# INTRODUCTORY DIAGNOSIS OF MANAGEMENT TRAININGS ON INNOVATIONS. PART I

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**Summary:** This paper is about the introductory diagnosis of trainings on innovations which are offered by the best and most popular training companies in Poland. The opening research was conducted in December of 2011 among 20 companies claimed as the best Polish companies in the training sector. The issues described in the text are: types of knowledge receivers, training approaches, strategies for trainings and trainer's techniques and skills. The whole text consists of two parts: the first one (Part 1), which is here, covers an introduction first two issued mentioned above. In the Part 2 there are two further issues and closing conclusions. The conclusions are both practical and methodical. They would open a field of profound research in trainings on innovations for companies.

**Keywords:** training companies, types of knowledge receivers, training approaches.

#### 1. Introduction

The choice of the topic of the article is a result of authors' reflections on the difficult situation that concern higher education in Poland. Universities are competing and want to be chosen by constantly diminishing number of students. Their offers are very interesting and still broadening i. a. specializations such as an innovation management. As far as innovations are concerned there are many training companies that offer a wide range of services including trainings on innovations. In general receivers of training services differ from students. Nevertheless some kind of a problem appears if it comes to postgraduate students who choose between trainings and studies at the university as a way to develop their qualifications.

The most important aims of the article are:

- initial research on trainings on innovations,
- preparation to start a project of scientific research on trainings as an important sort of educational services,
- formulating suggestions for business universities in the line of improving their offer for students.

The additional aim of the article is to present a theoretical background of professional trainings on innovations and the results of the opening research on this issue in the Polish sector of trainings. The text consists of two parts, written in separate papers, titled "Introductory diagnosis on management trainings on innovations. Part 1" and "Introductory diagnosis about innovative management trainings. Part 2".

The text includes two mixed aspects. First is a theoretical approach to the topic which means structures of knowledge about trainings, rules to obey, types of issues and ways of implementing them into practice. Second are results of the initial research about the trainings on innovations which are offered by Polish training companies. The results are

going to be a first step to conduct profound research on this topic in the training sector. We are open to a wide discussion on necessity of such research and its theoretical aspects.

The empirical opening research was conducted in between 10th and 20th December 2011. In order to choose companies to explore the topic authors used the list of the best Polish training companies that was compiled in 2010 by Warsaw Business Journal and it was published on www.personelprofit.com.pl [1]. The list consists of 38 companies. The author of the ranking took into consideration such issues within a period 2007-2009 as:

- a revenue from training courses,
- a total revenue,
- a number of graduates,
- topics of courses,
- an availability of open courses,
- a cooperation with high schools.

The next step of the selection was checking which companies offer trainings concerned innovations. Because of different meaning of this term not only did we look for a word "innovations" but also for synonyms to it. Among 38 companies we indicated 20 that fulfilled the criteria. Their names and training topics are presented in the table 1.

Tab. 1. The list of training companies offering trainings on innovations

Company	Examples of trainings on innovations
Gdańska Fundacja Kształcenia	The Six Sigma Quality Management
Menedżerów	System
Ernst&Young Academy of Business Sp. z	Process management
0.0.	Creative business problem solving
Nowe Motywacje Sp. z o.o.	Analysis and concluding using creative
	thinking
PROFES Centrum Kształcenia i Doradztwa	KEIZEN Management System
S.j.	
CT PARTNERS SA	Agile Project Management
VADEMECUM – Konferencje i Szkolenia	Innovative approach to sale
Sp. z o.o.	Modern tools in HR
Moderator s.c.	Creative thinking
	Change management
Lauren Peso Polska SA	Improving the production flow
	How to manage a change?
	Creativity
SYNTEZA	Problem solving and innovative acting (The
	Academy of Leadership Skills)
BEAVER Doradztwo Personalne	Implementing changes in organisation
Sympozjum	Creativity and imaginative actions
House of Skills	The art of innovative thinking (workshop
	for managers)
	Understanding innovation: trends and
	methods
	The Blue Ocean Strategy <sup>TM</sup> as a method of
	strategic work
	The Medici <sup>TM</sup> - a strategy of product

	innovation
	Development of innovation and a culture of
	innovations
	The art of innovative action
	Management of team's innovation
Infor Training Sp. z o.o.	Modern pay systems in practice
Mazowieckie Centrum Szkoleń Sp. z o.o.	A modern accountant
GB Resources Polska Sp. z o.o.	Modern techniques of communication and
	influence
ProFirma Sp. z o.o.	Training of creativity
Training Partners Sp. z o.o.	Creative thinking
ITS Education Sp. z o.o. (Midwest ITSE)	Creative thinking
Megalit Instytut Szkoleń	Blue Ocean Strategy – dedicated to Renee
	Mauborgne and W. Chan Kim
	Creative thinking techniques
Exbis Experci Biznesmenom Szopa i	Creative thinking and decision making
Szóstak Sp. J.	_

The opening research contained important issues which also constitute the pattern of the paper. There are as follows:

- types of knowledge receivers,
- training approaches,
- strategies for trainings,
- trainer's techniques and skills.

There were used such techniques of research as:

- an analysis of companies offers from their websites (20 companies),
- telephone interviews with trainers of these companies (17 trainers or staff members).

The authors bolded explored issues in the theoretical parts of the paper and associations to them in the result of the research.

#### 2. Types of knowledge receivers

In the learning process all senses of a human being are engaged. The process is carried through our sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. Another channel of getting new knowledge is movement. It is considered that specially learning processes at more profound levels, such as behaviours, beliefs, abilities or values, happen through what people do.

It is not possible to overestimate the importance of using all senses in the learning process. Relaying new knowledge is not efficient enough, while a theory is departed from practice. It does not mean that employees should do the same things which they will have to do at their work, but things strongly connected in figurative meaning and analogous to these in a real work.

As important as training employees in analogous situations is indicating the most relevant rules, which are essential to the topic of trainings. As an example, in taking photos one of the most important rules is to keep a certain distance between an object of the picture and a camera. The distance should not be less than one meter and more than a few ones. The rule in marketing which every specialist ought to remember is the complexity of

marketing-mix system.

As far as creating new patterns in a human brain is concerned, that part of human body is reckoned as the most sophisticated tool in the world and it is not possible to compare it to any other invention of a mankind. Many scientists say that much information and knowledge are stored in the brain branches system, which is similar to branches of a tree. The matter is so complex that i.e. when a man is asked to list economic efficiency indexes, he does it with a certain names of them, and he hardly realizes that they can measure also usual actions in a common life.

As G. Dryden and J. Vos wrote in their "The Learning Revolution" people in their learning process can be divided at least into three groups:

- "movement and touch" learners, who learn most efficiently when they are running, walking, waving, swaying and touching other things and they can experience on their own,
- "sight" learners, whose the best way of obtaining knowledge is to see what they should remember,
- "hearing" learners, who prefer hearing to any other senses, they like learning through sound, especially music and a verbal language [2].

One of the top trainings companies which use some techniques for "movement and touch" learners is Training Partners Sp. z o.o. One of its founder, R. Szczepanik, is a famous inventor in a training sector. He launched many strategic games and educational plays during which participants could feel like if they were in real companies. The training company offers a training named "Creative thinking" composed in this way.

Most offers found by the authors present methods of teaching, especially video presentations for "sight" learners. This kind of channel through which information can be transmitted to the learners is the most common in the training sector. Mazowieckie Centrum Szkoleń describes a methodology of their trainings and asserts the important role of presentations [3].

On the opposite authors did not find any statements about focusing on **hearing** as a kind of information channel. Often companies underlined a role of discussion – e. g. ITS Education Sp. z o.o. (Midwest) – but none of them used only this channel providing trainings, e.g. on the internet [4].

Scientists from the Specific Diagnostic Studies in Rockville in the USA made a research on that field and results of this appeared more than surprising. The research confirmed that most young people simultaneously use more than one human sense in learning processes. Another conclusion drawn by the scientists was that the elder people are using more a sense of sight in getting new knowledge they use. Obviously it does not mean it is the most efficient way of learning.

The facts presented above are a very strong reason for implementing new creative methods of learning, based on games and case studies in professional trainings. They take advantage of simple interpersonal interactions and a hidden level of childish creativity and vitality, which has been put out through years of adulthood.

R. Szczepanik claims that a good teacher or trainer does not repeat a piece of information twice in the same way. "Simply, I talk about the subject – says – and simultaneously show some graphs or pictures connected to the case. Additionally I go round the class and move my arms, hands, use my face to express feelings and emotions." Always after the teaching stage he make an exercise, which is to strengthen the knowledge and put it into practice.

The ways of learning not only influence on efficiency of trainings. J. O'Connor and J.

Seymour, trainers using neurolinguistic methods, reckon that there are four factors that every trainer should take into consideration:

- a size of a group,
- a level of simplicity of a training,
- group dynamics,
- a sex of members of a group [5].

The size of a group is very important when projecting a training session. Many companies in their offers precisely declare how many participants can attend the session. The best training company of the survey – House of Skills – offers a course named "The art of innovative action" which is dedicated for managers and subordinates "who strongly use in their work innovative thinking". As far as the offer is concerned the number of participants is required from 8 to 15 people. This condition derives from ways of training which are personal case studies and a team work [6].

Sometimes a training company gives a description of **level of simplicity** that training candidates can expect. This factor is used also to make a first-step selection in order to let participants choose an appropriate level of training. The example is a session named "Innovative approach to sale" organized by Vademecum Konferencje i Szkolenia Sp. z o.o. A program of the session was presented in details and authors found it difficult to understand by people who are not sale representatives [7].

There is a two-day training titled "Creative thinking techniques" offered by Megalit Instytut Szkoleń. This is an example of a session in which **group dynamics** is essential. As it is written in the agenda trainees will take part in team work for solving problems, creating new ideas, looking for association of words. All activities is strongly focused on team work and techniques of increasing a group's work dynamic [8].

Authors of the paper noticed that trainings on innovations are not precisely **women- or men-oriented.** None of the companies expressed it literally but between lines it is possible to distinguish some trainings which mostly men would attend. An interesting example is "Agile Project Management" made by CT Partners SA. This course consists of knowledge about a methodology used in IT and electronics projects. The goal of the training is to change an awareness of managers who are responsible for information technology in a company. Authors can assume considering a presence of women at the Technical Universities that a group in this case would mostly consist of men [9].

To summarize it is important to say that the size of a group strongly determines the training needs, which have to be described at the very beginning of establishing a training aims. It is widely know that a small group is more likely to discuss with a trainer and their members can easily exchange their own experiences. The level of training simplicity also influence aims of relaying new knowledge. If a training session is to relay very general knowledge, some participants may be bored getting information they have already known. On the other hand when it is about difficult, sophisticated aspects of some specific subject, it is a possibility of making participants confused and then more practical exercises can be required.

Another factor is how learners at the same session know each other and whether the training is obligatory or voluntary. If all the participants are the same sex, it is more probable that they may share their hobbies and interests. Diversity on that field can make them less open to others and sometimes reluctant to play roles.

There are a few factors which play a role in a training. One of them is a level of heterogeneous which means whether group is made up of **people with distinct professions**. The heterogeneity of the group makes it difficult to conceptualize, discern or

allocate responsibilities.

Gdańska Fundacja Kształcenia Menedżerów offers a training called "The Six Sigma Quality Management System" for managers **as a distinct profession of participants**. In the leaflet we can find a description of participants as people who run projects and are focused on developing processes within them. The session is projected on a high level of knowledge so it is worth having a little of experience in management before applying [10].

The mentioned differences are matched with variations of pre-professional education, personal conceptual theory and practice in both life and work, professional experience, professional level and training, specializations, materials used.

Many trainings on innovations are universal to such extent that their effects are useful **both in life and work**. Authors found a training "Change management" organized by Moderator s.c. They claim that after the session participants will be able to recognize a kind of a change to implement, choose people to help in implementing, convince people to make changes in personal and corporate life, inspire people to invent changes [11].

**Professional experience** is taken into consideration in many programs of trainings on innovations. Such an example is a session named "Analysis and concluding using creative thinking" organized by Nowe Motywacje Sp. z o.o. There are three levels of the training which concern professional experience of participants. Beginning managers are invited at the first level. The middle level is projected for managers with several years of experience [12]. The top level is based on such issues as formal logic and a statistic analysis.

Sometimes in the offers there are more strict requirements about a profile of participants than a profession. When the training is focused on difficult aspects of a very narrow activity it is clearly written who should take part in the session. Such a notice can be found in a session on "Modern pay systems in practice" made by Infor Training Sp. z o.o. It is for HR managers or specialists who want **to develop their careers** [13].

### 3. Training approach

Expanded and reconceptualised definition shows that a training should contain all learning activities relevant to the operation of an enterprise. What more learning activities includes formal and informal training, development, and education, can be provided internally or externally [14].

There are many theories concerning trainings. Authors who write about trainings often chose those that are considered as useful, novel and core among others. R. Swanson made efforts to conceptualise HRD (Human Resource Development). Theories that are important to mention here are: the human capital theory (HCT), neo human capital theories competitive and HR strategy and adoption of high performance work practices. They are explaining reasons form firms' investment in training [15].

The human capital theory posits **the link between an increase in units of training and education and organizational productivity**. The human capital theory argues that firms will invest more in firm-specific trainings than general skill trainings, as the latter is of equal value to other employers [16].

An example of this assumption when organizing training is a session "The Blue Ocean Strategy as a method of strategic work" offered by House of Skills. The aim of the training is to give managers and entrepreneurs abilities to increase competitive advantage of their companies on new markets. There is a strong impact on a link between effects of a training session and success of participants' companies [6].

Neo-human theories have two conceptual divisions. The first deals with the mediating

role technological innovation plays between education and training, and productivity [17]. Authors of this theory argue that highly trained and **educated employees are more likely to adopt technological change** than less educated and skilled employees. Consequently, new technology adoption should improve productivity.

Appropriate example of such a training approach can be found in the offer of Vademecum Sp. z o.o. There is a training on using modern tools in HR management which is called "Modern tool in HR". Authors must admit that tools presented on Vademecum's website are admirable. They are really innovative and **create a technological change** in personnel relations in a company. A participant can learn how to operate programs for setting goals, spreading tasks, looking for talented people among a staff, controlling organizational culture [7].

The second stream of neo-human capital theory challenges the orthodox views of HCT. G. Becker's HCT is based in part on the premise that, in a competitive labour market, the wage rate equals the marginal product of labour. Two implications of this premise are that:

- a worker receives all returns form general training; and
- firms will not pay the cost of general training [18].

Learning is predicated upon change in skills, knowledge and understandings for individuals and groups and is continued throughout a working life. Changes in knowledge, skills or attitude are demonstrated by behavior.

The example of such an attitude to trainings is practised in SYNTEZA Company. It organizes a large training project called The Management Academy. One part of it we focused during the research is on the "Problem solving and innovative acting". The program is prepared in details and additionally its aim is to **change behaviors through new knowledge, skills and attitude**. On one hand there are very well-known techniques as a brain storm, but on the other hand a participant will learn about KAIZEN philosophy [19].

R. Trennery describes research conducted across five industries. The research concerned training practices used in the industry. Trainers that participated in the project said that:

- learning is enhancement of skills and knowledge, developing existing skills, competence and knowledge to address current work context,
- learning can be achieved in a collaborative way, learning is the ability to listen, observe and react [20].

The example of such a training is a session called "Creativity" which is able to be bought in the "kupszkolenie.pl" internet store. This store is run by Lauren Peso Polska SA. A content of the training is based on **enhancing skills and knowledge** which a participant has from other sources such as a secondary school or an university. The program consists of methods for generating ideas, amplifying lateral thinking, solving problems in an uncommon way. The training company convinces that the session helps participant to find more original way [21].

How to learn through **collaboration and cooperation** can be found in an offer of GB Resources Polska Sp. z o.o. Managers can attend a course called "Modern techniques of communication and influence" where most of the time they will spend working in teams. This is not only important to learn how to communicate but also to feel a power which derives from collaborative learning comparing to learning alone [22].

What more other conditions are as follows:

- learning is an interactive process,
- people learn by what has happened to them, things they have heard, whether they want to or not [20].

In order to start the learning process, following the teaching process, it is important to use the special techniques, called 3A. The technique 3A is based on three rules:

- awareness,
- abilities.
- action.

This technique is aimed at a gradual way of obtaining and improving knowledge. In the first phase, which has to be initiated by a trainer doing the training session, the opportunity to get new useful tools has to be shown to the learners. Afterwards there is a time to relay certain knowledge and procedures to do new tasks. In the last phase of the 3A technique a trainer should convince apprentices to put into practice their new knowledge by practical exercises. They should be strongly connected with jobs and professional tasks, indicating the relevance of the training.

J. O'Connor and J. Seymour in their book "Training with NLP. Skills for Managers Trainers and Communicators" claim that a learning process influences both human values and beliefs, and in the end it can create emotions indispensable to an efficient way of obtaining new knowledge. As far as learning is concerned R. Dilts reckons that this process is used to be carried out on many different levels.

The first one is an environment, which gives to a learner **general knowledge** about his surrounding and people who he goes along with.

In some cases trainings are focused on **general knowledge** from some discipline. It is said that trainings should be practical, but this is not the rule to all trainings. When participants likely know quite little about the discipline a session must focus on general rules, patterns and definitions. Authors found these issues in the "Creative thinking and decision making" offered by Exbis Experci Biznesmenom Sp. J.

The second level is a behaviour, which is said to be an action in the real world. The third means **skills and flairs**. Many trainings sessions are overloaded with techniques and practical exercises comparing to a length in time and amount of theory. An example in this kind is a session on "Training of creativity" offered by Profirma Sp. z o.o. From the first sight it looks useful and as if it is a toolbox for a manager. Authors assumed that it is not possible to teach people described techniques of increasing creativity in 2 days. The focus on **skills and flairs** is worth attending the session but there is a lack of theory indispensible to understand the processes in creativity.

The fourth level of learning includes forming **beliefs and values**. "Creative business problem solving" by Ernst&Young can be an example of a training which concern this level of engagement.

The fifth level is creating the identity of learners, which takes an effect as **a definition** of a life mission. A few trainings found was connected with a life mission. Such a training is organized by House of Skills and it is for managers who want to inspire others to do better and to look for inventions. What more even its name shows the content: "The art of innovative action".

The last but not least, most profound level of learning, is when a learner can base his thinking on **spiritual values and merits**. Some topics reach also this high level of inspiration. An example is "KAIZEN Management System" offered by Profes Centrum Kształcenia i Doradztwa Sp. j. This training is based on the Japanese philosophy of optimization in companies and it requires also **spiritual engagement** in order to obtain high results [5].

It is worth mentioning that most of courses, trainings and school education are focused mainly on the first, environmental level. Rarely it reaches the second and the third one

making an influence on behaviors, abilities and skills. Very often only the first level is understood as an education process and the others are left to learners. Additionally as employees and managers are concerned during the school education they obtained three main barriers against effective learning:

- critical and logical ("at school I always felt bored and confused, so for sure nothing has changed"),
- predicting and emotional ("I'm sure I again will not know what it is about"),
- critical and social ("hardly anyone is an omnibus, so I will not be different from others").
- In the literature there is a great impact on understanding needs of learners, particularly educational needs of employees and managers of firms. If a trainer manages to get inside the world of participants of a training, the barriers can be easily removed.
- R. D. Stone gives some advice to anyone involved in providing training (training directors, project managers, training designers and others). He described his copyrighted process, Performance Alignment Linkage (PAL) and emphasized the importance of always talking in terms of performance and results, not learning. The process itself consists of 11 steps:
  - Determine the assessment strategy
  - Conduct detailed assessment and identify alternative solutions
  - Administer situational risk assessment and analysis
  - Propose a solution and negotiate a performance contract
  - Get a Go-No Go solution decision
  - Finalize delivery design and strategy
  - Develop/acquire performance components
  - Implement preengagement activity
  - Deliver performance solution and assess learning an initial reaction
  - Trigger transfer strategy
  - Rapid verification of results and follow-up steps [23].

A.Sparks, H.Ingram and S.Phillips present an innovative way to train adult apprentices for the construction industry (the AEAAS program – Advanced Entry Adult Apprenticeship Scheme). The program supplemented the traditional four-staged (four-year) apprenticeship program practiced in the enterprises with a dynamic two-staged pathway to trade qualification. Therefore the process of learning was accelerated and could bring evident benefits to employees and apprentices. To sum up benefits offered by the AEAAS training model are for organizations:

- providing immediate skills to a project site,
- creating and maintaining a guaranteed element of the skilled workforce,
- improving the risk mitigation for workplace health and safety,
- affecting bottom-line productivity gains,
- enabling accelerated acquisition of full trade qualifications,
- capitalizing and encouraging a loyalty factor for existing workers offered the program,
- identifying and positioning a new generation of supervisors,
- supporting the mobility of an essential work force where they are needed [24].

For the apprentices there are some recommendations:

recognized value of existing skills and experiences,

- increased self-worth,
- the gaining of formal qualifications quickly,
- accessing to high pay an conditions while completing training,
- secure working career relationships with industry enterprise,
- making possible a career pathway to supervisor roles [24].

## 4. Linking to the part 2

The next issues which was taken into consideration during the introductory research and conclusions after the research there are in the paper "Diagnosis of management trainings on innovations. Part 2".

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