

## LIFELONG LEARNING TO BE THE BEST MANAGER

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### Abstract

The article is devoted to updating managers' education nowadays. Lifelong learning has become a necessity for all people and especially for managers. They need to develop their competences throughout their lives if they want to be successful. Moreover, the rapid pace of change in the world and the continuous roll-out of new technologies make managers keep their job-related skills up-to-date. Both skills and management competences contribute to their motivation and job satisfaction in the workplace, thereby affecting the quality of their work. Managers should be able to dedicate time to learning autonomously and with self-discipline. They should be able to organize their own learning, estimate the progress of their learning, evaluate their own work and seek advice. Learning to learn requires ambitious managers to develop their own strategies for successful educational activity, to understand and know the strengths and weaknesses of their skills and qualifications and to be able to search for training opportunities. A positive attitude to lifelong learning helps succeed in learning throughout all life and become the best manager.

**Key words:** competences, management competences, lifelong learning, self-directed learning, learning autonomously

A job in management needs specific management competences [4]. A management competency is a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and personal qualities that combine to make a manager effective in his work, to help a manager to successfully carry out his job in management. A manager should be aware of the importance of management competences and developing them for successful performance in a job that requires being in charge of many people. Lifelong learning is the only way for managers to succeed in a profession and a career.

Lifelong learning is more than further education or training – it is a mindset of good managers inventing the future of our society. It is a habit for them to think, understand, explore and improve their knowledge, skills and personal qualities in order to be the best in management environment.

Professional activity of managers has become so knowledge – intensive that learning is becoming an integral and irremovable part of their work activities. In the emerging information society an educated person, especially a manager, must be someone who is willing to consider further learning as a lifelong process. More and more knowledge, especially advanced knowledge, be able to improve skills and personal qualities required for management, are in great demand for managers' activity, and lifelong learning is not restricted to providing them with opportunity to engage in learning activity, the objective of lifelong learning is to fundamentally

rethink learning attempting to change a mindset about it.

Learning to learn skills require the acquisition of the fundamental basic skills [2]. They are necessary for managers for further learning in order to be able to gain, process and assimilate new knowledge and skills appropriate to their work and career. A positive attitude to lifelong learning including motivation, confidence, creativity, experience succeeds at learning throughout people's life. People obtain fundamental basic skills [2] at schools and universities. But there are some drawbacks in learning, teaching and education in our society.

Most university graduates see their studies at the university as a period of their lives that prepares them well for work and from their point of view it is enough to be successful. They don't pay attention to the facts that:

- university graduates are not well prepared for work because of lack of experience;
- the pace of change is so fast that technologies and the skills of today's managers are becoming obsolete within 5-6 years and require constant renewal;
- they can change careers several times in their lives, even though what they learned at a university was designed to prepare them for their first career.

The current mindset about learning, teaching and education is dominated by a view in which teaching is often a process in which a

teacher tells and shows learners something they know nothing about. Although this model may be more realistic for the early grades in schools, it is obviously inadequate for learning processes in universities where the skills for lifelong learning must be developed. Teachers must adopt the role of the initiator and coach rather than being the teller of information. Learning is more than being taught [1]. Learning new skills and acquiring new knowledge cannot be restricted to formal educational settings.

A lifelong learning perspective implies that universities need to prepare students to engage in self-directed learning processes because this is what they have to do in their future professional lives. Self - directed learning means that the learner tends to be systematic independent, not focusing on the teacher [3]. The self-directed learner is able to monitor learning in a classroom and will use learning experience outside of the traditional classroom as well. Working in groups by role-playing, using case studies, or simulations may be an appropriate method of engaging students in this type of learning. Giving students the ability to share their opinions or thoughts among a group of classmates creates a feeling of collegiality among the group and help reduce fear among some of the quieter students. This type of environment will promote an atmosphere of trust where students feel they can share opinions. The sharing of thoughts among classmates is an important part of developing self-directed learning skills within the classroom. Teachers have to take responsibility for cultivating an atmosphere in which every student has reason to share. This is the way to develop lifelong learning skills to help future managers to improve their management competences and demonstrate their value to the company and in the job market. It is advantageous for both students and universities that students are able to direct their own learning: students have acquired the skills for self-directed, universities have succeeded in their objective.

Sometimes universities are inadequate to prepare students, future managers, to compete in the knowledge – based workplace. A major objective of a lifelong learning approach is to reduce the gap between university and workplace learning in order to prepare learners to function in working environment requiring creativity, collaboration, and innovation. Students must be taught within the context of their future work, on real-world problems. Teaching, learning and education must be integrated into their future work. Students must construct solutions to the problems when they are getting into trouble, use their knowledge for actual problem situations. The direct usefulness of their knowledge improves greatly the motivation to learn the new material because the time and efforts invested in learning are immediately paid. Moreover, completing challenging tasks students have opportunities to practice thinking. The aim of a teacher is to encourage students to think in a free way, what is vital for future managers.

Thus, an important challenge nowadays is to learn and practise students, future managers, to function in modern knowledge society, and to develop in them a new mindset for learning. We are sure that lifelong learning and self-directed learning help managers to develop their management competences to be the best managers in order to increase the productivities and competitiveness of their companies and make societies and economies of their countries successful.

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