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**Employability Skills**

**Introduction**

After the Second World War and until the 1980s, employment for individuals was typically a lifetime contract between the worker and the company. This "paternalistic" thought was portrayed by a psychological contract in which the faithfulness and duty of representatives were remunerated with wellbeing at work and an arrangement of upgrades (promotions etc.) effectively unsurprising. However, the labour market crisis in the mid-1980s resulted in limited growth in jobs and an excess of labour. Unemployment rates increased, the bargaining power of the unions weakened, and important benefits were lost during this time. It is since then that labour relations are not as durable as they were in the past. Eternal or long-lasting jobs are history now; rather there is a short duration of employment. The idea that someone’s life is dedicated to a single company and “safe position” does not exist. In the very same pretext, employability concept is created, which is, in short, corresponding to current labour demands.

In the present essay, the concept of employability will be developed from different perspectives. The advantages of being an "employable" person are analyzed, the skills required to be "employable" and the various selection criteria that companies use to find a person with a high employability index are also analyzed. Likewise, an analysis is made of how the market of a specific region, the government and private companies are an integral part of this concept and influence the employability of people. The consequences of not being employed are also analyzed, and some guidelines are given on how to learn to be employable. Finally, some conclusions of the discussed topics are established, and some recommendations are given to achieve better employability in society.

Companies nowadays have to worry about the employability of their employees. Nowadays, very few people have the same job in an equal company throughout their career. In the volatile, flexible and hyper-competitive environment that our society represents, companies must put in place tools and strategies to internally retain their human resources with rare and adaptable skills, as they represent one of the critical factors of success, their performance and their sustainable competitiveness.

**What is the term employability?**

A concept born in England in the 19th century, employability is first used to evoke the specific support provided by the state to classes in difficulty in society. Today, employability is a term generally used by companies to determine the ability of an employee to be recruited into a company, to keep that job and to evolve within that company or in another company. This term is closely related to the notions of skills and talent; it also mostly incorporates the ideas of an employee's career and talent management. It is generally considered that an individual's employability will depend on: his knowledge, his know-how, also on his skills (behaviour and attitudes in the world of work) (McGrath 2009).

 **Employability, what's the point?**

***For employees:*** Above all, it is a way for them to anticipate possible changes by concretely developing their skills throughout their career, this involves planning possible contractual breaks that require an appreciation of their abilities. In this way, during a period of transition or unemployment, the duration of employability is generally significantly reduced. It is also an excellent way to develop their skills towards access to talent and total professional development. (Cuyper et al., 2008).

***For companies:*** It is a matter of adapting employees' skills for the making of the company's strategy, by developing employability. In this way, the productivity of employees in the service of the overall performance of the company significantly increases. The rise in proficiency favoured by the employability approach is also significant support for the retention of talent. The action levers of employability must finally be at the service of the involvement and motivation of employees in that they all involve a form of recognition.

**Obligations of the employer**

In the framework of the development of the employability of employees, one is particularly interested in the regulations applicable to the field of training. As a reminder, the employer's obligations regarding vocational training are as follows:

* Adaptation to employment and maintaining the employability of your employees.
* Collective bargaining and social dialogue on the subject of vocational training (as part of the forecast management of jobs and skills for companies with more than 300 employees).
* The obligation to carry out every two years of expert interviews for each of your employees, to consider with them changes in the course.

What approach to adapt to develop the employability of your employees?

**Actions to improve employability**

As in any major project, start by making a diagnosis of the existing situation. The goal is to determine where you are to know where you want to go. There is, therefore, no employability project without the definition of a specific company strategy beforehand.When the global inventory is done, focus on your employees individually. To this end, the professional interview and the assessment of skills when necessary are valuable tools to take stock of the achievements, to collect the wishes of evolution, of mobility, and to highlight the centres of interest and motivation of your employees.It will then be necessary to set up an effective action plan:

 ***Through training first:*** You need to build a concrete and coherent training plan by seeking to create opportunities to develop talent.Your role as a manager will be to work tirelessly on career paths by encouraging professional mobility to develop the skills of your employees.

Remember to promote ***intergenerational management*** to boost knowledge management and avoid the loss of knowledge or critical skills following the departure (voluntary or not) of an employee.

***Vigilance point:*** in building a training plan, no population should be left to chance. Juniors as well as seniors, all have a potential of skills to develop; it will be then to exploit it.

To develop the employability of your employees, also work on behavioural skills (also called "soft skills").

***Through communication then:*** It is essential to communicate with your employees about existing opportunities internally. This can be through displays, in a weekly newsletter.

Also, facilitate the mobility of your employees by allowing them, for example, to receive special offers by e-mails according to their wishes of evolution and by giving them the possibility to apply online.

***Prioritize actions by building a coherent and achievable back-planning.*** Budget all the actions to put in place. Like any project, it is essential to set a budget.The time will then be spent on piloting the project. It will then be necessary to remain adaptable in case of the adjustment required.At the end of the year, analyze the repercussions afterwards and work on the points to be improved for the following years.

***Measurement of employability:*** As in every project, measuring the impact of the actions put in place is essential. Regarding employability, many elements can highlight this impact. We can then usethe rate of professional mobility of employees,the price of change in the number of people trained from one year to the next,the average number of years to evolve in society,the productivity rate of qualified employees.

Although the list is not exhaustive, these indicators will give you a clear idea of your ability to develop the employability of your employees. Employability is undoubtedly for the benefit of the employee primarily, but it must be at the service of the company since by valuing the skills of employees, the latter sees its performance and competitiveness increase significantly.

**Definition of employability**

Employability has many concepts while looking at it with different approaches. However, out of all, the following will be discussed:High-quality education and training and the execution of several other policies contribute to achieving this first result. It includes qualifications, knowledge and skills that increase the ability of workers to get and keep a job, improve their situation and adapt to change, choose another job whenever they want or lose what they had and integrate more easily into the labour market. Work in different periods of his life. It is the ability to find, create, preserve and enrich a job, and move from one to another getting in return a personal, economic, social and professional satisfaction.

The concept of employability can be divided into two scenarios:

***Internal employability:*** It defines the competitiveness level of a worker within the company and is focused on the skills that the worker must develop to raise their productivity within the company.

***External employability:*** It defines the competitiveness level of a worker in the labour market environment. All these concepts highlight some common elements of the employable people: They must have the knowledge and skills required by the labour market, they must have soft skills, including the ability to adapt to change and easily integrate into new groups. However, it is also essential to consider "entrepreneurship" within the definition of employability, in other words: entrepreneurial capacity, which can contribute to creating employment opportunities and, therefore, improve employability.

For this reason, the approach to employability is as follows: ***Employability is not about providing skills to get a job. On the contrary, employability is about how Higher Education develops critical, reflective, empowered students.***

We can safely say that "employability" does cover not only access to employment but also the creating job; or we can say that it includes all; the insertion, adaptation and the entrepreneurial attitude of the person.

**Advantages of employability**

Having high levels of employability and entrepreneurial attitude brings benefits for both the employee and the employer.

**Advantages for the employee**

***Better valuation in the market:*** Employees who present these characteristics will be more valued in the labour market, which allows them to improve their professional adjustment and their options for promotion and development within their company.

***The more excellent option of better labour benefits:*** This market value will offer these people greater possibilities of establishing personalized employment agreements that take into account their needs and preferences.

**Advantages for the company**

***Better training efforts:*** It allows better adjust the training and employee development efforts within the company. In this way, the employer ensures an effective strategy to attract, motivate and retain the most valuable employees for the organization, in a context of much less corporate and more personalized labour relations.

***Improvement in management:*** It allows improving the control of the company in general since both people and processes are more competitive.

**Skills required to be employable**

A person may be employable, but skills needed by him to be considered him for a particular job usually vary according to the context. However, some characteristics are enumerated as the necessary skills which are required to be employable according to some studies conducted and consulted for the performance (Dench 1997). They are:

* Problem-solving ability
* Good communication skills
* Good decision making
* Be positive and innovative
* Self-confidence
* Self-disciplined
* Responsible
* Positive attitude towards work
* Analysis capacity, understanding
* Know how to follow instructions
* Capability to identify internal and external difficulties
* Capability to anticipate threats and opportunities, problems and alternatives
* Ability to organize, plan and manage
* Reinforced identity and personal security

On the other hand, according to another study by a human resources company, employability can also be explained through six essential characteristics:

***Suitability Vocation:*** If the person is satisfied with the work they have, according to their vocation, or if they carry out said work only out of necessity.

***Professional competence:*** To determine if the person has and shows concern in continually updating their knowledge.

***The suitability:*** That determines if the person fits in the position that is

***Physical and mental health:*** Which is essential to obtain and even keep a job. Lacking it is starting at a disadvantage in the labour market as competitive as the current one.

***Alternative resources:*** Determine if the person can find solutions to any problem, even when the traditional ways have been exhausted. It is, according to the jargon of Human Resources, lateral thinking, the ability to find new solutions to new or joint problems.

***Interpersonal relationships:*** Determines if the person can achieve a harmonious climate at work, with adequate teamwork more, a friendly and approachable character, rather than a surly one, which hinders communication. The experts are clear that someone can be suitable and have excellent professional skills, but present difficulties of a relationship with co-workers. And this is not any quality.

As it can be noted, in both "employability classifications", of all these skills almost none of them is technical competence. On the contrary, most are "soft" competitions.

These skills can be summarised and grouped into three types:

***Primary skills:*** It covers the necessary skills of reading, writing, arithmetic, etc.

***Thinking Skills:*** That covers creative thinking skills, innovation, learning, problem-solving, etc.

***Traits and affective skills:*** That includes more personality skills such as responsibility, honesty, enthusiasm, positive attitude, etc.

According to the research, it is further established that employers have no problem with the behaviour of people's technical skills, but have severe reservations about non-technical skills. Based on the grouping of employability skills in the three aforementioned categories, we can determine that while it is right companies are looking for people with a skill mix of the three types described above, these tend to give much more value to practical skills, such as positive attitude towards work, ability to communicate well, ability to learn. Highly specialized technical skills are little considered by companies to measure the employability of a person. (Robinson 2000, pp.1-3).

There are two ways to measure employability:

***Analysis of objective indicators:*** Both the individual and the work context

***Subjective assessment of the individual:*** Both personal qualities and meaning, to achieve a clear idea of ​​the perceptions of the individual about their ability to obtain employment (based on their resources as in the labour market)

This leads us to contemplate the context of the labour market when "measuring" employability. That is to say: the fourth category of parameters can be considered (the first three are: essential thinking and affective skills) to have a more specific criterion of employability.

**Learning to be employable**

Being employable is not something innate. Any of the characteristics within the three categories can be acquired (Garsten and Jacobsson, 2004). It has been possible to determine three essential components to be able to teach, on the one hand, and on the other: to learn these employability skills in individuals:

***Explicit teaching:*** Most employability skills are best learned when they are included in a program of training objectives and are explicitly taught. However, many people think that practical and thinking skills such as positive attitude, teamwork are skills that a person has or does not have and that cannot be taught. This is an error and must be corrected.

***Simulations:*** These employability skills are best learned when teaching is done replicating real-world characteristics, having a better approximation of the real performance that people will have.

***Flexibility:*** It has been determined that in the classes where the participants have obtained a high level of employability skills, the teaching given was individualized according to the needs and styles of each person, instead of being guided by traditional education according to rigid plans for all participants.

**The role of the company with employability**

Given the competitive environment in which most companies move today, the situation that is created is paradoxical: companies are unable to guarantee long-term stability in employment and, simultaneously, demand from their employees a higher commitment and a higher performance level. That is to say: the worker is asked more than a few years ago, although the stability and career development that was previously practically guaranteed cannot be offered in return.This poses significant challenges for companies in trying to determine what they can provide the worker in exchange for the high levels of initiative, involvement and performance that are being demanded.Therefore, the company must also collaborate with the employability of people, not only with training but also as other elements, such as: ***Promoting participatory work styles:*** Like autonomy, creativity, initiative, etc. ***Motivating the worker:*** From free rewards to rational supervision, task enrichment, progressive delegation, etc. ***Facilitating internal relationships:*** With integration meetings with the work team.

It should also be noted that the company should collaborate on the employability of people and improve the employability of workers although it is true that these have more opportunities and more exceptional ability to leave, but it also means that the company can benefit from these people with higher capacity for adaptation, operational capability and more enormous potential and productivity. The commitment on employability is, then, common to the company and the worker, but also the benefit. The excellent work is not so much the faithful worker as the flexible worker who is and knows himself responsible for his career, aware of his abilities, with risk capacity and dependent less and less on external factors and more on his employability.

**Consequences of the non-employability**

The lack of employability skills in people, especially in young people, has effects:While it is true that a person without employability skills may be working in a company, it is very likely that such work is a temporary condition since only being really "employable" provides the quality required to maintain a job.By not having adequate training in employability skills in people, these will move from the classroom to the workplace without really knowing what the companies require in terms of capabilities.That will eventually lead to these people working in any job to survive.

**Conclusions**

The following conclusions could be found**:**

* There is a consensus regarding the skills that an "employable" person should have as well as on the employability concept.
* It is fascinating to find that the majority of employability skills, which are requested by the labour market, are practical and non-technical skills.
* It is also noted that a person’s employability can be affected over time due to the impulses of the labour market at a particular time.
* Employability skills can be taught. More flexible and realistic teaching, better the results for the participants.
* The private company must also collaborate with the employability of the people since, while it is true, it benefits the employee by giving them more excellent tools and freedom to make decisions to change jobs, it also benefits the company by training and having a high-quality professional, that elevates the productivity of the said company.

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