external environment into consideration (Kopertyńska, 1997).

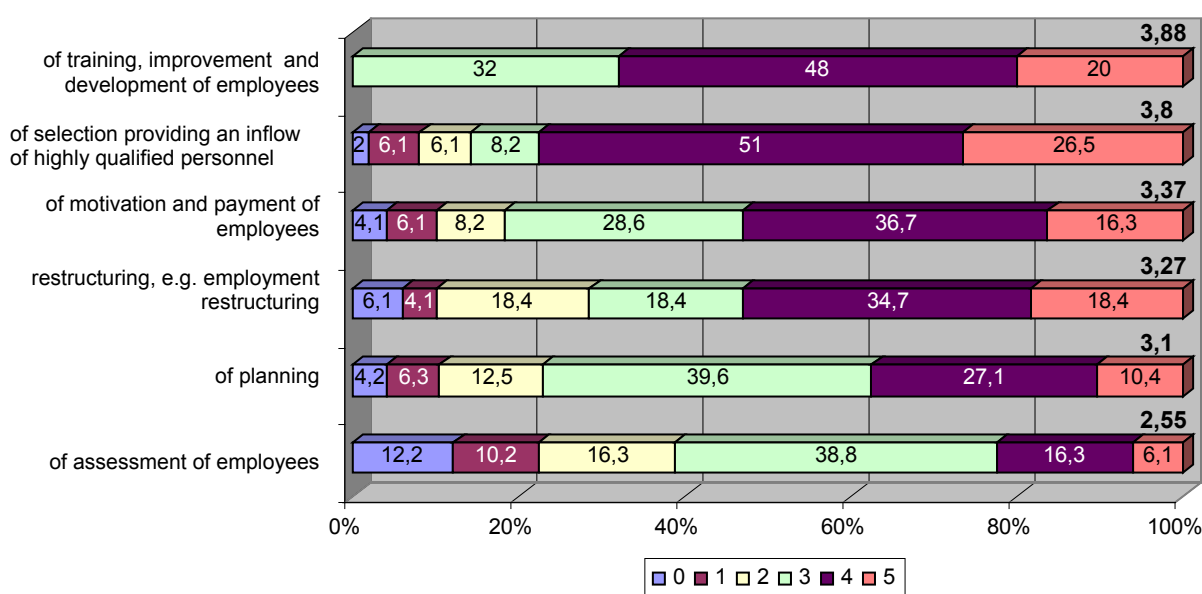
The results of empirical research carried out for the fulfilment of main aim will be presented in the next part of the study.

The influence of training activities in relation to the effect of other spheres of personal function on the efficiency of the functioning of enterprises

The level of influence¹ on the efficiency of enterprise functioning and its actions taken in such spheres as training, improvement and development of employees, selection which offers an inflow of highly qualified personnel, restoration, e.g. restoration of employment, planning, motivation and payment of employees as well as assessment of employees will be specified.

The structure of given answers is presented in diagram 1. The answers were ordered according to the criterion of the level of average level of influence (there is indicator's value for every option given in the diagram). On the other hand, table 1 includes indicators of average level of influence in groups distinguished due to the criterion: macro sector and the size of enterprise (answers were presented according to the order in which they appeared in the enquiry)².

Diagram 1. The influence of actions taken in selected spheres on the efficiency of the functioning of a firm



Source: own compilation based on the results of the research

¹ in the scale from 0 to 5, where 0- lack of influence, 1- very small influence, 2- small influence, 3- medium influence, 4- considerable influence, 5- great influence.

² data concerning another spheres of analysis were presented according to similar schemata

Table 1. The influence of actions taken in selected spheres (indicators of average level of importance)- the criterion of division: macro sector and the size of enterprise

Factor	macro sector			the size of enterprise		
	industry	finance	service	small	medium -sized	large
of training, improvement and development of employees	3,83	4,00	3,86	3,75	3,93	3,84
of selection providing an inflow of highly qualified personnel	3,73	4,00	3,86	4,50	3,50	3,84
of restructuring, e.g. employment restructuring	3,30	3,20	3,21	3,00	3,07	3,39
of planning	2,97	3,40	3,29	2,75	3,08	3,16
of motivation and payments of employees	3,33	3,60	3,36	3,50	3,36	3,35
of assessment of employees	2,50	3,00	2,50	2,00	2,57	2,61

Source: own compilation based on the results of the research

The analysis of obtained declarations enabled to state that the greatest influence on the efficiency of enterprises functioning had actions taken in the following spheres: training, improvement and development of employees (the highest level of average level of influence 3,88) and selection providing an inflow of highly qualified personnel (average level of influence 3,8).

It cannot be clearly stated that one of the above-mentioned options is superior³, since, on the one hand, in the majority of cases (77,5%) enterprises recognized selection of employees as greatly or considerably influencing the efficiency of enterprise functioning (68% for training), on the other hand, attention should be paid to the fact that no respondent supported a thesis that the system of training, improvement and development of employees did not have an influence on the efficiency of enterprises functioning or that it had small or very small influence. However, the thesis that investigated enterprises noticed a relatively great influence of training, improvement and development of employees on the efficiency of their functioning⁴, in comparison with other spheres of personal policy that were mentioned, was beyond any doubt.

Subsequently, positive effects of actions taken in the following spheres were indicated:

- motivation and payment of employees (average level of influence 3,37),

³ The above-mentioned statement is in accordance with the facts, on the grounds of the analysis of data in groups that were specified (for both analysed options).

⁴ The thesis about the considerable influence of subjects involved in the process of professional training and development on the efficiency of functioning is acknowledged by the results of the research carried out at Wrocław University of Economics. The average importance of the level of influence (measured in the scale from 1 to 3) of training on selected areas of functioning of an enterprise reached, in the majority of cases, high numbers, exceeding 2 level as a rule. According to the respondents, training determined, to the greatest extent, the efficiency of tasks accomplished by an employee (average level of importance 2,7) and, at the same time, improved the quality of the work done (average level of importance 2,6), and influenced the fact that needs for development (average level of importance 2,5) and recognition (average level of importance 2,4) were satisfied. In consequence, respondents' declaration about the existence of the close relation between training and growth of chosen economic rate appeared as well. Enterprises also noticed a considerable influence of training on organization wide areas, which could be seen in the fact that aims of an organization are understood in a better way and there was a greater integration with this organization (average level of importance 2,3), minor fluctuation of personnel (average level of importance 2,1), the fact that the work was always completed by the time stated (average level of importance 2,3) and the improvement in customer's service (average level of importance 2,2). The respondents claimed that the relation between training and encouraging teamwork as well as satisfying social needs of an employee (average level of importance 1,9) was the least significant. Cf. (Jasiński, Janiak-Rejno, 2004).

- restructuring, e.g. employment restructuring (average level of influence 3,27),
- planning (average level of influence 3,1).

According to the respondents, actions taken in the sphere of employees assessment (the lowest level of average level of influence 2,55, the minor share of option- great and considerable influence in the structure of answers 22,4%) had the smallest influence on enterprise functioning⁵.

The hierarchy of the importance of activity spheres in the context of influence on the efficiency of subjects functioning did not differ between groups specified according to the criterion of division: macro sector and the size of enterprise. Attention should be paid to two exceptions to the rule:

- enterprises from macro sector: finance and service noticed relatively less significant influence of restructuring processes (e.g., employment restructuring) on the efficiency of the functioning of enterprises which had its justification in the fact that restructuring processes connected with reductions of employment excess occurred mostly in industrial enterprises where greater influence of those processes on the efficiency of particular subject functioning could be observed.
- small enterprises noticed a very significant influence of selection, which provided an inflow of highly qualified personnel, on the efficiency of enterprise functioning (they chose only the following options: great and considerable influence, average level of influence for that option differed considerably- 4,50 and for the next one- the system of training- 3,75).

Factors determining the need for undertaking training activity

Many factors, determining the need for undertaking training activity, influence training activity which has been taken. There was a level of importance⁶ of thirteen chosen determinants in investigated enterprises determined (diagram 2 presents a structure of given answers that were asked as a test, whereas table 2 presents answers for groups distinguished according to adopted criteria of division).

Table 2. Factors determining the need for undertaking training activity (indicators of average level of importance)- the criterion of division: macro sector and the size of enterprise

	macro sector			the size of enterprise		
	industry	finance	service	small	medium -sized	large
current business of a firm	4,63	4,40	4,77	4,25	4,69	4,68
the improvement in BHP (safety and hygiene of work) state	4,13	2,20	3,46	2,00	3,85	3,94
the improvement in the quality of products and services	4,23	4,80	4,23	4,25	4,31	4,29

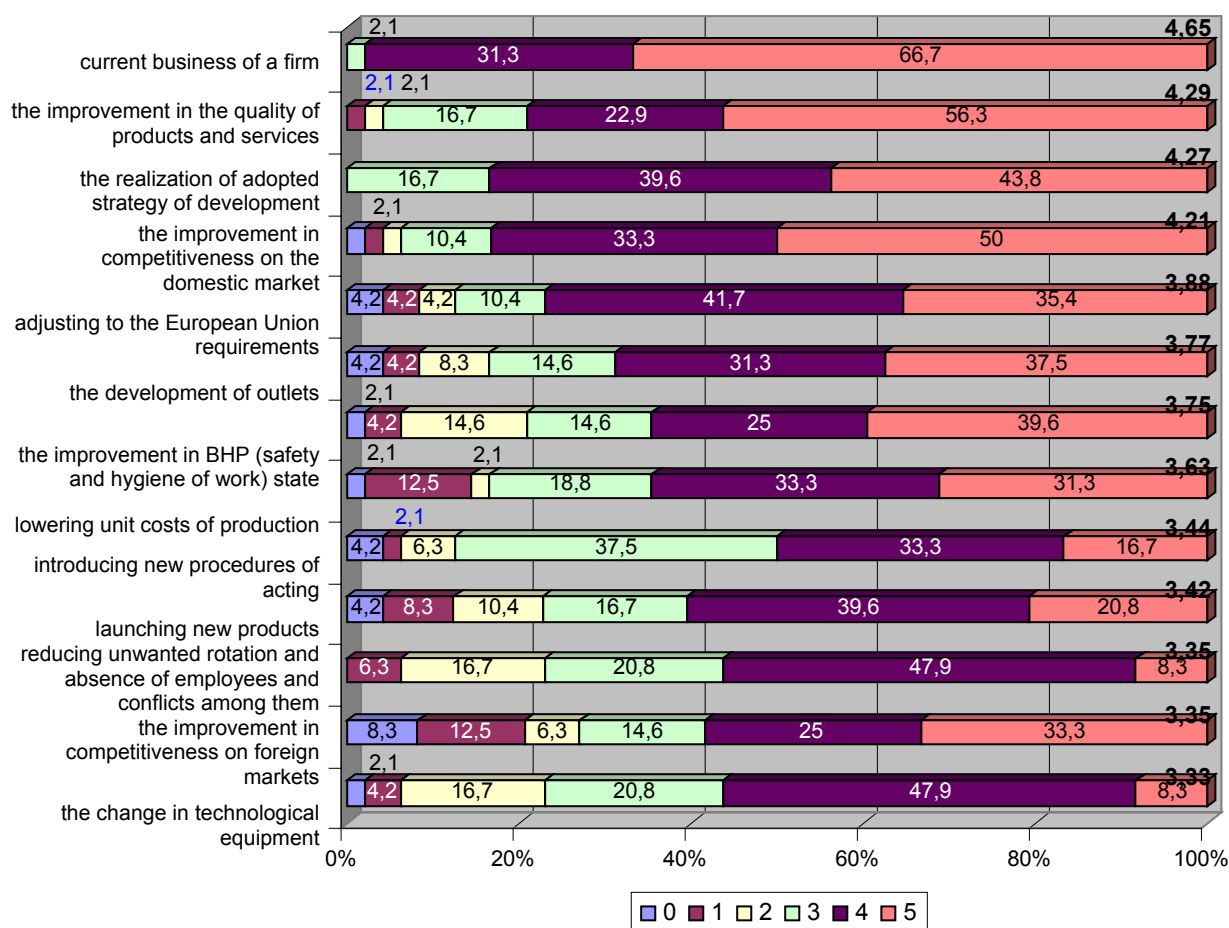
⁵ It is acknowledged by the results of the research carried out in 2002 by a group of authors under the management of M. Rybak in Institute of National Economy at The Collegium of Business Administration at Warsaw School of Economics (SGH). The majority of respondents claimed that actions taken in the sphere of training and improvement of employees had the greatest influence on the success of their enterprises; subsequently, the selection of employees, the efficiency of restructuring actions as well as actions taken in the sphere of motivation and payment were also mentioned. Individual persons pointed to positive effects of actions taken in the sphere of assessment of employees. Cf. (Rybak, 2003, p.44).

⁶ in the scale from 0 to 5, where 0- lack of influence, 1- unimportant, 2- slightly important, 3- important, 4- important, 5- extremely important.

the realization of adopted strategy of development	4,17	4,40	4,46	4,00	4,31	4,29
reducing unwanted rotation, absence of employees and conflicts among them	3,37	3,80	3,15	3,25	3,77	3,19
lowering unit costs of production	3,87	3,20	3,23	2,50	3,92	3,65
change in technological equipment	3,37	3,40	3,23	3,25	3,38	3,32
introducing new procedures of acting	3,33	3,80	3,54	2,75	3,77	3,39
launching new products	3,33	4,20	3,31	2,25	3,69	3,45
the development of outlets	4,07	4,20	2,92	2,50	4,31	3,71
the improvement in competitiveness on the domestic market	4,30	4,40	3,92	3,75	4,00	4,35
the improvement in competitiveness on foreign markets	3,87	2,20	2,62	1,25	3,38	3,61
adjusting to the European Union requirements	4,17	3,20	3,46	2,25	3,92	4,06

Source: own compilation based on the results of the research

Diagram 2. Factors determining the need for undertaking training activity



Source: own compilation based on the results of the research

Obviously, the most significant determinants of undertaking training activity were current needs (that factor was considered important and extremely important by 98% of

subjects, average level of importance 4,65)⁷. On the one hand, the fact that enterprises noticed and responded to chances and dangers existing outside organization as well as noticed bad sides of their activities, on the basis of which training programmes were outlined, was a source of satisfaction. On the other hand, it might imply that enterprises forecasted the future incorrectly while creating training strategy, the consequence of which was a need for current adjustments to occurring changes. In this context, it might imply that training policy was imperfect, especially due to the fact that the efficiency of supporting the development of a firm by means of training policy depended, to a great extent, on the harmony between the strategy of training and general strategy of an enterprise, and the realization of adopted strategy was also mentioned as one of the most important factors determining the need for undertaking training (this factor was considered as significant and extremely important by 83% of subjects, the lack of choice of options 0-2, average level of importance). The respondents included the following determinants into the group of extremely important determinants (average level of importance- above 4): the improvement in the quality of products and services⁸ (the factor extremely important for 56,3% and important for 22,9% of enterprises) as well as the improvement in competitiveness on the domestic market (the factor extremely important for 50% and important for 33,3% of subjects). In this case, undertaking training activities enabled enterprises to adjust to changing reality.

The selection of the above-mentioned options as the most significant was proved by the analysis of respondents' answers in particular groups (macro sector, the size of enterprise) because those four options were mentioned as the most significant in the majority of cases.

Subsequently, the following factors determining the need for undertaking training activity were mentioned: adjusting to the European Union requirements- that factor had gained significance in the face of the integration of Poland into the EU structures (the factor extremely important for 35,4% and important for 41,7% of the respondents), the development of outlets (the factor extremely important for 37,5% and important for 31,3% of the respondents), lowering unit costs of production (the factor extremely important for 31,3% and important for 33,3% of the respondents) as well as the improvement in BHP (safety and hygiene of work) state (the factor extremely important for 39,6% and important for 25% of the respondents)- relative importance of the level of importance of that factor implied that investigated enterprises did not reduce training activity only to obligatory trainings (e.g., in the scope of BHP), but treated it as a tool of the development of organization in all spheres of its activity and the creation of changes in order to increase efficiency, competitiveness.

The analysis of data presented in the general approach and at the level of groups selected according to adopted criteria of division enables to state that following factors may be included into the least important reasons for undertaking training activity: introducing new procedures of acting, launching new products or change in technological equipment (the lowest level of average level of importance 3,33), thus, in consequence of such approach

⁷ It results from the research on training policy carried out by Data Group in 2001 on the group of professionally active specialists associated with branch organization functioning within HR area which showed that training was organized in response to current needs in every third enterprise. Cf. (The Research ..., 2001).

⁸ The research carried out by Department of Social Labour and Policy at The University of Łódź within Leonardo da Vinci programme on the group of 41 subjects functioning at the outback of energetics on the territory of Poland acknowledged that the following factors were included in the group of the most important ones: current business of a firm (87,8% of indications) as well as the improvement in the quality of products and services (70,7%). Cf. (Feliniak, Kołodziejczyk-Olczak, 2002, p.29). The research carried out in 2003 to the order of PARP on the group of 125 enterprises showed that current needs occupied the second position in the group of reasons for organizing training. It seemed that enterprises were aware of the fact that current needs should not be one of the most important reasons for organizing training. For they foresaw, in this investigation, that their role as determinants of organizing training would become less and less significant in the future. Cf. (Danilewicz, 2003).

toward analysed reasons in investigated enterprises, adjusting the qualifications of employees does not always have to follow technological production or organizational changes, which may permit widening the qualification gap. The following may also be included into this group: the intension of reducing unwanted rotation, absence of employees and conflicts among them, as well as the improvement in competitiveness on foreign markets (the same level of importance 3,35- the fact which is worth noticing here is that the improvement in competitiveness on the domestic market was one of the most important determinants, and therefore enterprises are still orientated mainly to the domestic market- here considerable changes are needed, especially in the context of the integration of Poland into the European Union, the progress in processes of globalisation and changes occurring within employment market that are connected with these changes and processes).

While analysing data presented in table 2, it should be stated that the hierarchy of importance of determinants distinguished groups selected according to the criterion of division: macro sector and the size of enterprise. The most striking differences were noticed in the following cases:

- adjusting to the European Union requirements and the improvement in BHP state (the last position in the hierarchy in both groups) were relatively unimportant reasons for undertaking training activity in financial institutions and small enterprises,
- the development of outlets was a relatively insignificant factor in commercial enterprises (last but one position in the hierarchy),
- the improvement in competitiveness on foreign markets determined, to relatively greatest extent, undertaking training activity in industrial and large enterprises (8th and 9th position in the hierarchy),
- introducing new procedures of acting, launching new products and technological equipment determined (to the least extent) undertaking training activity in industrial, medium-sized and large enterprises,
- the reduction of unwanted rotation and absence of employees as well as conflicts among them was a relatively more important reason as far as small enterprises and financial institutions were concerned (5th and 7th position in the hierarchy).

Tasks of the training system

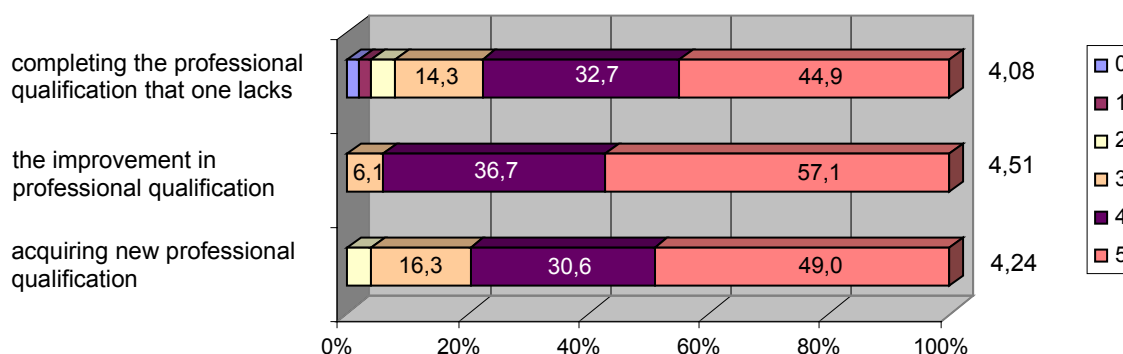
Then, three tasks which the training system had to face in relation to the realization of indirect aims of training were mentioned:

- completing the professional qualification that one lacks,
- the improvement in professional qualification,
- acquiring new professional qualification.

The importance⁹ of each of them (in investigated enterprises) was specified (diagram 3 and table 3).

⁹ in the scale from 0 to 5, where 0- lack of influence, 1- unimportant, 2- slightly important, 3- quite important, 4- important, 5- extremely important.

Diagram 3. The level of importance of tasks imposed on training



Source: own compilation based on the results of the research

Table 3. The level of importance of tasks imposed on training- the criterion of division: macro sector and the size of enterprise

	the criterion of division: macro sector											
	industry				finance				service			
	3	4	5	point	3	4	5	point	3	4	5	point
1	10,0	33,3	46,7	4,07	60,0	0,0	40,0	3,8	7,1	42,9	42,9	4,21
2	3,3	36,7	60,0	4,57	20,0	40,0	40,0	4,2	7,1	35,7	57,1	4,5
3	20,0	30,0	43,3	4,1	0,0	40,0	60,0	4,6	14,3	28,6	57,1	4,43
	the criterion of division: the size of enterprise											
	small				medium-sized				large			
	3	4	5	point	3	4	5	point	3	4	5	point
1	0,0	50,0	50,0	4,5	7,1	21,4	71,4	4,64	19,4	35,5	32,3	3,77
2	25,0	0,0	75,0	4,5	7,1	35,7	57,1	4,5	3,2	41,9	54,8	4,52
3	0,0	50,0	50,0	4,5	21,4	50,0	28,6	4,07	16,1	19,4	58,1	4,29

where:

- 1- completing the professional qualification that one lacks
- 2- the improvement in professional qualification
- 3- acquiring new professional qualification

Source: own compilation based on the results of the research

The analysis of data presented in diagram 3 and table 3 enables to state that the main task of training in investigated enterprises is improvement in professional qualification. This task was considered as extremely important and important by 93,8% of enterprises, whereas the indicator of average level of importance reached 4,51 level. The majority of data analyses specified due to adopted criteria of population division placed this task on the top of the hierarchy as well. Yet the highest level of importance (4,75) was reached in the group of building enterprises. The fact which should be evaluated positively was that, as far as importance was concerned, the next task of training system (in investigated enterprises) was to acquire new professional qualification. This task was defined as extremely important or important by 79,6% of subjects, whereas the indicator of average level of importance was placed at 4,24 level by them. Evidently, it was the training system of financial institutions that was directed mostly at the development of new professional qualification (average level of importance 4,60- the highest number, the first position in the hierarchy). This task was also

regarded as the most important in the group of enterprises within electro-machine industry. One may also come across three cases (food industry, TMT, services- other) in which the evaluation of the level of importance of hitherto mentioned tasks that training undertakings had to face was similar.

The respondents considered completing the professional qualification that one lacked as the least important task which training system had to face. Thus it could be assumed that enterprises assessed qualification potential of their personnel¹⁰ and this thesis was supported on the grounds of the group of chemical enterprises (here this task gained a very low score of average level of importance- 2,5). The average level of importance for this task (in the scale of the whole population) was placed at 4,08 level. This task was usually placed in the last position, in the majority of cases, for groups selected on the basis of adopted criteria of population division, except for medium-sized enterprises (average level of importance was very high- 4,64) and enterprises from the sector services- other where it gained the position of the most important task. In the hierarchy created by building enterprises, analysed tasks occurred in the second position (it was there that training system was directed, to less extent, at acquiring new professional qualification- average level of importance 3,63).

Summary

The investigated enterprises noticed a relatively great influence of training, improvement and development of employees on the efficiency of their functioning, in comparison with other spheres of personal policy which were mentioned. Current business of firms was considered the most crucial determinant of undertaking training activity. The following factors might be included into the group of the most important ones: the improvement in the quality of products and services, the realization of adopted strategy of development as well as the improvement in competitiveness on the domestic market. As far as the least important factors are concerned, the following might be included: change in technological equipment, the improvement in competitiveness on foreign markets, the intention of reducing unwanted rotation and absence of employees and conflicts among them, introducing new procedures of acting and launching new products. The main task of training in investigated enterprises was to improve professional qualification. Subsequently, the respondents mentioned acquiring new professional qualification, whereas they considered completing the professional qualification that one lacked the least important task.

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¹⁰ The results of the research point to such cause and effect relation. In 81,7% of cases, the respondents did not notice lack of qualification of management staff, in 69%- a team of specialists, whereas in 69,5%- executive workers. In effect, gaining the qualifications that one lacked was a major task of training only for 20% of investigated firms. Cf. (Rybak, 2003, p. 44).

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