

# Advantages and disadvantages of national and international corporate training techniques in adult education

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**Significant changes in various spheres of life along with the dynamic growth of industrial capacity and complexity have contributed to the increasing importance of corporate training issues in adult and continuing education. Here, we identify the benefits and difficulties encountered in both national and international techniques of training the human resource in enterprises, under modern conditions. The leading method in this challenge was a comparative-and-contrastive method that allowed us to identify advantages and disadvantages, of national and international techniques of corporate education. Our study also disclosed the contents, peculiarities and difficulties in the use of corporate training methods like distance and modular learning; video and case study; business games, metaphorical games, role-playing games; brainstorming, projects, behavioural modelling, mentoring, learning-by-doing, working groups, basket method, training sessions, storytelling, rotation, secondment and buddying. Selecting the proper corporate training method or technique, depends on specific nature of industries and business, and the country's development level. Our study hopes to help managers, mentors in enterprises, and trainers who are engaged in in-house training of specialists to do their jobs better.**

**Keywords:** Advantages and disadvantages, corporate training, enterprises, national and international techniques.

DEVELOPMENT of personnel, their professional competencies and personal qualities, is a major condition for improving and maintaining the competitiveness of a modern enterprise. Therefore, corporate learning is of special importance and value for employees, as it impacts the development of their skills and abilities, required in the external labour market<sup>1,2</sup>.

Contemporary international and Russian experience shows that it does not matter when a manager or expert graduates from the university; his knowledge and skills are still insufficient to work successfully in the company<sup>3</sup>.

New technology and Russia's integration into the world economy, requires specialists to improve their qualification, master new technologies and methods<sup>4-7</sup>.

The experiences of major developed countries indicate the effectiveness of applying advanced techniques of corporate education for promoting leadership of the companies in the international labour market. Investment into preparation and retraining of personnel in leading companies, contributes to achieving leading market positions, thus ensuring maximum self-fulfilment and pay-off in terms of career development. This has proved to be an important factor of professional development<sup>8,9</sup>. However, the qualitative relationship of techniques used in transnational companies cannot be ignored by developing or developed companies, as the dynamic development of HR in any company depends on a constant study of the issue related to the world potential and conditions for steady economic development.

## Features of corporate training experience abroad

Before studying foreign techniques used in corporate training of HR, we highlight its features in developed countries such as USA, Great Britain, France and Japan.

## Study of corporate training experience in USA

In USA, corporate training focuses on further developing university graduates and interns, primarily managers. The probability of corporate programme success is 50% and above, for people with higher education. Managers with Masters and Ph D degrees earn twice as much as Bachelor degree holders. Americans believe that if a management team is small, it can considerably influence and improve the company's profitability.

HR corporate training can be provided only by larger companies, some of which do not have their own corporate training systems and hence, they group together to create intercompany training and further-development centres. Unlike Japanese and German companies, the US HR training is not considered as part of their competitive strategy. The per capita annual expenditure on corporate

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training in German companies is twice as much as in USA, and in the field of worker training, it is 17 times as much<sup>10</sup>. In France, the companies imparting corporate training for their personnel receive tax benefits<sup>10</sup>; in USA the government promulgates flexible policies and strategic guidance to support employee development and leadership employee engagement strategies<sup>10,11</sup>.

### Corporate training in France

In France corporate training is carried out through short-term and highly specialized courses. The system is based on the pressure to train and retrain the HR taking into account the specific features of business they work in. Preference is given to on-the-job training.

The system of in-company (in-house) HR retraining (or development) and their qualification upgrading is as follows: training objectives and goals connected with the general strategy of the company are set; training for managers of subdivisions is arranged; training is practical and carried out expeditiously with periodic assessment; there is a balance between the length of training and coverage of various personnel groups, as specialists believe that every year 30% and more of each professional group should improve their competence or qualifications<sup>7</sup>.

### Corporate training features in Great Britain

British companies also prefer to train and develop their employees in workplace, because out-of-house (external) training is associated with problems, e.g. expenditure; and managers will have to put up with the fact that the employee is not in his workplace, and will have to plan his off-work time with the period of training programme. There may be also personal problems. One important problem is that knowledge obtained during the course is not applicable to the work place, because it might not meet the existing standards and requirements established by the company authorities or colleagues<sup>5,12</sup>.

Training in the workplace is one of the most efficient and cost-efficient ways of improving HR qualification. Among various popular training techniques and methods, there are two most cost-effective and well-proven ones – advanced experience, know-how sharing and skills mastery and mentoring.

### Results

Russian corporate training practice is based on both traditional and foreign forms and techniques, such as modular training, case studies, education, training sessions, business games, role playing, metaphoric games, brainstorming, projects, behavioural modelling, mentoring, storytelling,

learning-by-doing, working team training, in-basket, rotation (horizontal, vertical), etc. The benefits of foreign and domestic techniques in corporate training are presented in Table 1.

The problems and disadvantages occurring while implementing both foreign and domestic techniques may be adapted for use in Russian corporate HR education and thus contribute to the overall success of corporate training. Hence, if used reasonably, they might be integrated into the Russian corporate practice of training technical specialists.

### Discussion

It should be noted that advanced international experience related to corporate HR training is used cautiously in Russia, because majority of enterprises and companies still remain closed for innovations in the field of training and developing HR competencies, or qualifications. At the same time, rational organization of corporate HR training contributes to profitability of enterprises, job prestige, developing corporate culture of the enterprise, improving mentoring, its continuity and positive impact on competitiveness of the enterprise as a whole.

Mere copying of foreign forms and techniques of corporate HR training is not reasonable and advantageous unless there is constructive analysis of their use under the conditions of Russian enterprises. This opinion is based on the fact that, otherwise, we could lose our own best practices in the field of engineering pedagogy, which served as trigger and ensured progressive development of Russian advanced companies.

All the above considered techniques popular in foreign practice of corporate training, make it possible to conclude that it is not the quantity that is key when transferring or delivering strong and rich experiences, but the balanced, integral and holistic character of a set of techniques. This being the case, competitiveness of an organization may be ensured.

### Conclusion

We conclude by reiterating that among the most common and widely used techniques of corporate HR education and training, there are those that may be distinguished as the most effective ones: secondment (a temporary transfer to another job, rotation), buddying (assigning a buddy to a new member of staff), e-learning (remote instruction), business simulations (business-simulation or the imitation of management), in-basket method, storytelling (informing about the history), etc.

In the domestic practice of corporate training, it is common to use conventional forms and techniques: training sessions, business games, role-plays, metaphoric games, brainstorms, projects, behavioural simulation, training

**Table 1.** Forms and methods of training used in corporate training

	Brief description	Merits	Demerits
Modular learning	Independent and complete topical fragment of training directed toward solution of specific objectives or development of the necessary skills for specific purposes, tasks and levels of material study, to determine the skills needed and to achieve necessary results.	Active participation of the trainees; Possibility to change the sequence of modules depending on the trainees' requirements	Modules depend on each other; Mandatory sequence of modules
Case study	Involves an up-close, in-depth, and detailed examination of a subject, as well as its related contextual conditions. Is conducted through practical activity, discussions, group or individual alternative optimal solutions, reinforcing the knowledge and skills for further use in practice.	High level of participation; Control and assessment of knowledge acquired; Urgency of issues considered; Linking learning to practice	Time, expenditure when discussion is not organized properly; The result depends on necessary knowledge and experience acquisition, which in turn needs to be directed and controlled by a trainee; Training requirements for trainers
Training sessions	Ensures intensive and interactive instruction to obtain communicative skills, sharing of professional experience between trainees, possessing skills of practical value and saving time and resources.	Opportunity to develop and reinforce the necessary skills; Opportunity to change the attitude to one's own experience and approaches	Difficulties in analysing one's own behaviour; Need for conducting post training classes to reinforce and strengthen training effects
Business game	Training on the basis of themes, situations and materials that simulate real professional activities. It is effective as the method of instruction makes it possible to reduce operating cycles and demonstrates the eventual solutions made and actions of participants. It offers the opportunity for generating and enriching knowledge through creative and emotional interaction with partners.	Connection with professional activity; Predicting the eventual results; Comprehensive coverage; Training in simulation of real situations	Requires specific rules and introductory information which determines the sequence and content of the game; Printing of the most frequent models of real situations and the needs constant updating
Metaphoric games	Creative immersion into the situation of changed stereotypes, directed toward generation of new activities and shift of the attitude. It is accompanied by introduction of 'support team' with the aim of studying competitors; developing optimal strategy to expose effective models of behaviour that can be transferred into work situation.	Develops trainee's creativity; Attractive for application with all categories of trainees; Participants are free to solve the set situations	Requires metaphorical proficiency of participants, i.e. knowledge of legends, parables, and so forth
Role play	Active training of interpersonal interaction, and simulation, or reproduction of real or typical work situations with roles of various leaders and subordinates, considered as preparation for management jobs.	The instruction in habits of interpersonal communication; Makes it possible to understand the motives of the behaviour of one or another worker; Makes it possible to see typical errors.	Requires combination of various types of trainings; Requires appropriate qualification of the trainer (instructor).
Brainstorming	Involves collection of various ideas and recording them in written form. Effectiveness depends on participation level of leaders who act as hosts and well informed about the purposes and objects considered and are capable of managing the procedure and process of generating new ideas.	Does not require preparation; Does not require development of ideas; Can help overcome psychological stress, or barrier; Contributes to constructive criticism	Is not suitable for solving complex problems; Does not have criteria to evaluate the strength of solutions; Difficulty in determining the best ideas; Difficulties in management.

(Contd)

Table 1. (Contd)

	Brief description	Merits	Demerits
Projects	Predicts the combination of individual's independent work and the work in collaboration with small groups, in a team. The work with diverse information sources, use search and research methods which make it possible to expose alternative points of view	Makes it possible to form one's point of view, to generalize the material; Contributes to forming corporate and research culture	Requires scientific management; Requires high level of multi-professional competencies for developing projects in the team
Behavioural simulation	Involves training concrete skills and attitudes connected with the fulfilment of professional activities via simulated and proposed behavioural models. Requires trainee's confidence and willingness to follow the model which can be ensured by the transparency of desired result.	Contributes to developing interpersonal communication skills; Takes into account person's individual features; Is flexible in time	Requires confidence and willingness of trainees to follow the model of the behaviour proposed; Requires results' transparency; Dependence of this method on the level of a trainee's motivation
Mentoring	Professional training and adaptation of young trainees of the company which implies sharing experiences with highly qualified trainers and being informed about peculiarities of work in the company as well as corporate valuables. The training is carried out in the workplace in working hours which contributes to minimization of adaptation and implementation period.	On-the-job training; Contributes to adaptation of young specialists; Ensures success in developing corporate culture in the personnel; Ensures professional growth of colleagues.	Requires experience in training, high qualification corresponding to company requirements related to personal qualities and competencies which help the trainer to conduct the activity.
Story telling	Telling stories on the lives of peers and colleagues to present information about traditions, philosophy and corporate culture of the company <sup>13</sup> . It includes study of necessary local regulations.	Facilitates the period of adaptation; Promotes loyalty of new colleague to the company.	Requires high level of qualification, knowledge of history, current situation and prospects of the organization; requires skills developed within the short period to moderate the colleagues
Training (learning) through participation	Corporate management makes it possible to effectively solve emerging organizational challenges through participation, involvement; development of the structure and dynamics of changes without removing the employee from his job. It is characterized by a combination of regular situation analysis, setting new goals and thinking through steps to achieve them.	Development of decision making skills; Development planning, plan fulfilment and goal setting skills; Opportunity to solve business problems; Close connection with professional activity.	Requires peers, colleagues (assistants) capable of solving complex real-life problems to overcome the gap, imaginary and real in the company.
Training in work teams	Workgroups, or teams, consisting of specialists of different levels are formed to solve specific problems in certain time interval; develop the algorithm of the tasks set, and determine the length of time needed to solve them. The team proposals are considered by the company management and can be either accepted or rejected.	Different trainee groups enrolled regardless of their level of qualification; Development of self-determination and independence of employees; Forming decision making skills; Increasing their motivation.	Requires that the group has been previously informed and trained on methodology and analytical methods of problem solving.
In basket	Training based on imitation of frequent work situations characteristic to senior executives and managers to identify and train their management talent and skills. A trainee is given a list of items (a number of mails, telephone calls, documents and memos, planned and unplanned meetings, etc.) which must be addressed within a certain time frame. He/she is asked to prioritize the	Develops the capability to analyse and select the more important factors; High level of motivation; Involvement into the process of problem solving; Unbiased assessment of participants	Requires preliminary training on how to work with documents and objective self-assessment of one's own abilities to analyse, understand the system and select the most significant factors that help to consider the problems according to degree of their urgency, and determine ways and methods to solve them successfully.

(Contd)

## RESEARCH ARTICLES

**Table 1.** (Contd)

	Brief description	Merits	Demerits
	items and justify his/her reasons to the panel, to determine what is important and what is urgent. A number of problems are kept in the 'in basket'. The worker has to look at the problems and solve them; he/she transfers them to the 'out-basket'.		
Rotation	Independent and autonomous training through rotational programmes (through different parts of a company) or specific, structured training programmes. The trainee/employee temporarily rotates in different departments within the organization, performing different tasks unrelated to his original job. The employee acquires new skills, polyvalent qualification. He gains perspective on various areas of organization, overcomes the consequences of boredom and monotony, enriching it by new social contacts that contribute to creation of positive motivation.	Contributes to developing new poly-professional competencies; Motivates; Helps to overcome the stress caused by monotonous work; Best application of knowledge, abilities, interests; Opens new opportunities and expand contacts, learns necessary skills which can help the employee to advance within a company.	Requires to create conditions for free systematic movement of employees from one job to another within the structure of the organization, which in its turn prevents them from using previously acquired skills; Possible discrepancies between desired and proposed jobs or positions in the organization.
Secondment	Similar to rotation, difference is in the fact that a 'job-swap' may take place not only in another division of the same company, but also in external organization, in different sphere and then returning to previous positions <sup>14</sup> .	Developing poly-professional competencies; Trainee's personality development; Improvement of interpersonal communication skills.	Requires creating conditions for free systematic movement of employees from one job to another and prevents them from using previously acquired skills; Risk of possible discrepancies between desired and proposed jobs or positions in the organization.
Buddying	A technique to help already capable staff to learn how to apply their skills more quickly, to reduce floundering at work when a new hire starts. Ensures positive feedback and constructive criticism when developing new skills through accomplishing a task and new current responsibilities. In contrast to tutoring, it means equal partnership of trainee and his guide.	Opportunity to have a detached observer point of view and see disadvantages; Equal rights of the participants; Opportunity for a trainee to outline his advance within the company.	Requires to ensure objective feedback and information; Constant control by, or on behalf of, HR department.
Shadowing	Opportunity to immerse for a certain period of time into the role of an executive a better idea of the job. The trainee gains information concerning special features and knowledge necessary for the position chosen. It is effective in re-training.	Contributes to rapid adaptation of a trainee; Allows to be immersed into the real professional activity.	Requires desire and willingness of senior executives and managers to share their experience; Requires necessary conditions to be created for trainers to objectively evaluate and assess their abilities.

in work teams, training through participation, and instructions. Companies using their practice modular learning, case study, buddying, storytelling, in-basket, secondment, or coaching are rather rare. Selection of forms and techniques in corporate training is determined by the fact that they are in demand and became an integral part of the system due to specific factor characteristics. The most significant reason is their effectiveness in the current stage of development.

The experience gained in national and international corporate training, and the study of advantages and disadvantages related to the methods applied, make it possible to design and develop the educational and academic process considering its potential for successful application in the Russian corporate education system. The experience proved to be helpful while developing special methods and techniques, curricula, learning and teaching material in Russian enterprises.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. We thank the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

Received 28 September 2015; revised accepted 3 June 2016

doi: 10.18520/cs/v11i9/1480-1485

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