On the Quality of Vocational Training of Specialists:
Why Russian Employers Are Not Satisfied with Them?

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Abstract: This article is devoted to the evolution of the requirements of Russian employers to vocational training system at the turn of 20th century. The role of the evolution of the requirements, that insisted on diversification of the vocational training system and abstracting bachelor’s master’s and further education levels, is showed. The reasons why quality of vocational training is decreased are revealed. According to the authors of this article the major reason lies in neglecting practical aspects of the training at academic workshops and enterprises. The necessity to form students’ adaptive skills during their work activities which implies public-private partnership of education institutions and private enterprises (the customers of the human resources). The ways of solution of vocational training compliance with labor market requirements are discussed. The authors consider realization of corporate education at enterprises (customers) as one of the way of solutions. This kind of teaching on condition of partnership with enterprises is considered by the authors as a form of internship combined with work. The interaction between employer and education institution is considered as means of increasing quality of vocational training.

Key words: Employer • Vocational training • Specialist • Employer’s requirements • Education institution

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of the employer requirements for the governmental system of education.

The requirements of Russian employers for Russian education system are not constant and defined by economical conditions of the country.

The recession in 90’s in Russia led to devaluation of the human resources. It was on of the reasons of boom in the sphere of higher education in Russia. It increased in 2,5 times the amount of students and commercialized Russian education system. Such dramatic changes adversely affected on the quality of the vocational training. And, as a result, in the late 90’s Russian government began to reform vocational education system.

New times and free market economy required a new kind of employee-flexible, ready-to-learn and adaptive. This again challenged Russian study process and education system as a whole. The institutions found themselves under double-sided pressure: on one hand they needed to renew educational technologies, on the other hand they faced the lack of financial, material and employment resources at the same time. This naturally resulted in segmentation of the education market: cheap lower-quality, affordable average quality and prestigious institutions segments respectively.

After the economic growth of 2000’s (about 9%) employers’ requirements for employees and graduates became more and more strict. The key requirement is a graduation certificate. This requirement implied rather good breeding than professional skills. Consequently increasingly more school-leavers pursued higher education. Meanwhile employers became progressively less literate on labor-market and introduced more strict selection of job-applicants. Along with job interview employers introduced testing and survey of job-applicants. Soon it became clear that graduation certificate was not enough for getting good job position and, especially, for obtaining quick promotion. In the issue second graduation certificate and other kinds of further education became popular in demand among the employers. This meant diversification of the vocational training system and introduction of bachelor's degree over which built master's degree and other kinds of further continuing education that quickly responded to employer's demand. These reforms spanned the whole
system of higher education and ran through legislation. Meantime employers expressed their attitude towards mass-education of specialists: along with the certificate, graduates must have certain competences. This implied inevitable changes in education system. The employers turned into prevailing customers. According to the results of the sociological survey [1, 2] in early 2000s customers faced lack of qualified human resources. Consequently the customers became more open to interact with the education institutions in order to find new qualified employees. This meant that employers became direct customers of qualified human resources, instead of ministry officials that formerly represented employers' interests. But the main thing that changed is the approach of demand. Earlier it was based on number of students with quality standards of education to be defined by government. Later the demand was based on immediate requirements of an employer. This consequently deprecated conventional approach of the education system. And there became more sharply a question: whether to follow governmental education standards or employers' requirements? This question unburies another one-fast changing of a notion of a proper employee. Government doesn’t keep education standards up to date; but the main requirement of an employer is the accommodation to a changing labor conditions. The sufficient job-applicant should have:

- Motivation
- Team-work skills
- Ability to resolve irregular situations
- Ability to act responsibly
- Ability and desire to learn new
- Great work capacity [3].

While higher education grows in popularity the prospects of secondary vocational training become vaguer.

The most often private enterprises had complaint about level of training of a specialist that studied at secondary and secondary vocational training institutions (45% and 38% of complaints respectively) and tertiary (higher) education institutions (about one third of the respondents). 25% of respondents noted high level of theoretical knowledge while high level of practical skill noted only 10% of respondents.

The customary of signing social agreement with enterprises, where undergraduates carry out their internship and consequently work at, grew more popular. As social partners employers do not feel indifference to personal traits of their employees-both to older and younger generations.

**Employers Note Following Weaknesses of Employees:**
- Lack of professional skills of a young employee;
- Lack of discipline
- Irresponsible attitude towards workplace
- Lack of chemistry with other employees.

The atmosphere on the enterprise also plays its significant role. 18.8% of employers complain about lack of discipline of their employees. 56.4% of them say that debauchery is the main misbehavior. A propos debauchery of younger employees wasn't mentioned at all. Lack of chemistry among older employees is not significant (6.3%) [1, 2].

**The Reasons of Decrease of the Training Level:**

The present economical state of affairs in Russia forces to reconsider both theoretical and practical approaches towards vocational training. Gradually grows incompliance between requirements of the training and the level of this training.

The main reason of this phenomenon is considered to be decrease of the attention to student’s internship activities which is observed in recent years.

According to the analysis of the level of training among students shows following issues:

- Internship still remains the part of the training process and, in order to cope with these problems, the principles of the interaction between businesses and education institutions must be worked out.
- Internship is still carried out on obsolete equipment; modern equipment and advanced technologies along with corresponding manuals are not accessible to the interns because of classified character of the new technologies.
- Industrial enterprises still treat interns as a burden since short-term internship doesn’t introduce them into well-adjusted technological process. Interns have a predisposition of temporary attendance and don’t fancy themselves as a part of enterprise.
- Low interested motives of the interns
- The enterprises remain partially indifferent to supply educational institutions with up-to-date equipment. Consequently graduate first encountered with the equipment turns out to be unaware of its specifications and feel uncertainty during his/her early work activities.

The above mentioned issues dictate necessary modernization of practical education, taking into account present economic state of affairs that regard: [5, 6].
Enterprises are becoming increasingly more interested in “human resources” as crucial factor for the businesses to be competitive. The new advanced technologies along with a capability of an employee to fully implement all his/her potential. This predetermines the effectiveness of production and assures the quality of work performance. Therefore the quality parameters of the “human resources” are made highlighted such as: hard work capability, psychological endurance, high level of experience, broad span of the professional knowledge.

The growing expenses on specialists' training and their further education in order to provide more effectiveness of labor, active and flexible interaction between specialists and to create an opportunity to participate application of new advanced technologies.

Mastering and implementation of new advanced technologies, modernization of current technologies and equipment, introduction of resource-saving and environmental-friendly technologies.

Provision with the information regarding professional activities-it will bring more intelligence to the activities.

Decentralization: time flexibility; more independence of employees that will bring brevity of decision-making.

Complexity to manage present production, executive and social systems; the human-factor risks, risks of situation to get out of hand; emphasizing role upbringing, healthcare functions of labor. They predetermine the crucial significance of the professional requirements such as: intelligence, competitiveness, awareness of dependency on satisfying society needs.

Regarding present economic state of affairs vocational schools must train labor-adaptation skills to students which imply interaction between the government and private enterprises (the customers of human resources).

Therefore the interaction between theoretical and practical features of training is implied. The connection between training and labor, the optimal combination between cognitive and productive basics are the key-stones of internship-oriented training in vocational schools.

The interaction between the government and the enterprises results in following opportunities:

- The easy access to labor market information (which and how many specialists are needed for the employers).
- The provision of the employers’ requirements to the curriculum.
- The opportunity to amend current curricula or to work out new ones.
- The opportunity to arrange students’ internship.
- The opportunity to arrange teachers’ internship,
- The higher possibility of the job placement for graduates.

The Vocational Training Compliance to the Labor Market Requirements: During recent 4-5 years the issue of vocational training compliance to the labor-market requirements became more actual for Russian education institutions.

Contemporary society; production; goods, services and labor markets are not stagnant. Fast change becomes a trait of a present-day life at all levels: global, regional, social and individual. These fundamentally new conditions make new requirements to vocational training at all levels of the training. International standard of the education is the new requirement nowadays that satisfy demands of all customers: personality, society, government, enterprise.

Today a Perfect Candidate Should Have:

- Abilities to adapt quickly to changing conditions, to learn new, to apply his/her knowledge for solving arising problems.
- Abilities of critical thinking, observation; abilities to solve problem using advanced ways of solution.
- Consciousness where and how an employee’s skills can be applied in practical activities.
- Creativity.
- Literacy to work with information.
- Sociability with various kinds of groups spheres of work activity. Ability to prevent and evade conflicts.

Analysis of these requirements to a job candidate is based on thesis that usefulness of an employee is made of his/her characteristics. The employer will prefer one employee to another because the employee reckons some features of an employee more useful than another ones.

The preferences are usually defined with the requirements of the job-position: the character of work and workplace and role than employee will play at this...
job-position. Every vocation requires some set of personal traits, some of them, affected with features of a certain work activities, acquire vocational characteristics.

The set of employer’s requirements is not stagnant and is defined with economy state of affairs (both at state and enterprise level). The more job-applicants there are the more wide choices.

These days employer, approaching to the labor market, uses only reduced set of the requirements. The most general requirements are specialty-relevance, work-experience and graduation certificate. The employer also looks at age, gender, specific skills such as computer literacy etc. As a rule personal traits are never mentioned. For the employers the most important requirements will be graduation certificate (almost 100% of vacancies), work experience (at least 2-5 years), computer literacy, age (under 40-45).

The selection of candidates becomes increasingly stricter these days. Along with graduation certificate grows the role of work experience. Although employer always demands certain level of the education, labor-market specialists always treat it as a second priority. A graduation certificate is considered to be minor factor for getting job-position.

Often the work experience is treated as major parameter for the employer (3-5 years for the most vacancies but there are ones spanning from 1 to 20 years depending on the sphere work activity).

As the labor-market specialists say, the work experience is preferred because of following reasons:

- Economy of time and finances that should have been spent on training of inexperienced employee;
- Knowledge of an experienced employee could bring new ideas and rationalize work process on enterprise;
- Experienced employee could easier make decision in case of critical situation reasoning from the situations he/she encountered before.

Nonetheless sometimes it is more preferable to prefer young, initiative specialist to conservative employees that are unable to progress and learn new. Making this decision CEO put personal traits as a highest priority.

It should be noted that there is a contradictory requirements of an age and experience. Employers wish to see an employee both young and experienced (about 5 years of work experience and advisably to have a graduation certificate as well).

The Interaction Between an Employer and Vocational Training System: Meeting Each Other: These days employers expect from the government more rights: to regulate the relationship with education institutions, to stimulate training of future employee, to amend relevant laws. Those are the features of social partnership in Russia.

Also Russian employers constitute a system of inner training. Employer considers training at workplace more effective than taken at the institutions. This approach displays understanding that on condition of present economic state of affairs training at the institution will never be high-quality enough. Only the collaboration will make a desirable result.

The main criterion that employer focuses on is the readiness to start career right after graduation. In order to train such specialists it is necessary that institutions and enterprises (as a customers of personnel) share participation in undergraduate's education.

Besides, training carried out together with enterprises allows approximating the training towards solution of problem of lack of personnel at the enterprise. This, above all, concerns replacement of retired employees, introduction of new equipment since the training is carried out in order to occupy certain job-position. Training combined with work will allow to solve staff scarcity before enterprises pick up prosperity and popularity. This concerns some defense-related production enterprises.

Thus interaction between enterprises and education institutions will make a new kind relationship. This relationship still remains to be problematic and controversial which is accounted for fast change of the economy paradigm. Nevertheless, despite a great deal of mutual complaints, employers and education institutions collaborate more actively. They look for the points of contract in order to form curriculum and define minimum requirements for a graduate. For the time being it is only the first layer of the issues. The second one lies in finding of effective interaction between enterprises and vocational training system and shortcut the way between them.

As one of the way of solution we consider the realization of corporate education of students at the enterprises-customers [5, 6].

We also consider corporate education as a form of internship combined with work at enterprises.
For different spheres of enterprises, in order to gain prosperity on the market, specialists of different skills are needed. That is why, during the training process, internship aspects of future work must be taken into account. In order to facilitate solution of this problem continual internship training must be introduced. Such system must be based upon “new technology” of training; where everything is built on interaction between education institutions and enterprises where continuing education of student’s personality, where students can compare theory and practice, where principle of training along with practice is realized at a new advanced level.

In accordance with works [7-11] we can emphasize the following advantages of corporate education in comparison with conventional training:

- First of all, corporate education perform complimentary role in theory training.
- Secondly, interns acquire professional skills that facilitate further continuing education in changing conditions of labor-market.
- Thirdly, corporate education implies direct participation of enterprises in vocational training. Enterprises give an opportunity both to carry out internship and to work and bear expenses including wages. Education institutions collaborate with enterprises, where internship is carried out, on a parity basis.
- Fourthly, government as well as local institutions, enterprises and unions share the expenses on corporate education. Not only big businesses must participate the training but also middle and small ones.
- Fifthly, during the implementation of corporate education the principle of interdepartmental and inter-branch interaction must be introduced in order to consolidate material and human resources.
- Sixthly, to monitor both needs of human resources and vocational training in corporate education special psychological surveys, analysis of needs of enterprises is carried out. This allows providing flexibility of the number of the graduates of a certain specialty.
- In the seventh, during the implementation of corporate education good education equipment provision is treated as a highest priority. Enterprises provide education institutions with modern advanced equipment.

Aforesaid allows to consider corporate education as a promising, facilitating achievement of goals of the vocational training and providing training of skillful, competent specialist that satisfies the requirements of both production and labor-market.

**Resume:** Analysis is carried out. Variable requirements to the education system of the employers are revealed. Thus transition to a new economic paradigm during 90s demanded a new kind of employee-flexible, ready-to-learn. At the turn of the 20th century employer became a prevailing customer. The custom went immediately to the education institutions instead of ministry officials that represented customers’ interests. The principles of the custom also changed: previously defined with the quantity of graduates along with quality of the education defined with governmental educational standards, now it is defined with quality requirements of an employer.

Today, in the new economic paradigm vocational schools have met a new challenge-to teach students to be more accommodative which means public-private partnership of the enterprises and education institutions. The main criterion that employer focuses on is the readiness to start career right after graduation. In order to train such specialists it is necessary that institutions and enterprises (as a customers of personnel) share participation in undergraduate's education.

One of the ways of solution of this problem lies in the realization of corporate education of students at the enterprises.

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