



[Instances of Changes from the Greek case study](#)

[Results from the TTPlus project](#)

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# **TTPlus Project**

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### **INSTANCES OF CHANGE**

In order to reach the described situation of training and trainers in the three cases these cases have undergone a lot of instances of changing the training (and trainers') situation. These instances of change are more extended and visual in the cases where the training procedures are more elaborated and firms base their profitability on knowledge and its support. Changes are significantly fewer in the case of shipping branch, where we have seen profitability is based on other parameters than knowledge.

We refer in the following on the instances of change the training and trainers' situation in the three cases of our analysis.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> case: Informatics firm**

As we have seen, the first case has a much elaborated training system. It has undergone a lot of changes from the time of the firm's establishment. Important instances of change of the last period are:

#### **FOCUSING ON SPECIFIC TRAINING PERIODS**

- The decision to focus training in two periods of the year (May and September/October). This decision has been taken because the management has drawn the conclusion that the former "anarchic" system, to organize a training seminar directly at the time that a training need was identified, had many disadvantages for the working context. This change was needed because "*we experienced that important collaborators were in external training provision, at that time most of the training was provided externally, in times of a pick where they were very much needed in the firm*". But also in later periods, when firm decided to hold the majority of training internally and engaging preferably trainers of the own staff "*we discovered that managers could not organize their working day in a proper way if they had also training duties*".

#### **TRAINING DESIGN ACCORDING TO THE EXPRESSION OF STAFFS' NEEDS**

- The elaboration of the training needs not only from the managerial level but also from the free expression of the staff's wishes and ideas. "*The staff has the possibility to express its training needs, and this expression is taken very much in consideration when structuring the training program of the year*". This decision works in a very incorporative way for the firm's working culture and also the similar decision that nobody gets a negative answer in his attempts to

participate in a training procedure. *“We give everybody the possibility to attend a seminar regardless if his or her working responsibilities have directly to do with the actual training’ subject. Our intention is to give our people the possibility to change department, if they wish, but they must have the needed knowledge of the other department before being able to move”*. This is a huge change, because in former times only managers decided about the training of their staff.

#### **VERIFICATION THAT BEST TRAINERS ARE USUALLY THE OWN STAFF MEMBERS**

- The decision that the majority of training should be provided by the own staff. In former periods training was provided by external trainers. *“From the participants evaluation of the training seminars it was repeatedly expressed the conclusion that training provided by external staff produced confusion and had therefore quality problems because the external trainers used often examples from branches totally different than informatics”*. It is easy to understand the reasons that produced this problem. In Greece there are very few leading firms in the informatics branch; external training firms do not have therefore the proper trainers for these firms. This decision had positive influences in the firm’s culture due to another parameter: some of the managers like teaching very much and they are eager in becoming the possibility to train the staff and enrich in that way their day to day work. *“If a staff member has not enough training experience we send him or her to specific ‘train the trainer’ procedures to enhance and promote their training and didactic skills”*. In that way everyone who wishes to become a trainer has the possibility to do so. Another positive factor mentioned by one of the managers is that *“in that way of providing mostly internal training the cost for training are very much reduced for the firm”*.

#### **SCHOLARSHIPS FOR THE MOST PROMISING STAFF MEMBERS**

- The conferment yearly of 2 scholarships to study at masters’ level. These scholarships cover the needed fees for the university postgraduate studies; they are between 12.000 € and 30.000€ depending on university and faculty. Master degrees are very much taken into consideration in the decision about promotion. The scholarships are conferment after an open announcement followed by applications of staff members that content the subject of studies, the faculty and the thesis’ scientific field. *“Because we have a very meritocratic system of deciding about these scholarships, the hole procedure is supporting the firms’ working life, because the staff knows, that everyone can get a scholarship”*, said the general manager of the firm. A trainee said in this context that *“this situation is very positive, because all of us have the possibility to get a scholarship. But from the other side it is very difficult to study in the postgraduate level with these scholarships, because during the studies you are not deliberated from*

*work, you have to study in the evenings after work and during the weekends; you get only free days for the examinations”.*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> case: Shipping firm**

In the case of the shipping firm only a few changes are done in the last period. Remember that shipping is not a knowledge based branch.

#### **INTERNATIONAL DECISIONS DEFINE TRAINING SUBJECTS**

- New obligatory training subjects were added in the shipping branch after some important international decisions concerning safety and environmental protection. Every shipping firm has to train its staff in these newly decided subjects.

#### **USING NEW TRAINING TECHNOLOGIES**

- The only interesting change we could discover in this case is the creation of a ‘simulation laboratory’ that in created in the Philippines. In this Laboratory mariners from the Far East countries are trained for all the possible circumstances they will face during their traveling. *“The decision to create some years ago the Simulation Laboratory was due to the fact that very many of the mariners we employ come from the Philippines and many of them have a ‘knowledge gap’ in their initial education. They are often not able to manage to work productively on a modern tanker without being further trained”.*

### **3d case: Inspection and training company**

In that case changes are done in order to create an even better training provision. We report this because this firm has a long tradition in training and has taken conclusions from past learning experiences. The specific firm is part of an international firm specialized in inspection of quality, in the fields we mentioned in the former chapters, and training provision if problems arise from the inspections they provide. The Greek firm had only to elaborate some points that could be specified in the case of the country in order to enhance the quality of training. Very many parameters of the training procedure are the same in every country, e.g. training materials, didactic approaches, teaching of a lot of subjects that are equal in all the countries (like environmental protection) etc.

Important instances of change were in the past years:

#### **RECRUITMENT OF TRAINERS ON THE BASIS OF THEIR EXCELLENT PREVIOUS VOCATIONAL PRACTICE**

- The ascertainment that only a good practitioner could become a good trainer. “*At the beginning we engaged very well educated people with many diplomas as trainers. In many cases it worked well, but in many others it was a mess. We investigated a lot and came to the conclusion that good training is not necessarily provided by a brilliant scientist or a virtuoso in the didactic art. Good training is provided by someone with large experience in practicing his occupation and who is willing, and able, to share his experiences and knowledge, to teach his subject to others without having the fear that these ‘others’ will steal him (her) his (her) own knowledge or the art of facing professional and occupational problems*”. It is a very important finding that not primarily excellent didactical capabilities make the good trainer (which means that not everyone good in didactics can be a proper trainer regardless the subject and the audience he/ she is teaching); but that good didactical approaches based on extended occupational practice and knowledge of the training subject make the good trainer.

#### **CREATION OF A ‘COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE’ FOR TRAINERS**

- The elaboration of a sophisticated system of deciding about the qualities of a prospect trainer and the capabilities the novice has to be incorporated in the ‘community of practice’ of the existing trainers of the company.

#### **PEER EVALUATION OF TRAINERS CAPABILITIES AND SKILLS**

- The elaborated system of ‘community evaluation’ of trainers from their peers and the open discussion of the evaluations. This ‘open discussion’ is, as far as we know, an exception in the Greek paradigm. “*With this procedure we gain something very important despite the high quality of our training provision we are (very well) paid for: we produce a ‘community of practice’ of trainers with similar techniques but also similar personalities; all of us are very communicative, friendly and open minded*”.