Soufflearning for Small and Medium Enterprises

An innovative Teaching and Learning Methodology

Bonn Science Shop e. V. and netz NRW e. V. have developed a concept for the specific needs and demands of small and very small enterprises which is capable of being flexibly adapted to everyday operations and work flow and responds directly to the individual needs and demands of the staff in the business. Soufflearning provides support and assistance as the acquired know-how is implemented. As it increases staffs’ disposition to engage in further training and motivates to take an active part in the shaping of further training within the enterprise it contributes to the efficiency and expertise of the company.

Background

- Further training is a major key to success for small and medium-sized enterprises.
- The demands on the employees have increased considerably over the last years.
- It is seldom possible to release staff for additional training due to the low level staff coverage.
- The benefit gained from external advanced training courses is only marginal. A large part of the contents is either not needed or is already known.
- Training courses fail to provide the specific know-how and expertise that is relevant and immediately applicable.

Soufflearning Workflow

Training needs assessment
With management and employees, objectives of the enterprise, workplace conditions

Selection of trainers and coaches
Different coaches for different topics, flexibility to adapt specific requirements and workplace situation

Specification of training contents
By trainers and employees, setting up a ‘Soufflearning’ plan

Prompting and self-learning
Addresses directly concrete situation, variety of forms: ranging from immediate action to reflective comments, employees also keep written reflection sheets

Implementation guidance
Working in small units, presence of the coach on the premises or via telephone or internet, constant exchange between training institution, coach and enterprise

Evaluation

Transfer of Innovation: Soufflearning in Europe

- An EC project for more widespread implementation of a successful training concept to other European regions
- Four partners (F, CZ, I, D) with own VET professionals that know best their clients’ particular requirements and their local VET market
- Comparing transfer processes to develop a methodology on how to adapt a training and qualification concept to the requirements of a new clientele or geographical region
- Networking to enable cross-border exchange and internationalisation between SMEs, VET trainers and their institutions to advance mobility in Europe

Soufflearning – A Methodology

- which provides small learning-modules, focused directly on the specific needs and the particular facilities of the enterprise and the respective employees,
- which is accompanied by coaches for observance assisting guidance,
- which has subsequent periods of self learning on the job,
- where newly gained skills are used in everyday work and constantly critically scrutinised as to their relevance and applicability,
- which allows the internalisation of the newly acquired know-how without impairing the work flow.

Results from the Pilot Project

- 11 enterprises with up to 20 employees each took part. Request came from all over Germany and from various branches (e.g. a violin maker, a forest kindergarten, a middle-sized industrial company, a chemist’s store).
- Soufflearning is process oriented, tailored to the individual and gender-related.
- More than 75% of the employees rated their personal gain from adequate to very high. Nearly 100% assessed the benefit for the enterprise very high to adequate.
- Soufflearning leads to a significantly higher disposition to engage in further training.
- Employees recognised advanced training as a mean of preserve their own employability

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