

The Role of Education System in Adaptation of Graduates from Russian Institutes and Colleges at European Enterprises (By Example of Service Companies)

Nataliya A. Zaitseva

Russian State University of Tourism and Service, Pushkin Area, Moscow Region, Russia

Abstract: The paper considers the problems of adaptation of graduates from Russian universities to work at European service enterprises. Different types of adaptation (organizational, social-psychological, professional and psycho-physiological) and the role of universities in the preparation of graduates to the adaptations are studied taking into account the demands of contemporary European business. We present examples of interaction of universities and colleges with business for the purposes of practicing and probing the students and their preparation for work in the international service companies; e.g. programs of international hotel networks “Radisson” and “Marriott” are presented. Recommendations are given for organizing and conducting the trainings for students, aimed at their gaining the professional competences in the sphere of visitor service standards, cross-cultural management and intercultural communications. Recommendations concerning technologies and student education forms are given (cases, role plays, working in mini-groups, facilitation, moderation and others). The paper concludes with results of the research, conducted by the author of the paper in the Russian State University of Tourism and Service, into the influence of active education forms and, in particular, master-classes and other forms of interaction with business and abroad probations upon the further efficiency of adaptation of graduates from universities.

Key words: Education • College • Institute • Service • Competences • Service companies

INTRODUCTION

Under the conditions of rising innovative activity of European companies [1,2] and, simultaneously, under the conditions of world's tendencies of population aging, increasingly more attention in business is paid to the quality of professional training of graduates from universities and colleges and, in particular, from Russian universities [3].

When hiring young employees, it is very important to reduce the period of their adaptation and to make the adaptation more efficient.

Adaptation (from the Latin *adaptati* meaning adjustment), as applied to the problem considered in this paper, means adjustment, accommodation of the employee to new organization, new position. The importance of adaptation stems from the fact that, according to statistics, from 80 to 90% of employees, who left their job within the first year of work, took this decision as early as

the first day of their stay in a new organization [4]. The efficiency of adaptation of new employees and, in particular, those for whom new organization is the first job after they obtained professional education, depends much on the preparedness of the employee for work. This problem is especially urgent for those who, after they obtained Russian education, are hired in European companies and, in particular, in service sphere.

First of all, we will consider which types of adaptation may really be and how institutes and colleges can prepare their graduates for this.

The Main Part: Organizational adaptation is based on the fact that new employee understands and accepts his organizational status, organization structure and the existing mechanisms of management in the concrete company in the service sphere and, in particular, taking into account the specific national features of business management.

When a graduate is prepared for organizational adaptation, more attention in the training process should be paid to both theoretical aspects (business organization basics, specific business features in different European countries, formation principles of enterprise management structure, system of internal and external communications and other questions) and to the practical skills (resolution of practical situations in real business with the use of active forms of training).

Socio-psychological adaptation of the employee is his acceptance of new norms of interrelations, behavior in a given organization and adaptation to a new society. To eliminate problems associated with such a kind of adaptation, the graduates in institutes and colleges should be introduced with the basics of cross-cultural management, traditions and specific features of business management in some or other country. In order for graduates to acquire practical skills in the case of specific conditions of realization of work activities (closure or remoteness of enterprise divisions (network business)) it is worth accomplishing the social-psychological trainings, aimed to create specific norms and style of relationships during work under these conditions.

Professional adaptation is a gradual perfection of professional skills and collaboration skills, raising them to a certain level necessary for a new employee to realize his functional responsibilities at a technologically required level.

The role of an institute or a college can now lie in that, during practical lessons and abroad probations of students, these former should be organized such as to help a student to acquire as much experience in the professional sphere as possible. This is especially important for the sphere of services, since competitiveness of the graduate on the European labor-market will be higher if he had already got practical experience and awareness with work if not abroad, then at least in network business of international company and is acquainted with the work principles and corporate standards in restaurants and hotels of international corporations.

Psycho-physiological adaptation is connected with the adjustment of the employee to the concrete regime of work and rest, accepted in a given organization for particular job position. Unstandardized working regime and night shifts can cause physiological discomfort in those who worked previously under different conditions such as exactly from 9 to 18 o'clock.

Preparation for such a kind of adaptation in institute or college can be reduced to the ability of the graduate to carry out autodiagnosics of his abilities and skills and, in particular, in physiological terms.

Factors, influencing the process of adaptation, which depend on the new employee himself, can be divided into two groups [5]:

- Employee competence, i.e. the knowledge, skills and abilities in the professional sphere of activities, previous work experience in a similar position and, in particular, during practices and probations.
- Socio-psychological factors, i.e. the flexibility, adaptability, sociability, stress resistance, motivation system, expectation level and others.

The usual structure of the training is as follows: approximately 25% of training accounts for concentrated theory in the form of mini-lectures no longer than 15-20 min in duration and 75% training accounts for exercises, illustrating the training or giving an opportunity to practice new techniques and methods and to begin gaining skills [6]. This is done using different active forms of training:

- Cases (analysis of concrete situations, illustrating some or other ideas);
- Role plays aimed at improving skills (after participants have received new information);
- Work in mini-groups (when participants in groups of 3-5 persons invent something and solve any problems);
- Exercises that give concrete experience for analysis, illustrate some or other ideas (which is, in particular, necessary for effective agreement with each other or about what clients wish);
- Facilitation and moderation (formats of bilateral communication with a group, helping to "extract information" from the proper participants of the training) [7];
- Demonstration of film fragments, illustrating some or other theses and topics of the training;
- Exercises, helping to apply and train acquired skills (such as to plan a workday of hypothetical character of the exercise, with the use of methods of planning, obtained in the training).

Optimal number of the audience is 10-12 individuals. Training can be performed in groups of even larger size, such as in groups of 50 persons and more; however, in this case smaller number of active exercises is used and there is no opportunity to ascertain if every participant acquired precisely those skills necessary for some or another competence and for which this training was undertaken [8].

Training program for work in hotels

No.	Theme of the lesson	Summary
1	Installation	Main services of the hotel Rules of internal working order Rules of personal hygiene and personal medical records availability Safety measures Liability for breakage
2	Basics of professional visitor service	Service sector specific character Clients needs and expectations What defines the opinion of the client about the service Three roles of the personnel Communication basics Importance of the first impression Interaction between services Team work
3	Basics of efficient communication	Means of communication Communication handicaps. Overcoming obstacles The ability of listening Types of questions Reformulation Scheme of efficient communication Analysis of person interaction Punctuation marks
4	Efficient phone usage	Importance of quality service via phone Importance of behavior Types of questions The art of listening Words and phrases Skills of communication via phone
5	Complains of clients	What's the significance of complains Classification of complains and objections Optimal response to complain Rules of complains consideration
6	Self-control and time management	Attitude to time in different cultures Time killers and how they can be overcome Principles of time scheduling Priority establishment Systematized analysis of urgent problems Delegation
7	Training of trainers	Definition of pedagogic problems Method of lessons arrangement Practical application of acquired knowledge

Joint actions of education sector and business representatives produce the largest effect, especially during practical lessons and practices of students [9].

Practical experience of Moscow hotel “Radisson SAS Slavic”, realizing its activity under international brand, can be a good example of linkage with educational institutions. All staff, trainees and assistants in the hotel wear pins Yes I Can. All the employees in their first

workday are trained according to this program. During training, basic principles of company philosophy are explained and the behavior skills (team work, personal responsibility, maximum attention to a client) are practiced. Employees, newly hired in the hotel “Radisson SAS Slavic”, pass through two programs of training: “Welcome, new colleague!” and “Yes, I can! – Keeping promises”. First program takes eight hours of training and

includes study of organizational structure of LLC “Slavic hotel and chief seat of commerce”, code of corporal culture, rules of internal working order, etc. The program “Yes, I can! – Keeping promises” is developed by the corporation and is obligatory for all personnel of the hotel network. It clarifies basic principles of corporal philosophy “Yes, I can!” and standards of professional behavior. The training takes 5 hours and includes demonstration and discussion of video film, practical exercises and role plays.

Second part of the program is called “Yes, I can! In your department” and it is hold by managers of different hotel services. Concrete situations and their resolution are addressed in accordance with principles and standards of “Yes, I can!”. Top managers are also trained in accordance with the program “Conductor of ideas Yes, I can!”, the aim of which is to learn how to help subordinates to work. Professional training of a new employee according to rules of “Radisson SAS” lasts for no less than two weeks. After training completes, he passes an exam and only then he begins unaided work [10].

Training system in the hotel network Marriott includes a few training directions. First direction is an introductory lesson for new employees and it takes three days. Employees are introduced with the company and its history, with basics of corporal culture, with safety measures and so on. In addition, the program of adaptation of newcomers is implemented during first three months.

Secondly, employees are permanently trained at work places. Those, who directly deal with clients service, are given lessens in technologies of work in the sphere of hospitality, stress-management, phone etiquette and so on. At the same time, managers are studying management basics. For instance, certified Marriott trainers hold training “The Seven habits of highly effective people” after Stephen Covey [11].

Apart from trainings, Marriott employees got still another important standard, i.e. a little notebook with mottos. These are the rules of behavior with respect to visitors and hotel, developed in headquarters. Mottos are changed every day and they total 20, i.e. one motto per workday of the month (no mottos for Saturdays and for Sundays are envisaged). We may present an example when Santo Alba, the president of the Marriott Milan, in Milan took notebook from his pocket: “Today’s motto is “I am proud to represent the hotel Marriott”. Today all the employees of the hotels Marriott also live under this same motto throughout the world”. Mottos for other days

sound with no less pathos: “I hearty welcome every client”, “I am able to work in team” and so on. Every day in hotels Marriott begins with 15-minute meeting, where employees are reminded about today’s motto and at weekend the details of past week are analyzed.

Personnel of the hotel usually are rather skeptical about mottos. But, as Marriott managers assure, life under motto gets a habit with time, since motto of the day is not just a slogan. Employees are explained what do mottos mean and how they are to be realized. For instance, motto “I divine guest’s wishes” means that employee should pay special attention to guest mood, listen to him”.

For top managers in the Corinthia Nevsky Palace Hotel, a special 2-year program of training Exceleator is created and gives an opportunity to be introduced directly with all the departments work and trains the employees for a potential position of a chief executive. Hotel staff, having been trained with programs Specialized courses and Exceleator, receive international certificates Edexcel.

In the hotel “National”, with participation of the company Le Meridien, trainings are held not only by its departments’ managers, but also by its own trainers, as well as by invited specialists from abroad. Western training-manager working in the company Le Meridien, with the support from the personnel office staff of the hotel “National”, holds eight 2-hour seminars in the framework of the program Le Meridien “Commitment to excellency”.

CONCLUSION

The research, conducted by the author of this article in Russian State University of Tourism and Service, showed that simultaneous use of master-lessons as well as other forms of cooperation with business and abroad probations has the result that the subsequent efficiency of adaptation of graduates increases:

- Organizational adaptation improves on average by 10%;
- Socio-psychological adaptation improves by 12%;
- Professional adaptation improves by 15%; and
- Psycho-physiological adaptation improves by 8%.

Therefore, the use of new approaches to training the graduates will not only favor their better adaptation, but also heighten their competitiveness and, hence, will increase the rating of institutes and colleges that prepared such students.

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