

Vocational Education and Training Reform in the Republic of Serbia

Manual 7

GUIDE FOR SCHOOL DIRECTORS IN MODERN VET SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Vocational Education and Training Programme – Phase II

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Guide for School Directors in Modern VET School Management

The system of vocational education and training in Serbia is in transition, plotting its course towards a future structure in which quality, flexibility, and broad co-operation are keywords, and where decentralisation will be a key tool to achieve these.

With the early reform stages currently being implemented and the further changes planned for the coming years, the identity and function of the VET school will unavoidably change as well – and with these, the role of the VET School Management.

This present Manual is based on the VET School Management Training Programme, having been conducted by the EU CARDS VET Reform Programme – phase II in Serbia, during 2006 and 2007. The Training Programme has been completed in 27 days with 22 VET School Directors through seminars and coaching.

The Manual contains main parts of the Tools, Concepts, and Training Material applied in the Training Programme, as well as experiences and learning points generated through its implementation.

The Manual is, in its overall choice of topics and approach, based on Practises and Trends from current VET School Management in EU Countries, as well as experience with the impact of reforms on the VET School Management in transition countries in Central - and Eastern Europe.

The Focus in the Manual is on the *new challenges* and *new management skills required* as a result of the reform of vocational education and training in Serbia – and its expected impact on the legal and administrative framework in which the Serbian VET Schools will operate in the future.

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Introduction – From Centralised to Decentralised Organisation

Traditionally, the VET System in Serbia has been characterised by a high degree of Centralisation with the training programmes defined by the Ministry of Education in terms of content and enrolment. Financial budgets for the delivery of VET have been determined partly from the central state level (re. salaries) and partly from the local/municipality administration level (re. physical facilities at the school).

One of the main implications of this Centralised approach to management of the VET System is that the role of the individual VET school has been, if viewed from a school-level managerial perspective, mainly to *administrate* the training, pedagogical, and financial framework given from central actors.

This means that good management performance at VET Schools has been synonymous with the ability to generate the maximum value from known human and financial resources, within a sphere of operations defined by legal statutes and regulations given by the Ministry of Education.

In these managerial conditions, valuable VET School Managers skills have been:

- Budget Administration Skills
- Staff Management Skills
- Skills in interaction with state and local administration counterparts
- Vocational, professional, and pedagogical understanding of the training programmes provided by the school

In accordance with this Manager profile, VET School Directors have traditionally been appointed from among the teaching staff at the school, on the basis of proven pedagogical and administrative performance.

It is clear from the stated Reform Objectives and from the Strategy for Development of Vocational Education and Training, adopted by Government in December 2006 that the overall intentions of the reform include:

- Bringing the Serbian VET System into line with similar systems in the EU countries, to allow for integration of the System into European co-operation – and to facilitate eventual Serbian membership of the European Union
- Increasing the ability of the Serbian VET System to deliver training matching the needs of the labour market and to strengthen the ability of the system to respond to changes in these needs, nationally and regionally.
- Supporting the ability of VET schools to undertake developments and activities to supplement their budgetary finances – in order to strengthen decentralised investments in the VET system and the schools. This includes an objective to improve the co-operation between the VET schools and social partners, as well as enterprises.

It is also clear that in order to achieve these reform objectives, VET schools must be granted more operational freedom to generate financial resources, to allocate these resources, and to target its future developments towards the products and services required by its 'market'. This invariably implies a gradual decentralisation of the VET system.

On the basis of this present VET Reform context, it can therefore be concluded that:

In the medium-long term perspective, it is realistic to forecast that Serbian VET schools will be operating with a significantly increased freedom to decide, at school level, which training services to provide, how to organise the school and its staffing, how to generate commercial income, and how to invest its finances in development of products and human resources.

In this future scenario, the role of the VET School Management will be significantly changed, when compared with the previously described centralised framework. The future, foreseen, VET School Manager will, be responsible for increasing to the maximum possible size the operational framework of the school, realising the maximum potential and development possibilities that the school can identify.

For this new managerial challenge, new skills will be in demand, which must be addressed by a combination of additional education for existing VET School Managers and a revision of the current procedures and conditions for recruitment of new Managers.

Focal Skills Areas for the future VET School Managers will include:

- 'Business' Administration Skills
- Business Planning and Strategy Development Skills
- Marketing Skills and understanding of the Market for Education
- Motivation Skills
- Management and Development of Human Resources Skills
- Innovation and Co-operation Building Skills

The purpose of this Guide is to highlight awareness of these new skills areas, foreseen to be required in the future at the VET School Management level.

This awareness is provided in order to prepare and inspire the current Management at VET Schools to launch initiatives in the school within the above areas already at this stage of the reform, and consequently to be better prepared to meet the new roles and challenges for the schools as the reform gradually progresses.

1.1. A new Managerial Challenge

In this Guide, we will cover six main topics, which are all related to the above foreseen new Skills Areas for VET School Managers, and which mark areas where the present System has not systematically trained or prepared Managers – which means that the skills cannot reasonably be taken for granted with existing Managers.

The Six areas, each covered by one Section of the Manual are:

- **The Roles and Responsibilities of the VET School Manager**
- **Organisational Development in the VET school**
- **Strategy Development**
- **Human Resource Development Planning**
- **Public Relations**
- **Marketing on School Level**

The areas have been chosen for inclusion in the manual on the basis of

- Having been selected as the main components of the VET School Management Training Programme implemented by the EU CARDS VET Reform Programme in Serbia and
- Being areas where international experience and EU country trends and practises can be realistically applied to the Serbian context.

In addition to these areas, other focus points of a specific Serbian nature naturally exist, such as understanding of the legislation and the relevant co-operation structures in the VET System. These areas are not addressed by the Guide.

2. The Roles and Responsibilities of the VET School Manager

The following Responsibility Areas of the VET School Manager in a typical EU Country school system, based on decentralised organisation are:

Responsibilities regarding to Administration

Internal Issues

- Staffing
- Training Process
- Financials
- Facilities

External Issues

- Networks and Forums
- Ministry
- Legal issues and Licenses

Responsibilities regarding to Development

Internal Issues

- Motivation
- Innovation in Training
- Organisational Development
- Human Resources Development
- Strategy (Vision, Mission, Actions)
- Projects

External Issues

- Marketing
- Business Development
- Cooperation building
- Know the Market

The main focus is that the Manager Role should be regarded as an approximately 50/50 division between managing External and Internal issues, while also maintaining the ability to divide attention app. 50/50 between Administrative and Development issues.

It is the expectation that this profile closely resembles the future Responsibility areas of the Serbian VET School Manager.

Similarly, the Managerial Challenge, as generally presented in School Management Training in EU Countries, focuses on the ability of the Manager to *Plan and Initiate Developments* while also being able to *Analyse and Assess the Results*, i.e. to lead every step in a continuous process of development and adjustment of activities. The implication is that the School Manager should focus on *Development Leadership* of the school and, if demands for his/her resources are overstretched, seek to delegate *Administrative Management* in order to maintain the ability to perform this Development Leadership.

With the added focus on Development Leadership, the overall Management Role has become more Complex than in an administration-dominated management framework. The ability to perform in this new, more complex framework starts with one important realisation:

“WITH THE NEW, COMPLEX MANAGER ROLE, THE MANAGER CAN NO LONGER FILL ALL AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE BUILDING, DECISION MAKING, AND ACTION IMPLEMENTATION FOR BOTH EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL AREAS OF ACTIVITIES”

In other words, the VET School Manager, who leads and organises everything in the school will be a phenomenon of the past.

The future VET School Manager therefore must be willing and able to delegate, not only responsibilities, but also competences and decision-making rights. An important task for the Manager will be:

- **TO MAKE SMART CHOICES ABOUT WHAT TO DELEGATE - AND TO WHOM**
- **TO ENSURE THAT THOSE, WHO WILL CARRY OUT DELEGATED MANAGEMENT TASKS HAVE THE MANDATE, COMPETENCE, TOOLS, AND MOTIVATION TO DO SO**

2.1. Delegation

To be successful in delegating components of School Management, the VET School Manager will require Personnel Management Skills, such as Communication Skills, Motivation Skills, and the ability to plan Managerial Tasks logically and consistently in order to make the staff member(s) to whom they are delegated understand not only the task but also its function in the overall school strategy.

Successful delegation requires logic, transparency, and good communication of the Management processes in the school.

In addition, it is essential that the VET School Manager realises and evaluates all his/her Delegation Options. In a traditional Management culture, the automatic delegation path would be to the immediate subordinate (e.g. a Deputy Director or Head of Vocational Teaching Board) who might then, in turn, delegate further.

In a modern VET School framework, the Manager should consider a broader range of delegation options, inside or outside the organisation.

Delegation questions to be evaluated include:

- Should the Management Task be performed by an individual, acting on behalf of the Manager?
- Could the Management Task instead be carried out by one of the school's departments, who might find its own way of implementing the task instead of the Manager?
- Could it be a better idea to collect a number of individuals from across the organisation and set up a dedicated Expert Team for handling the Management Task?
- Could the Management Task be more efficiently solved by an expert from outside the school organisation or by one of the school's co-operation partners (i.e. by 'outsourcing' handling of the task)?

Typical Management Tasks delegated in VET Schools in EU Member Countries include:

- Development and Management of Projects, which do not directly affect the primary operations of the school (i.e. experimental projects, international co-operation etc.)
- Planning, Monitoring, and Assessment of the teaching process in the school
- Monitoring of Staff Training Needs/Wishes and Planning of Staff Training Activities
- Representation of the school in a variety of networks and meeting forums, e.g. associations
- Financial administration unless legally requiring the Manager's participation

The main considerations behind the delegation areas listed are often the time and resources they require from the Manager compared to the necessity of being carried out by exactly the Manager in person. This issue naturally includes legal requirements for the Manager to take responsibility, but even in these cases, it should be a consideration for the VET school Manager if the implementation of the task can be entrusted to a staff member on behalf of the Manager.

Participation in meeting forums and networks are examples of activities which might be considered to take too much time and resources compared to the benefits of the presence of the Manager instead of another representative of the school.

Another consideration for the Manager to make is whether delegation of a Management Task can help in building motivation or skills with the staff member(s) selected for implementation.

A good example here might be Project Development and Project Management, which often strengthen the creativity, initiative, and managerial skills of the involved staff – and thereby creates a good argument for delegation.

Similarly, delegation might be used as a display of trust and respect for staff members or departments and used as a tool to increase motivation and/or morale with the recipients of the task. An example of this could be transferring the planning rights for training to the department responsible for a specific course or subject.

Management Tasks, which should never be delegated include:

- Main decisions regarding allocation of budgets between different activities or departments
- Legal representation of the school
- Responsibility for development of the overall Strategy and Business Plan of the school
- Monitoring of the Strategy and Business Plan and its realisation into concrete activities

It should always be the Manager, who assumes responsibility for monitoring that the school's strategy for today (the present time) is carried out in practise AND that the school always has a clear strategy for the future.

2.2. Leadership Styles

One of the important aspects of modern Management Skills is awareness about different Leadership Styles, the ability to use each of these styles when required, and a clear understanding of the impact and signals that each style communicates to the organisation (school).

This means that it is essential that the Manager is at all times conscious about what Leadership Style he/she is applying at that moment and how it is perceived by the staff.

Leadership Styles must be considered as Tools by the VET School Manager – and the selection of the right 'tool' for each occasion should depend on the outcome/result, which the Manager wants to achieve.

While the personality of the Manager will most often mean that he/she is more comfortable with some Styles than with others, he/she must be able to (and constantly develop the ability to) employ all of the Management Styles listed in the following, in order to most efficiently lead the school staff.

Research in Germany and Denmark indicates that staff trust in the Leadership of the Manager in organisations does not depend on which Style they connect with their Manager – but on whether the Manager is seen as using the "right" style in the right situation.

This means that it is not important for the efficiency of the Manager in leading staff whether he or she is considered to be basically authoritative or basically democratic. It is much more important than the Manager is able to apply a Democratic Leadership Style to issues and situations where the Staff (or other counterparts) perceives this style as the most appropriate or efficient. Similarly, where Authoritative Leadership is considered the right option by the Staff, the Manager must be able to display this style – even if basically inclined towards Democratic Leadership.

The biggest Managerial Failure in this aspect is when the Manager is unaware of how his/her Management is perceived by the Staff or when the Manager by his/her actions or attitudes communicate one Style to the Staff while attempting to apply another. I.e. the Authoritarian Manager, who sincerely believes that he or she

is a Democrat will be unsuccessful as Manager because he or she will be unable to successfully “play the card” of using the right Leadership Style when required.

Each Leadership Style is a card in the hand of the Manager. Each card has its values and should be played at the right times. A successful Manager must be able to play all cards convincingly and know when each is needed.

Use of the Leadership Styles:

In knowing how and when to apply each Leadership Style it is important to realise the advantages and disadvantages of each style. The following list is by no means exhaustive and the reader is strongly encouraged to add further examples based on personal experience:

Short description of the Democratic Leadership Style

- Creating a Group atmosphere
- Being Supportive
- Listening before deciding
- Inviting for participation in decisions

Advantages:	Disadvantages:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signals fairness and respect • Invites staff participation and prevents unclear decisions/responsibilities • Supports joint understanding of how decisions were reached • helping the smartest in decisions to be respected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can lead to lengthy discussions and • Can be interpreted as indecisiveness on fear of speaking out about issues • The loudest may dominate

Short description of the Authoritarian Leadership Style:

- Using and displaying power
- Giving Orders and Directives
- Discouraging discussion or participation re. decisions

Advantages:	Disadvantages:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads fast, clear decisions • Shows decisiveness and action from the Manager • Avoids confusion and discussion among staff members during the decision process • May intimidate staff from taking responsibility or sharing opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May create feelings of unfairness or lack of respect with staff • Does not create “ownership” of decisions within the organisation

Short description of the Laissez-Faire Leadership Style:

- Transferring responsibilities
- Inviting others to take the initiative
- Reducing his/her visibility as Leader

Advantages:	Disadvantages:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives others the space to express their strengths and ideas • Encourages experimentation “without punishment” if mistakes are made • Can be used to display trust in others’ abilities and motives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be interpreted as lack of interest or commitment from the Manager • Manager may lose control of the quality of the decisions taken • May make a negative or weak impression on external partners

Short description of the Charismatic Leadership Style:

- Displaying strong feelings and commitment
- Appealing to emotions and passion
- Showing high level of personal motivation

Advantages:	Disadvantages:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used to build commitment opinions and team spirit with staff • Shows courage and commitment from the Manager and invites sympathy • Allows the Manager to control the decision without using Authoritarian Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves little space for alternative opinions as discussion is not invited • Can be interpreted as unprofessional and patronising if staff or counterpart does not agree with the motives of the Manager • Difficult for others to ‘take over’ the decision later and maintain the Manager’s arguments

Several of the advantages and disadvantages listed focus on the *decision-making process* and which type of process is the most ideal for the Manager to seek in each case.

2.3. Management vs. Leadership

The following section contains various research findings, which may serve as useful reminders for Managers in distinguishing between what is Management and what is Leadership.

The main point of the research results is that Managers tend to spend too much of their time and resources on Management and too little on Leadership, yet Leadership is a more important part of the successful Manager’s job than Management itself and is harder to delegate.

Managers must be very conscious about how they allocate their time and to recognize what is important (Leadership) and what is less important (most Managerial tasks) – and prioritise their activities accordingly.

The more Development issues are decentralised to the schools (and their Managers) to decide, the more Leadership becomes essential for the VET school Manager.

First, a definition of Leadership¹:

A **Leader** is defined as “someone who occupies a position in a group², influences others in accordance with the role expectation of the position, and co-ordinates and directs the group in maintaining itself and reaching its goal”

¹ From Christine de Neuville: “Are Managers Leaders?”, University of Sydney, 2001

Therefore, **Leadership** is “the process of influence between a Leader and his/her followers to obtain goals as defined by the Group, the Organisation, and the Society”

In a further expansion of this definition, the leader can therefore be described as the person, who has the most impact on the beliefs and the behaviour of a group. This means that the Leader is the one, who initiates action, makes decisions, settles disputes between group members, offers encouragement, serves as a model, and is in the forefront of the group activities.

It can therefore be concluded that to exercise Leadership, a person must have the formal authority to carry out the Leadership (=Position), but also the personal characteristics, knowledge, will power, and energy to become the person who can credibly take on these functions in a group or organisation.

There are two important conclusions in these definitions of Leadership:

- 1) The Leader cannot on his/her own obtain all the goals of the organisation, so Leadership is about making sure that the organisation as a group can and will obtain those goals.
- 2) Since Leadership requires the Leader to be a credible force of influence in the organisation, Leadership abilities have little to do with a person’s skills in administration or traditional management – but more to do with the quality of the person’s visions and ideas – and his/her ability to communicate them convincingly to the organisation.

According to another research³, Managers generally perform four functions in an organisation:

- Planning
- Organising
- Controlling
- Leading

The overall success of the Manager depends most of all on avoiding bad performance in any of the four categories. This means that a School Management does not need to excel in any one of the categories to be successful – but it cannot afford to be weak in any of the areas.

Since ‘Leading’ is the only one of the four elements, which cannot be delegated from the Manager without undermining his/her position in the organisation, it becomes a conclusion of the research that the Manager *must* be able to conduct good Leadership and must be good at *either* performing planning, organizing, and control *or* be able to secure the successful implementation of these functions by delegation to others.

This means that a VET School Manager does not necessarily need to have specific planning, organising, or controlling skills (as long as he or she has the awareness to secure delegation of these tasks to capable experts) but must focus on the Leadership performance, personally.

According to the Management specialist, Jay Mintzberg⁴, Leadership is the component of the Manager’s work, which is about the interpersonal relations inside and outside the organisations, which create change. These are:

Inside the Organisation (School):

- Defining the organisational structure and the working environment in which the subordinates (staff) work and from which they develop motivation
- Monitoring and questioning the activities of staff to keep them alert (and with a feeling of importance of the activities)

² a ‘group’ can, in our context be interpreted as a VET School organisation

⁴ J. Mintzberg: “The Nature of Managerial Work”, McGraw Hill, New York, 1973

- Selecting, encouraging, promoting, and disciplining staff in direct relation to the strategic goals of the organisation
- Trying to balance the needs of staff and the needs of the organisation – with a view to creating the most effective function of the organisation
- Defining future goals for the organisation which are supported and understood by the staff – motivating and explaining where necessary
- Allocating resources in a way that matches the strategic goals of the organisation

Outside the Organisation (School):

- Negotiating with other Leaders in order to create supportive frameworks for the implementation of the strategic goals of the organisation
- Marketing the strategic goals of the organisation in order to obtain support and understanding for the goals from the external framework of the organisation
- Handling disturbances and problems, which might influence the organisation

Complementing these Leadership areas, Management consists of a wide range of tasks, which are characterised by the fact that they do not affect

- How the Strategic Goals of the organisation are developed, implemented, or understood
- How the organisation and working environment of the school is set up – and therefore how the conditions are for the school staff to carry out the strategy of the school and build their motivation
- How the staff perceive that the school has clear goals and acts in accordance with these goals

By listing these definitions of Management, Mintzberg is in fact saying that the opposite is really what matters for the Manager in order to focus on Leadership, i.e.

- To prioritise those tasks which directly influence how the Strategic Goals are developed, implemented, or understood
- To prioritise tasks related to the design of the organisation and working environment – to give the staff the chance to carry out the Strategic Goals in practice – and to build motivation
- To prioritise tasks related to securing that the school activities (and how they are implemented) match the choices, priorities, and standards defined in the Strategic Goals.

We can therefore conclude that the research of Mintzberg recommends that Managers should give top priority to development and follow-up of Strategies for the school and to monitoring and adaptation of the school organisation and working environment to match the requirements of the Strategies.

So, why do Managers end up spending so much time on Managerial Tasks and so little on Leadership?

On this question, Mintzberg (in the same research as above) lists a number of factors that conspire towards focusing managers' attention on the less essential parts of their job, and therefore leaving too few resources for the important ones.

The conclusion here is that Managers need to be aware of these time-robbers, and wherever possible define solutions to avoid falling into the trap of spending time on the wrong issues.

Factors removing Managers' attention from Leadership:

- Management jobs are open-ended and Managers feel obliged to tackle a large workload at demanding pace. There is little free time. Breaks are rare. Escaping from work after hours is physically/mentally difficult.
- Consequence: Managers feel they must always be available to solve immediate problems. These problems then occupy the mind of the Manager and prevent the Manager from finding time and mental space for thinking and analysing.

- Management work is fragmented, full of short hectic processes and frequent interruptions. Managers need to change behaviour constantly.
- Consequence: The Manager cannot keep a constant mindset for a long period of time and his/her mind is directed towards quick decisions and actions rather than thought.
- Managers seem often to get used to, and develop a preference for, these current, specific, well-defined problem types (“fire-fighting”)
- Consequence: The Manager may develop superficial attitudes to relationships and conditions the mind towards reacting to immediate stimulus and close, immediate pressures rather than future, broader issues.
- In order to maintain the speed of handling issues, Managers tend to prefer media and direct verbal contacts instead of written communication.
- Consequence: Managers lose the focus on analysis of in-depth information and lose the taste for the studies and information search needed to expand their strategic knowledge.
- Meetings eat up valuable managerial time due to long formal duration, large groups, ceremonials, transport time. Managers fail to demand efficiency in meetings – often because these are at the same time essential for informal information exchange.
- Consequence: Managers waste time and lose focus on the objective and value of meetings.
- A significant part of the Manager's time is spent dealing with external contacts and direct requests or problems presented by Staff. Staff members often bypass their own immediate superior and take their problems directly to the Manager. The Manager interaction with Staff often takes place in the Manager's office instead of in the work environment of the staff.
- Consequence: The Manager spends a lot of time on meetings with staff and external parties, often on issues or at times which the Manager has not selected to spend time on. The Manager often gets too little “value” (i.e. knowledge about the real situation in the organisation) from these meetings when they take place in a way and at a time chosen by the other party instead of the Manager.

Mintzberg concludes overall that:

Managers tend to control too little of what they do. Too much of their time is dedicated to handling obligations and commitments, which has too little value for them to justify the time spent.

Addressing this problem starts with taking control over the commitments from the beginning. The Manager must establish clear limits to those commitments (based on clear principles) in order to free up time to focus on Leadership issues. Many commitments can be delegated if the Manager is willing to do so.

2.4. Investment Decisions

A major difference between VET School Management in the Centralised and the Decentralised System is the ability of the school in the Decentralised System to freely plan and decide the use of its financial resources.

In the future reformed VET System in Serbia, VET Schools will administrate budgets, which will partly consist of state and local contributions with some degree of flexibility for use by the school, and partly by direct income of the school generated from commercial activities, donations, or project participation.

In order to apply these funds in accordance with the Development Strategy of the VET School, the school will have to make investment decisions, which means that the school Management must be able to draw up alternative investment scenarios and compare these scenarios for their benefits to the school and its strategy.

The main Management skill for doing so is to be able to attach financial value to the assets of the school. Since the school will be a service provider in the market for education and training, its assets will consist of the facilities and equipment at its disposal, the training programmes and materials available, the skills and capacities of the school staff, and the goodwill and customer loyalty created with its “customers”, i.e. students, enterprises, and organizations in the local community.

Most investment decisions will involve investment of financial means and/or working time in improvement of one or more of the above assets. In order to properly assess alternative options in a future framework where the school can determine its own investments, it is therefore necessary to determine the expected value of each of these alternative developments.

At present, to the knowledge of the VET Reform Programme, this type of calculation is rarely carried out at VET Schools at present – and the Management Skill of making investment decisions is therefore a learning area for VET Schools in Serbia.

In summary:

- **In a Decentralised System, VET School Managers must choose the allocation of limited resources to alternative investment opportunities**
- **Therefore, VET School Managers must know how to**
 - **Consider all choices as investments**
 - **Assess and compare investments on value**
 - **Assess risks of investments**
 - **Recognise skills as assets and assign value to skills**

The basic notion in Investment Decisions as a Learning Area is to start considering all the school assets in terms of value:

The value of the Skills of the Staff is the expected income these Skills can bring the school in terms of student enrolment and/or generation of commercial activities.

The value of a training programme and its materials is the income from the expected number of students it can attract and the commercial activities that can be generated on the basis of the course.

All values are subject to depreciation over time: equipment and materials get outdated, staff skills get obsolete, training programmes get out of touch with labour market needs.

School investment decisions should therefore consider both:

- Which investments are necessary in order to maintain the value of our existing assets?
- Which investments are expected to be most profitable for development of new assets in the school?

For example, the VET School Management should assess:

- How many extra students do we expect to be able to attract if we can offer this new VET Programme? (Next year, the year after, etc.)
- What will be the expected income for the school from these extra students? (Next year, the year after, etc.)
- Do we expect to be able to ‘sell’ this VET Programme, or parts of it, commercially? (Next year, the year after, etc.)
- Can we increase the attractiveness of some of our other programmes by integrating elements from this new VET Programme? If yes, what is our estimate of the additional sales value of those programmes on the basis of the new elements integrated?

What is then the total expected financial value of this new VET Programme? (With incomes from later years added with a reduced factor, e.g. 0.8 for year 2, 0.6 for year 3 etc. to reflect amortization)

Does this expected financial value justify an investment of X Hours in development costs and X RSD in purchases of materials and training for staff?

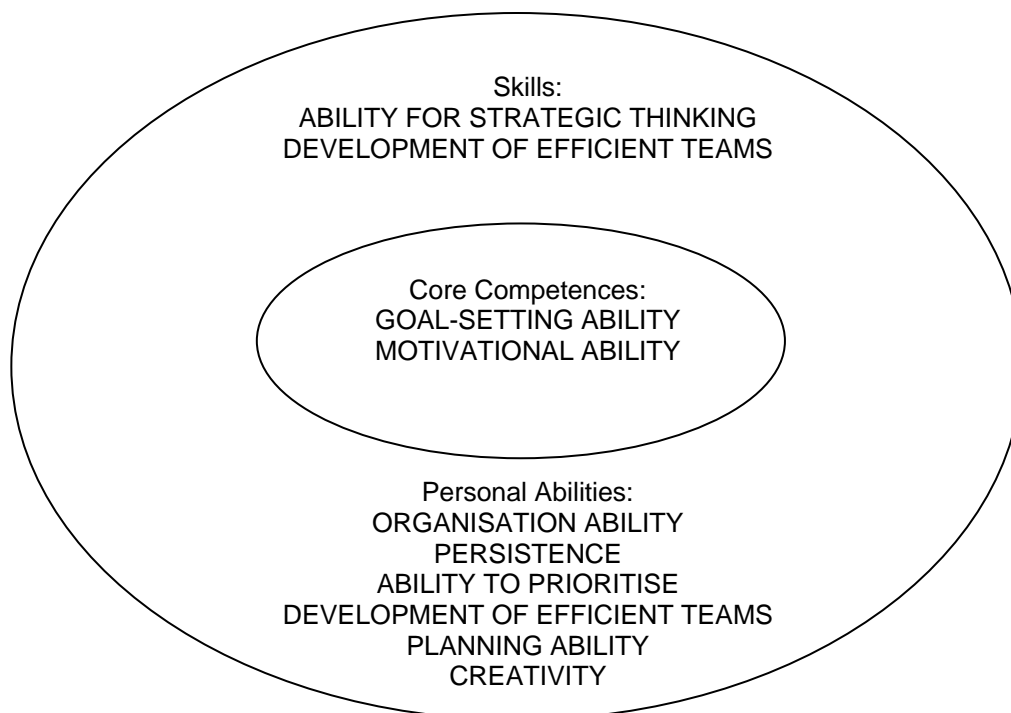
Or can we achieve a bigger expected financial value from spending the same investment (time and money) in another development? Or can we achieve approximately the same value but with lower risks by choosing another investment?

2.5. Learning Points from the VET School Management Training Programme

During the VET School Management Training Programme, 22 VET School Directors from all regions of Serbia were asked to identify the 10 most important Management competences for a VET School Manager in Serbia in the future from a list of 51 general Management competences. Each competence was described in detail.

Based on the responses of the participants, the following profile of the perceived essential Competences for the Serbian VET School Manager was compiled:

Manager Competence Profile:



When additionally asked to self-assess current strengths in each of these selected Competences, responses from the VET School Managers revealed that the lowest perceived current strength levels were in Development of Efficient Teams and Planning Ability.

In general, feed-back indicated that VET School Managers considered their current skills in areas related to staff organisation and – management as stronger than current skills in strategic management areas and self-organisation.

3. Organisation Development in the VET School

A common mistake in Management (and an attitude, which was often encountered during the VET School Management Training Programme) is to assume that new Strategies and Developments can be put into action while leaving the organisation of the school and its Management unchanged.

Many Managers have a natural resistance or uneasiness about changing existing organisational models, as these changes will also directly affect their own working conditions. But instead of fearing or opposing change, the future VET School Manager should embrace it as an integrated element in the development of the School.

If we compare the school to a production enterprise, we may conclude that when products change and production processes change, the organisation must change, too, to reflect those developments.

Organisations consist of people (Human Resources) and Organisation Development means (re)organising these Resources and the hierarchical connections between them, in such a way that the maximum working efficiency, energy, and motivation is realised.

Put shortly, when Decentralisation means that the school must put greater emphasis on development and expansion of activities, the school Organisation needs to be developed in such a way as to allow more Human Resources to become Developers in the school.

Main experiences in this area from EU Countries during decentralisation of school systems suggest that organisation development will (and should) take the direction of

- Reducing hierarchies in the organisation – in order to allow a freer flow of ideas to decision-makers
- Reducing the focus on control and supervision to the minimum possible. Control functions are rarely cost-efficient in a market economy where school resources are better applied to development and customer service
- Delegating decision-making competence and responsibility to the extent that the staff level is ready and capable to accept and absorb these delegations
- Allowing a greater number of staff members to become external representatives of the school, in networks, associations or project co-operations
- Focusing more on visible and objective reward systems for initiative and performance among staff
- Introducing self-managing teams in the organisation for some planning and development tasks

It should of course be recognised that Serbian VET Schools differ from the EU country framework in one important area: the limited influence of the VET School Management on the staff employment at the VET School and the (at present) limited ability of schools to influence salaries and other financial benefits provided to staff.

However, it must be expected that with the implementation of the VET Reform, individual schools will gain access to a greater range of opportunities to design incentives and reward schemes for positive staff performance.

In order to understand the Factors of the Organisation Development, it is useful to consider the school as consisting of three main areas:

- The Resources and Capital available to the School (Assets)
- The Market in which the School operates
- The Organisation structure the School has selected to best apply its Resources and Capital to serve the Market

The Assets and the Market are areas that the School Management can only *partly* control. Both of these areas are characterised by including factors beyond the control of the school, such as the development of the business sector in the school's local area and the changes in state budget legislations.

The School Management's tool for partially controlling these areas is the Strategy, which sets out how the school plans to develop and use its Assets and how it will develop and serve its Market. The Strategy must take into account and react to the external changes that will appear in these areas.

The Organisation Structure, as the third area of the school, is different from the others in being almost exclusively an internal matter for the school to organise. As it is linked to the other areas by the strategies defined by the school for its Assets and Market, the Organisation Development becomes the school's internal tool to make sure that it is as well prepared as possible to carry out the planned Strategies and to react to changes in its operational conditions regarding Assets and Market.

The conclusion is that Organisation Development in the VET School must reflect the Strategy made by the school and respond to the needs of that strategy.

While the Organisation Development, as described, should be determined by the needs created by the Strategy (covering Assets and Market), some general principles for good Organisation Development practise can be established:

Principles for Organisational Development and Involving Processes

1st Principle	To create future visions that will lead to actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which Inspire • Which Can and will be Effectuated • Which Contain a set of Basic Values
2nd Principle	To free the tied-up energies of the organisation There are always things, which can be improved by somebody, who can and will
3rd Principle	To take into account that the world will continue to move on during the Development Process
4th Principle	To focus on the Basic Idea on which the Development Initiative is based: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The idea is a Precondition for Obligation • Reveal the Basic Attitude to Other Human Beings Expressed by the Idea
5th Principle	To find key persons and talents for the future, who can and will take responsibility for the future in new ways and involve them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess Energy • Possess Skills • Remember "new" Colleagues • Avoid Classic Image of Representation
6th Principle	To carry the realisation of the development through initiatives and actions by individuals and groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better to have more initiatives than too few • Follow-up and Follow-up
7th Principle	To secure immediate visible steps of progress and inform about them
8th Principle	To remember that the desired result and the roads leading to it are equally important The Essence in New Initiatives must be Demonstrated and Visible from the Start

Similarly, for each Organisation Development initiative matching the above principles, a checklist can be established to control that the initiative is properly thought through, is justified, and does match the overall Development Strategy of the VET School:

Checklist for Organisation Development Initiatives:

Purpose/Idea:

- Why do we/I want this?
- Which desires and ideas are behind the project?
- What are our/my motives?
- What benefits do we/I get from participating here?

Own Working Principles (Policies):

- How will we/I work with the implementation?
- Information?
- Involvement?

Goals and Desired Results:

- Who must benefit from it?
- Which visible results must be achieved?
- How will we/I evaluate it?

Organisation:

- Who must participate in the development work?
- Who must take the decisions – and how?
- Should we/I organise it in working groups, decision groups, consultation groups etc.?

Activities, Time, Milestones:

- What do we/I start working on first?
- Which activities must we/I go through?
- What is our/my time framework?
- Should we/I set up milestones for the development?
- How do we/I keep the organisation informed?

Resources, Means:

- Which resources are necessary to acquire (facilities, equipment, expertise, capital)?

Network:

- Who constitutes our/my network (resource persons/experts, supporters/pioneers, decision-makers/lobbyists)?

Concrete Proposals/Ideas:

- What concrete proposals and ideas do we have already at this stage?

One of the essential Management challenges connected to Organisation Development is to secure that the Organisation learns from the developments it undertakes. Since Organisations are people and people automatically will assess any change they are subjected to, it is a Management Task to secure that this assessment becomes formalised so the Organisation can generate learning from its development activities.

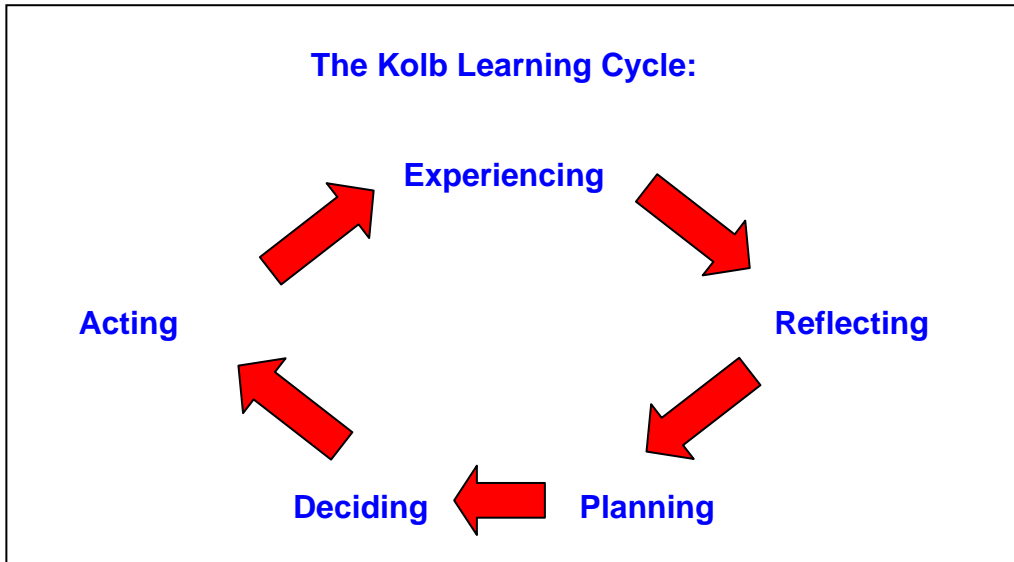
Learning from Developments is central to avoiding future mistakes (and repeating mistakes), as well as to improve the organisation's skills in predicting the impacts of future development proposals.

e.g. if a reorganisation of responsibilities in a department in the school has led to complaints from some staff members about a decline in working conditions in the department, it is essential that the organisation (i.e. the

Management) systematically examines if the reality is a few disgruntled teachers or if there has indeed been a general negative effect on the working conditions, directly caused by the reorganisation. The systematics proposed here marks the difference between a *Learning Organisation* and a static one.

The German sociologist Kolb illustrates formalised learning with the following loop:

Experience-based Learning



The crucial Management challenge lies mainly in securing that the Experiences made are systematically analysed and Reflected on, and that these Reflections are carried into the Planning of future Developments.

3.1. Team Organisation

One specific Organisation Development initiative recommended to be considered by VET Schools is the introduction of Team Organisation.

The purpose of Team Organisation is to organise a part of the operational processes of the school in dedicated teams of staff members, who are assigned with some degree of freedom to decide how to undertake and organise the process in question.

The potential benefits of Team Organisation lie in releasing the creative energy of Staff Members and creating a "safe" working environment for staff to express their skills. In addition, Team Organisation can give staff a greater feeling of influence on their own work situation and increase work motivation.

Team Organisation can be implemented in many varieties: from the "careful" first step of setting up teams to handle a few selected non-essential functions of the school (like organising events or developing projects) to a full delegation of organisation of the training process to teams of teachers.

It is very important to underline that the benefits of Team Organisation do not happen automatically, and that establishment of teams without the proper preparation and/or back-up from both the prospective team members and the school management can lead to negative results.

In general, establishment of Teams require the following considerations by the VET School Management:

1. A clear reason why do we establish teams?

Organisation must have clear reason for choosing to set up a team-based organisation.

Organisation must also define clear goals it wants to achieve by establishing teams – and how to measure if they are really achieved.

2. For which functions?

The School Management must consider which functions are realistic and desirable to establish as organised in Teams.

In this consideration, it is important to decide whether the school and the staff in question would be ready to organise part of its main activities in Teams, or whether to experiment with team organisation in less essential (less risky) areas within secondary activities of the school.

Experience from the VET School Management Training Programme suggests that most schools, who have adopted the team organisation model, have chosen to generate experience with this model in areas that are not essential to their main operations.

Typical team organisation examples have included:

- Teams for maintenance and physical improvements in the school
- Teams for organisation of special events in the school
- Teams for marketing, public relations, or other external activities in the school
- Teams for human resources development in charge for teacher training seminars selection and organisation
- Teams for development of projects in the school

When choosing the Extent of Team Organisation, the School Management must consider which extent is:

- Realistic?
- Desirable?
- Necessary to achieve the stated goals?

And also the readiness of the

- Staff to accept Team responsibility
- Management to delegate decision power

3. How much power do we delegate to the teams?

The essential consideration of the School Management is to consider which level of delegation is the team ready to absorb. The more the team is expected to rely on self-determination and independent operation, the higher are the demands on the team's ability to organise itself and to sort out internal conflicts.

In addition, the higher the degree of self-determination given to the team, the more its requirement for support from the Management changes from traditional managerial inputs towards coaching. This raises the equally important question of the management readiness and capacity to carry out this function.

Experience from the VET School Management Training Programme shows that most teams set up by participating schools have been granted some extent of planning autonomy and some teams have been given the rights for self-organisation of roles within the team. However, no examples were noted of teams, which had obtained managerial autonomy or financial competence. A cautious approach was recommended during the training programme and has been adopted by the schools monitored.

The most important action to be taken by the School Management to facilitate the successful integration of teams in the organisation is to secure the proper preparation of the teams.

The tool to achieve this aim is Team Building, i.e. training to make the Team Members aware of the requirements for functioning well as a team. These include establishment of good Communication Skills in the team and the ability to solve internal conflicts in a positive manner.

Teamwork exercises help train the co-operation in the team in an informal way and allows for discussion of team roles and co-operation. Team Members' personal profiles and preferences in teamwork can be tested by using one of many acknowledged self-tests, e.g. the Belbin test (see www.belbin.com for a free trial version).

4. Strategy Development

Like enterprise, every VET School must have a Strategy for its future development. In the absence of a Strategy, the school will be like a ship without a rudder, drifting aimlessly at the mercy of sudden moods of the Management and unable to respond in a professional manner to the changing forces of its external framework.

The Strategy development work in the VET School should take its basis in an analysis of the current situation of the school. This can be done through a SWOT analysis (see below, section 4.1.).

To complement the analysis of the present situation, the school, should express its Mission in a Mission Statement.

A Mission Statement is a short (1-3 sentences) description of *why the school exists*. The Mission Statement should answer the questions:

- Why are you in business?
- Which "product" are you "producing"?
- Who are your customers?
- What is the value you provide for your customers?

A Mission Example could be:

"The Technical School is a regional centre of vocational training, serving the local community with vocational education opportunities in response to the needs of the labour market. We provide young and adult students with relevant and up-to-date qualifications for securing employment and opportunities for vocational career development"

The next step is to look at the future. Most important of all is that the school develops a Vision. The vision should, just as it was the case with the Mission, be short and should answer the questions:

- What do we want to be in the future?

The vision should express what we want to be the characteristics of our school at some point in the future (say 3-5 years), what do we want to be known for, and why will our school be relevant in the future?

A Vision Example could be:

"The Technical School aims to be the largest, most modern, and dynamic vocational training institution in the Region. We want to be characterised by our flexible and updated training services, our international profile and equipment standards, and our close and efficient co-operation with the business community. Our young and adult students must experience unrivalled commitment and service from our training and counselling staff, resulting in better employment opportunities than offered by other VET schools."

The main task will then be to define Strategic Goals that will realistically take the school from its present status and situation (Mission) to its stated future goal (Vision).

All Strategic Goals must be in accordance with the Vision.

Each Strategic Goal should then be detailed in a Plan of Operation, which describes in practical and measurable activities how the school will reach the Strategic Goal in question.

The Plan of Operation should include clear and measurable indications about WHEN the individual activity should take place, WHO is responsible for it, and WHICH RESULT is expected from that activity.

The Quality of the Plan of Operation depends on how well the Plan can show a realistic and credible process to lead the school from the present situation to achievement of the Strategic Goal.

Conclusion:

The main items of the VET School Development Strategy are

- The Mission Statement
- The Vision for the future
- A number of Strategic Goals, each expressing developments supporting the Vision
- A Plan of Operation for each Strategic Goal

The Development Strategy can be summarised in a Business Plan for the VET School. The Business Plan is a Communication Tool to illustrate in a professional way to external partners, and to the school organisation itself, how the school plans its development for the future.

The Business Plan should contain, as a minimum:

- Main data about the school
- The Mission Statement
- The Vision for the future
- All Strategic Goals

The Business Plan should not necessarily include all Plans of Operations, as these are mainly internal tools to manage the development process. However, the Business Plan should include a time schedule to show which development processes are planned to happen at what time, and a general budget which, in main figures, show the expected income of the school for the next years and how the school plans to allocate funds for the investments connected to the Strategic Goals.

A Business Plan will typically be 10 -15 pages and should include enough details to allow the (external) reader to get a clear impression about the realistic and relevant nature of the developments planned by the school.

This means that the reader must be able to confirm:

- √ That all Strategic Goals stated by the school really lead in the direction of the Vision
- √ That the Strategic Goals listed will realistically lead the school to achieve its Vision if realised
- √ That there are clear and realistic activities planned for each Strategic Goal, and that implementation of these activities will most likely lead to achievement of the Strategic Goal
- √ That the school has a realistic time plan for implementation of its Strategic Goals and that there are realistically sufficient available resources to implement all activities

If the Business Plan includes too few details, it will not constitute a Communication Tool, because the reader will not be able to confirm from the Plan whether the School has a credible Strategy for its future development.

If the Business Plan lacks cohesion between its stated Vision, Strategic Goals and planned Activities, it will appear incomplete or not credible, and thereby fail in communicating the future Strategy of the school.

The VET School Management should take great care in preparation of its Development Strategy and Business Plan. If well prepared, it will be the most important management document in the School.

Finally, it should be noted that it is equally important that the Development Strategy is known, understood, and accepted *within* the school itself. A Strategy, lacking the support and co-ownership of the staff that must ultimately implement it will likely fail due to lack of motivation.

For this reason, it is strongly recommended by the VET School Management Training Programme that a process of involvement of Staff is established for the development of the Strategy.

4.1. The SWOT Analysis

The standard tool for analysing the current situation of the school, from which the Development Strategy should be built, is the SWOT Analysis.

SWOT stands for Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats

The (internal) Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses refer to the Internal characteristics of the School, while the (external) Analysis of Opportunities and Threats cover the External factors influencing the School.

Internal Strengths and Weaknesses:

The internal analysis is carried out with the purpose of revealing which strategic developments should be initiated within areas such as: staff development, recruitment strategies, the social and professional environment, the marketing area, administration, and finances. The focus could include a/o the following items:

- Identification of professional and personal staff qualifications, ability to change, co-operation skills, distribution of assignments with regard to age and competence, management resources etc.
- How is the approach to working with quality-creation activities such as: - development of didactics, professionalism, service etc. – internationalisation, staff and competence development, quality development etc.
- Pedagogical principles
- The learning environment and the social environment
- The physical environment, facilities, buildings/rooms, and equipment
- How do students, the business community, and competitors assess the image of the school
- Financial situation and potential for improvement of this situation
- Co-operation agreements, alliances, and network competence

External Opportunities and Threats:

The external analysis is carried out in order to expose the trends and tendencies from the surrounding society, which the school must take into consideration. The political component is obvious in that it holds decisive influence on every aspect of school operation, from finances to didactics. But other factors can affect the everyday situation and future development as well:

Politics	Which new legislation initiatives might influence the strategies, what are the characteristics of the current political climate, and which directional indicators can be identified?
Financial	Which financial parameters exert influence on the competitive situation of the vocational schools?

Environment	Which environmental and energy resources exert influence on the competitive situation?
Technology	Which technological development trends are important, and how will these express themselves in the situation of the school?
Demographics	Which demographic trends might constitute opportunities or threats for the school?
Culture	Which developments characterise the essential values of the society, how are these changing at present, and how might these changes affect the school?

Involved parties and networks

In the vocational school sector, the competition perspective must obviously be covered, but it is equally important to perform an analysis of involved parties and networks. Which political actors represent dialogue opportunities for the school in order to stay at the forefront of developments? Which alliances can be made? Which advisory bodies and actors does the school wish to engage in dialogue? Which signals could these provide? From where do the vocational schools recruit their students? What relations could be established towards suppliers of students, such as continuation schools and primary schools?

In summary form, this could be described as follows:

Students and Course Participants	Where do the students come from, geographical distribution, development trends of recent years and future forecasts for the next 5-10 years?
Links with the Business Community and other Involved Parties	Who are the main involved parties, work placement situation, enterprise sector development, competition development, and other relevant factors? What needs and functions are addressed by the department/vocational branch/section? What are the expectations of the involved parties, what do our students want to get from the school, which role does society want the school to fulfil, and what are the resulting opportunities and threats?
Competitors	Who are the relevant competitors? What are their market shares, strengths, and weaknesses – which aims and plans do they have at present? What future development is expected in the competitive situation?
Co-operation and Networks	Which schools are possibly suppliers to the vocational school, involved in co-operation agreements etc.? What co-operation potential and limitations exist? What alliances can be established, what alliances represent threats? Could similar initiatives be applied to other types of training provided by the school, e.g. adult education or open learning studies?

Other Opportunities and Threats	What other sector-specific technological, environment-related, financial, and/or political development trends represent significant opportunities and threats?
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Conclusion of the SWOT Analysis

Reality Description:

Finally, a conclusion of the internal and external analysis is drawn up. It is essential that the school is able to set up a Reality Description, which is recognisable for the staff, on the basis of the analysis. In addition, and perhaps most important, it must be transparent how the conclusions were deducted from the analysis. Only by ensuring this will the conclusions obtain relevancy and make a useful foundation for the subsequent Development Strategy preparation.

Use of the SWOT analysis results:

The SWOT analysis itself, or the Reality Description, do not need to be included in the Development Strategy document or the Business Plan. The most important aspect is that all conclusions from the SWOT analysis are considered when drawing up the Vision for the future and the Strategic Goals to be achieved. For each important Opportunity identified, a strategy should exist to define how to exploit the opportunity. Similarly, for every major threat identified, a strategy should exist to describe how the school will counter the negative effects of the threat.

5. Human Resource Development Planning

As an 'enterprise' operating in the market for provision of training services, the VET School is very dependant on the quality and skills of its Human Resources. As the growth potential of the school depends on the abilities of these resources to develop and implement new 'Products', it is very important that the VET school has a professional planning of how to develop its Human Resources.

Human Resources can be developed by:

- Recruiting new Staff with Skills not already exiting at the VET School
- Or by
- Training existing Staff in new Skills areas

Training of existing Staff can take place as

- Skills generation through introduction to new experiences at work
- Informal training or instruction on a person-to-person basis
- Formal, individual training
- Formal, group-based training

In all of the cases listed, Human Resource Development represents an investment for the VET School, and should therefore be subjected to investment planning (see section 2.4.)

Main factors to consider when planning investment in Human Resources in the school will be:

- The development wishes and motivation of each staff member
- The relevance of the skills development area to the Development Strategy of the School
- The expected value of the skills development to the school organisation
- The investment required to achieve the skills development
- The need of the school to balance developments between different skills types and different staff groups

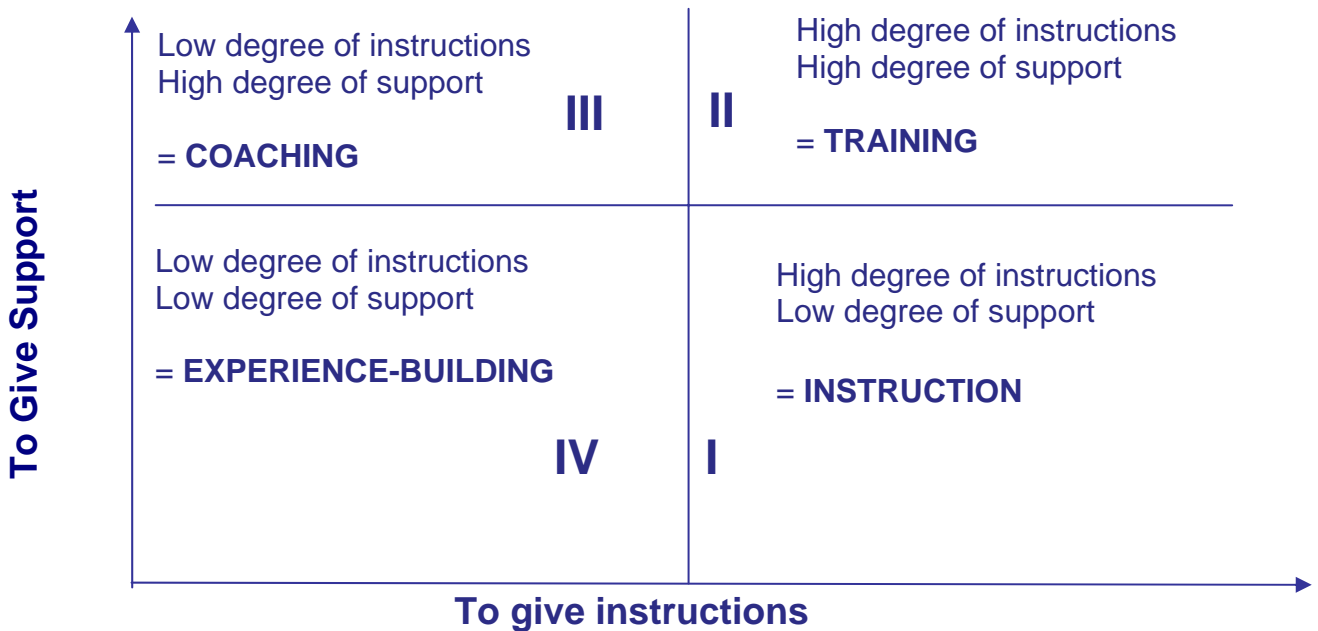
In order to manage planning of Human Resource Development investments, taking into account this complex of factors, the VET School Management requires Tools for cataloguing in a systematic way

- The Wishes and Motivation Factors of Staff regarding their career development and training
- The Present Human Resource “capital” of the School and expected future Human Resource Needs in order to identify gaps to be addressed through investment.

The first main consideration for the VET School Management is which approach to Human Resource Development (HRD) to apply for solving any particular HRD needs issue:

If the Management considers that providing Human Resource Development inputs to existing staff members is preferable to hiring new staff, the following four options present themselves:

The Contingency Approach Model – Four Options for HRD:



It can be noted from the model that HRD through EXPERIENCE-BUILDING represents the lowest investment, and might therefore be considered optimal in cases where it is feasible.

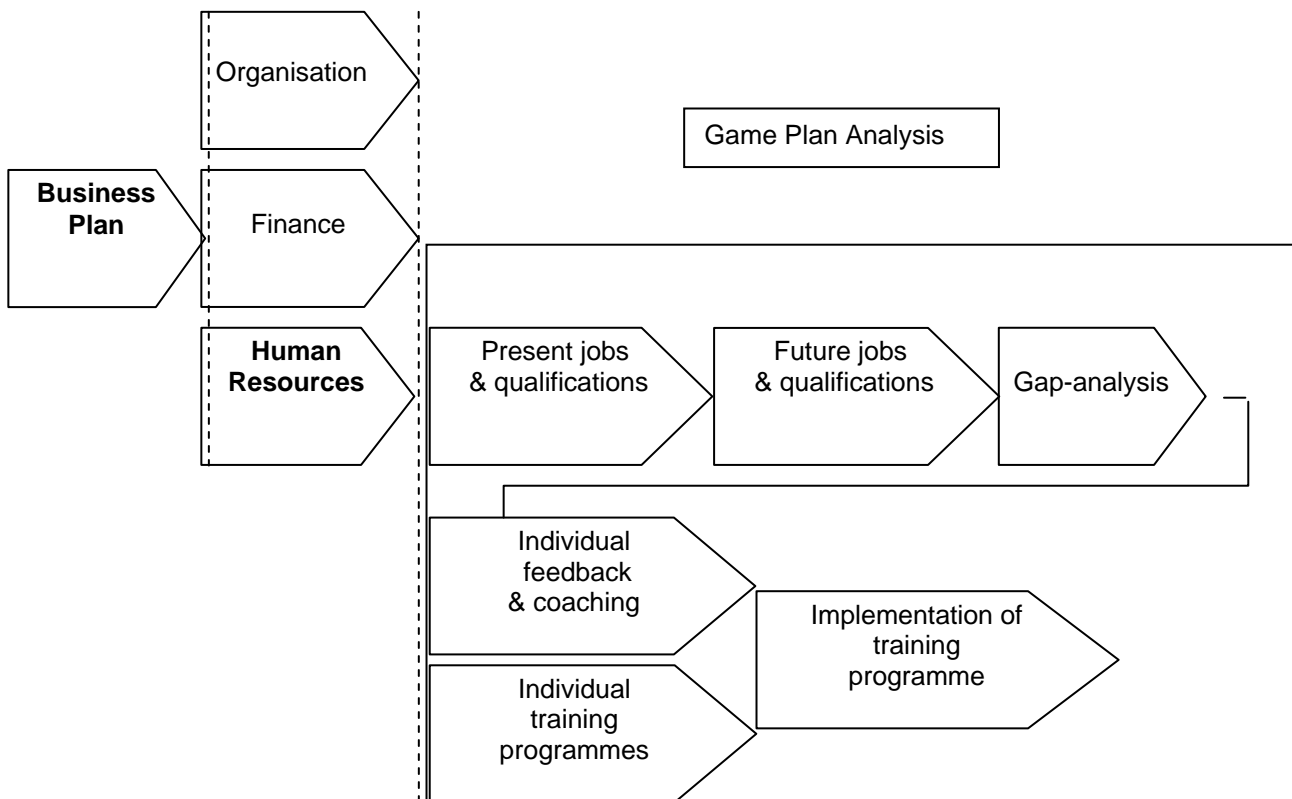
However, this approach might not always be possible, either because the skills in question cannot be gained by experimentation, or that such experimentation carries other risks.

As a basis, TRAINING represents the maximum investment since the input is high, both in the initial instruction phase and in subsequent support. The VET School Management might therefore consider INSTRUCTION or COACHING as other approaches.

5.1. Game Plan Analysis

The next step for the VET school Management would be to establish a systematic analysis of the Human Resource Needs of the organisation, in order to identify where present resources are insufficient and must be upgraded.

A widely used tool for this purpose is the Game Plan Analysis:



The Game Plan Analysis takes its basis in the Human Resource Development component of the Business Plan/Development Strategy.

The first step in the Analysis model is to describe Present Jobs and Qualifications:

Jobs/functions

- Job descriptions and responsibilities for individual groups of staff
- Job name
- Primary tasks and responsibilities
- Secondary tasks and responsibilities
- "Personal profile"

Present qualifications

- Describe the qualifications needed to carry out the job at present
- Technical qualifications
- General qualifications
- Personal qualifications

A similar description is then made of the Future Jobs and Expected Needed Qualifications, in accordance with the new products, organisation changes, external opportunities and threats illustrated by the Strategies in the Business Plan:

Future jobs/functions

- Job descriptions and responsibilities for individual groups of staff – based on new business plan
- Job name
- Primary tasks and responsibilities
- Secondary tasks and responsibilities
- “Personal profile”

Future qualifications

- Describe the qualifications needed to carry out the job – based on the new business plan
- Professional qualifications
- General qualifications
- Personal qualifications

The two sets of descriptions for each job category is then compared and a GAP Analysis is carried out:

- **Compare the present profiles of the individual groups of staff with the new challenges**
- **Describe the gap between present and future qualification of the individual groups of staff**

- **Where are the main challenges?**
- **Are there groups or needs that require special attention?**

After completion of the GAP Analysis for each job category, the VET School Management should have an indication of where the most significant skills shortages, in relation to future expected skills needs, are located at present, and where Human Resource Development needs are most pressing in order to allow the school to meet its Strategic Goals.

The entire analysis can be visually illustrated in the GAME PLAN ANALYSIS format:

The Game Plan Model is intended as a visual tool for illustration of Human Resource Development initiatives planned. The aim of the model is to communicate plans and goal to involved staff in the VET School and to motivate choices and strategies adopted.

5.2. Staff HRD Dialogue

The other issue raised at the start of Section 5, which requires a Planning Tool for the VET School Management is the need for systematic identification of Staff wishes and Motivation Factors regarding career development and training.

For this issue, the preferred EU approach is introduction of Systematic Staff Dialogue with the purpose of encouraging staff to clarify job and training wishes, securing an opportunity to match these wishes with the organisation needs (as per the Development Strategy) in an open discussion, while at the same time obtaining the chance to record the data provided by the staff member.

Several Staff Dialogue Models exist, but one such Model: The Compass Dialogue is enclosed in detail in Annex D to this Manual, in the form applied by AOrganisation, Denmark.

The Compass Dialogue represents an individual dialogue session between a Staff Member and his/her immediate superior, to be conducted at a fixed interval (typically annually). The outcome of the dialogue session is an internal contract between the staff member and the organisation, in which both parties confirm a mutual agreement on those Human Resource Development Activities for the Staff Member for the Next Period (Year), to which both the organisation and the Staff Member can agree.

In this way, the Compass Dialogue becomes an occasion for mutual commitment and search of mutual interest between the staff member's HRD wishes and the organisation's HRD requirements. Any activity agreed on should be in accordance with both of these interests.

Naturally, the successful conduct of Staff HRD Dialogue sessions of this type requires discipline and mutual trust between the parties to the dialogue, and it is imperative that the dialogue (and the information revealed during the dialogue) is never used by the organisation 'against' the employee subsequently.

In summary, the Compass Dialogue represents:

- Focus on the future
- Dialogue
- Evaluation of the organisation and the manager
- Evaluation of the individual member of staff
- Focus on personal and technical development
- Support to the strengthening the overall qualifications of the organisation

The Compass Dialogue is NOT:

- negotiations of salaries
- substitutions of the day to day dialogue
- rituals
- interrogations
- excuses for cleaning up the organisation

What the Compass Dialogue does:

- create expectations with the management, staff and the organisation
- support the effort to set goals for the future and the means to achieve them
- focus on the culture of the organisation

The major dangers for the Compass Dialogue (or any Staff HRD Dialogue models) are mainly that

- They become regarded as useless or 'empty rituals' if agreements made are not followed up by concrete action from the Organisation
- Trust cannot be established or breaks down between the parties to the agreement, which then disrupts the free exchange of information during the Dialogue

In response to these dangers, the main safeguarding actions of the Management should be

- To ensure that its representatives in the dialogue are aware of budgetary and other constraints on HRD activity possibilities so the organisation does not enter into agreements it cannot honour afterwards
- To train its representatives in communication skills to facilitate establishment of trust with the staff member counterpart in the dialogue and to signal that the dialogue is taken serious by the Management.

If successfully implemented, the Compass Dialogue will be a valuable tool for the VET school Management in monitoring the extent of correspondence between the organisation needs and staff wishes. If the gap between the two sides widen, it might indicate that there is a need to better communicate the strategy and future scenario of the school among the staff.

Used in combination, and on the basis of the developed Strategy, the Contingency Approach, the Game Plan Analysis, and the Compass Dialogue add up to a comprehensive planning system for identification and selection of activity areas within Human Resource Development in the VET School organisation.

6. Marketing at school level

6.1 Marketing is important

Even though education has been regarded as a non-profit field for quite a long time, there is a real market competition in education today. Similar to companies, schools are also on the market – with clients who focus on the value they get for the money they pay and clients who want to be sure that the school is worth the price it is charging. In order to be successful in such an environment, the school must apply marketing principles, or, in other words, it must offer services that will satisfy the needs and interests of the market.

As opposed to private schools whose work is based solely on marketing principles, when marketing is mentioned in public (state) schools people often make comments like: why do extra work, why make additional efforts and waste time? The school is here and it will always be here. Certain students will enter public (state) schools - students, parents and the society need this kind of school. But the answer is simple – better students (with whom it is easier to work) enter better schools, these schools have better teaching staff and more opportunities for professional development, better opportunities for additional incomes, greater support from the community and social partners.

Each school director should, from time to time, ask himself/herself the following four questions and give honest answers:

- Do students and their parents see my school as a school they would gladly enter?
- Would I ask my children or grandchildren to enter this school?
- Is the teaching staff in this school the same or better in comparison to the teaching staff in the competitive school?
- Are our clients satisfied?

If the answer to any of these questions is `no`, he/she should take into consideration different opportunities, ways and strategies to overcome this situation. And this marks the beginning of marketing actions.

According to the definition marketing is: `... the management process responsible for the identification, anticipation and satisfaction of the consumers' needs and wants profitably`.⁵

Since the aim of each organisation or institution that offers products or services is to satisfy the clients, the director or the marketing team (which exists in very few schools) are not the only ones that should be held responsible for the strategy in marketing – the responsibility is collective. Success is possible only if managers find ways in which they can combine the limited resources that are at their disposal in order to satisfy the needs of the clients and to achieve the aim of the organisation.

Promotion and advertising of the school which is different from other schools with special emphasis on its values are necessary for getting better students and associates. This task – presentation of what the school offers – should be part of everybody's job. Although only few employees may have in their job descriptions the word `marketing`, everyone has an important role in promoting and sending a positive, unique message. The most common mistake is to regard marketing only as advertising and writing press releases. Marketing is a much wider field which is part of almost all daily activities, from setting the price for certain services provided by the school, information to parents about their children's grades to regular updating of the school website.

Internal cooperation and good marketing

If, at the school level, there is a clearly defined attitude towards the identity of the school, its mission and the direction towards which it is moving, if all the resources are engaged in the proper way and if all the

⁵ Definition of the British Institute of Marketing in: Frank Jenkins, *Advertising*, Clio, Belgrade, 2003, p.10.

employees pass the unique and convincing message to target groups, then half of the job is done. Cohesive internal marketing and coherent internal image are as important as external promotion. This kind of background is necessary for ensuring and keeping up the success of external marketing activities. Internal environment with a friendly atmosphere of cooperation, coordination is crucial to credibility of the school.

The next important thing is research: what kind of image does the school have in the community and what does the community expect from the school? As opposed to internal marketing evaluation (estimation) which gives the answer to the question who you think you are and who your clients are, the analysis of the external image gives the answer to who the clients think you are. This gives an opportunity to compare how similar or different these two ideas are. It is important that the mission and the vision perceived by the school and the employees are as similar as possible to the mission and vision perceived by the clients.

Messages and issues that are the result of the research relating to the vision or the image of the school represent the basis for communication and development of marketing plan, development of organization, the contents of the website and feedback information about the programmes and services. There are dozens of groups that should be systematically monitored and whose attitudes should be analysed. However, key/target groups are students and their parents, donors and the local community. Periodic and systematic research is necessary. Perception of the school quality is subjective and is in constant change. Be always informed about the reasons and the directions of the change.

The role of the school director

Cooperation and communication are the necessity if the school wants to carry out marketing activities. School director, however, has the greatest individual influence. Director's personality, management methods, values and attitudes, professional behaviour, cooperation and decision making style are the defining factors for marketing as well.

If the director constantly asks questions such as: *How can we do this better? How can we improve our response to demands and challenges? How can we estimate possible changes? How can we work even better than usual?* He/She designs a model for marketing related work and then other employees know what the priorities are. By asking these questions at the beginning of each discussion, the director helps everyone to focus on the accomplishment of the mission, on the school's response to the changes in community needs and changes in perception of what exactly the quality is.

Formulating the vision in each and every opportunity – there are four statements, answers to key questions, which every leader has to repeat constantly: *Who are we, What is our role, Why is this important and What are we aiming at.* Answers, as well as the mission statement, should be simple so everyone could adopt them, and they should serve as a starting point for every decision.

Cooperation among staff members is a necessity. We cannot overlook the importance of administrative and support staff in marketing activities, because they are often the first to make contacts with students and parents, as well as donors and other partners.

Research is the first and the most important step in the process, but, at the same time, it is quite often forgotten, skipped (omitted) or underestimated. How are we going to develop strategies oriented towards the change of attitudes and opinions regarding school, without having any information about their present attitudes and opinions? Research provides information which is necessary for decision making, but at the same time it represents the signal to the public that the school shows interest in their opinion.

Although this process demands time, it enables precise determination on what is that the school provides and what its clients want or need. According to the research, the following things are important for parents and students when they select the school:

- The school should have solid and strict, but not too strict and too rigorous rules
- The school should be competitive in terms of students' knowledge
- It should be well - known for its quality
- Small classes
- Oriented towards results
- Extracurricular activities that satisfy the students' needs
- Open, warm atmosphere

- Polite staff
- The school should be glad to involve parents in its work
- That school should be easily accessible and located within safe surroundings
- That ex-students think positive about the school

If the research is efficient, it will enable identification of the messages that clients want to hear and clear definition of marketing goals of the school. When the research is finalised, then the process of defining goals can begin, and after the goals have been set, planning can start.

6.2 Planning

Sometimes planning can confuse you, especially when you talk about market – oriented plans. What is to be done first? What is the sequence of planning activities? The answer is that the business plan must be made before the marketing plan and the promotion plan. If you don't have the business plan - don't make the marketing plan.

Planning demands time – hours and hours are spent on preparations, but it cannot be seen in the plan which is the end product. Statistics say that you will probably spend even 80% of your time on planning and the quality of the preparations will reflect on the success of the plan you are going to implement.

When the strategy and the goals are defined, the operational plans together with marketing plans can be made.

Marketing goals

Marketing goals must always be expressed in such a way that the people engaged in the team will best understand them.

Marketing strategies

In accordance with the plans of the organization you should decide on the market segments that are interesting for achieving the goals and on the ways in which you can act best in that market to satisfy the needs of a certain target group. When you have decided on the segments and the approach, the marketing strategy is appropriate.

Marketing tactics

Study in great details how to implement the strategy and plan all the elements of marketing mix so that each of the elements could contribute to the achievement of these goals.

Monitoring (Evaluation procedures)

It is important to specify the tools that are necessary for the implementation of the strategies and tactics. The support of the management is gained through the internal marketing plan.

The time planned (the schedule) for the work on specific tasks enables you to move faster from plan to action. The feedback information and monitoring must be planned from the beginning itself, since it is the only way in which you can see in time that the plan is not successful and the managers may learn from their own plans.

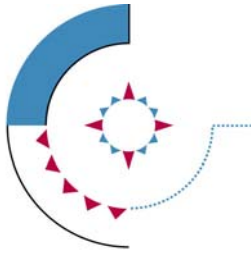
It's a fact that the plan will not be carried out only because it is written. It often happens that managers make mistakes and the plan remains only in the written form. The plans will not be usable without making adjustments and alterations, because they are based on the incomplete data which are the result of the forecasts that might prove to be wrong. The more you develop plans, the sooner you will understand that they need to be improved – good managers are cautious, adaptable and ready for anything.

How much time is needed?

How long the planning will take depends on the amount and the complexity of the work you do, on the experience you have in planning and in data processing and on the tools that help during the planning process. According to some rules, the percentage of the time spent on certain planning phases is:

-
- 25% for internal analysis
 - 25% for the analysis of external factors
 - 30% for the evaluation and selection of strategies
 - 20% for the development and the presentation (announcement) of the plan

You should keep in mind other activities that are done during the week, vacations, holidays, etc. If the planning activities are relatively undeveloped, do not try to make them perfect from the beginning. You can always change the plan and base it on new or better information, and as time goes by, you will become more skillful in plan development.



Annex A: EU Country VET School Model for Staff HRD Dialogue

The Compass Dialogue

The Compass Dialogue model is one example of a model for establishing a structured framework for dialogue with staff regarding Human Resource Development in the organisation.

Objective:

The Objective of the Compass Dialogue is to create a safe and motivating forum for engaging staff in the planning of their own development within the organisation. At the same time, the Compass Dialogue aims at helping the organisation to co-ordinate staff wishes with the organisation's overall strategy and to create formal agreements between managers and staff regarding goals and responsibilities for Human Resource Development.

How the Compass Dialogue Works:

Each staff member should be invited once a year for a Compass Dialogue by his/her immediate superior. This means that each Manager in the organisation is responsible (only) for conducting Compass Dialogues with his/her immediate subordinates.

There should be no other persons present at the Compass Dialogue than the Manager and the invited Staff Member. The Compass Dialogue must always take place as a one-on-one dialogue between the two parties involved.

As *Preparation* to the Compass Dialogue, the Staff Member should be given (e.g. one week in advance) a copy of the Organisation's Development Strategy and/or Business Plan and should be familiar with this Strategy when entering the Compass Dialogue. Also, the Staff Member should be given in advance copies of the enclosed Question Area Sheets A - E in order to have time to consider the questions and to note down remarks that he/she would like to share during the Compass Dialogue.

The Compass Dialogue should (indicatively) last between 1 and 2.5 hours per staff member.

During the Compass Dialogue, all five Question Areas A - E from the Question Area Sheets should be discussed and both the Manager and Staff Member should provide his/her inputs and opinions to each area. The Checklists provided on each Question Area Sheet should be seen as *Guidelines* for possible discussion topics, but do not exclude that other topics could be discussed as well.

The last 30 minutes of the Compass Dialogue should be used for writing down conclusions that both parties can agree to in the enclosed 'Conclusion of the Compass Dialogue' template.

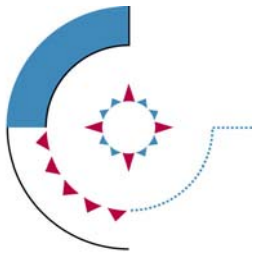
The Conclusion document should be signed by both parties at the end of the Dialogue and should be considered a binding agreement between the parties until revised. Therefore, it is important to add to the Conclusion document *only* items where agreement has been reached between the parties.

The Conclusion document must be the only document produced by the Compass Dialogue and all other discussions carried out during the Dialogue should be considered confidential and non-binding.

Usually, the Conclusion document should be added as an Annex to the job description of the Staff Member and the Job Description itself is revised if required on the basis of the Conclusions agreed in the Compass Dialogue. Signed copies of the Conclusion document are kept by the Manager, the Staff Member and the Staff Administration Dept. of the organisation.

Important:

The Compass Dialogue is intended to help establish trust and communication between the parties involved. However, the model also *requires* the presence of trust to function. In a situation where most Staff Members distrust their superiors, the Compass Dialogue cannot be expected to work and will not create the desired

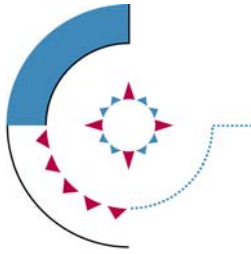


COMPASS DIALOGUE

open dialogue about the Staff Member's development needs and wishes. We therefore do not recommend using the Compass Dialogue as the *first* trust-building measure in an organisation.

The following measures should be considered to obtain the optimal results from the Compass Dialogue:

- Train the Managers in Communication Skills and in understanding the Objective of the Compass Dialogue before conducting the first round of dialogues. It is essential that the Manager does not misuse the information given by the Staff Member during the Dialogue and that the Manager does not intimidate the Staff Member during the Dialogue
- Make an initial short Seminar for all Staff Members, explaining the Objectives of the Compass Dialogue and that the dialogue represents both an opportunity and a responsibility to participate in defining development areas for skills and competences of the individual staff member. Underline that the Staff Member is personally co-responsible for getting the most out of the Dialogue and that good preparation is essential.
- Make sure that the Conclusion documents are taken seriously and are seen to be serious by the Staff Members. This includes ensuring that the Staff Member understands the *realistic* possibilities of the organisation to support professional training and other development activities for the Staff Member and avoiding promising unrealistic activities in the Conclusion document. It is the responsibility of the Manager to make sure that obligations agreed by the organisation are realistic.
- Make sure that topics discussed during the Compass Dialogue remain confidential from the side of the Manager and are not 'used against' the Staff Member at a later date. Also make sure never to fire a Staff Member on the basis of a Compass Dialogue or with reference to any part of the Conclusion document made. Compass Dialogues should focus on (and only on) the development of the individual staff member in relation to his/her and the organisation's needs.



COMPASS DIALOGUE

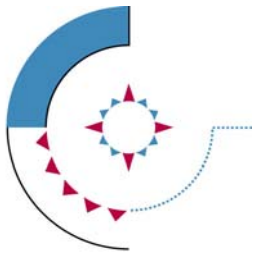
Question Area Sheet A:
Follow up on previous compass dialogue

Evaluate if goals and actions agreed during the previous Compass dialogue have been obtained.

Checklist:

1. Did you obtain the objectives agreed during the previous Compass Dialogue (see conclusions of previous Compass Dialogue)?
2. What did you do to reach the objectives?
3. What did your leader do to assist you in reaching the objectives?
4. What do you suggest that we do in common to improve performance and results?
5. Other issues?

Your Own Remarks to the Checklist:

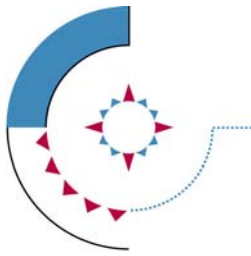


***Question Area Sheet B:
Tasks and competences***

Checklist:

1. How do your competences (technical, pedagogical and personal) match the tasks and duties of your job?
2. What are the motivators and challenges/obstacles in your job?
3. What tasks do you find most important?
4. What tasks do you find most interesting and motivating?
5. What tasks interest you the least?
6. How do you experience your abilities and the possibilities to live up to the expectations and demands that AOrganisation has to you as an employee?

Your Own Remarks to the Checklist:

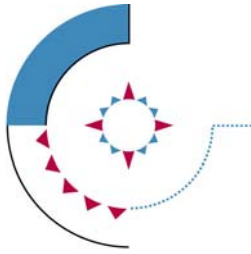


Question Area Sheet C:
The Social Working Environment

Checklist:

1. How do you estimate the co-operation between you and your superiors in relation to:
 - Information and communication?
 - Support and coaching?
 - Openness and trust?
 - Planning and follow-up on tasks?
 - Other issues?
2. What can I/you do to improve the relationship?
3. How would you describe the general social 'climate' in our team/area?
4. How would you describe co-operation in your team/area?
5. How would you describe your own and your superiors' effort to create co-operation in your team/area?
6. What can you and your superior do to improve co-operation in your team/area?
7. How do you experience your own and your superiors' ability to carry out the tasks described in your job descriptions?

Your Own Remarks to the checklist:



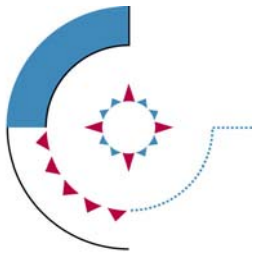
Question Area Sheet D:

Assignments and goals for the next year?

Checklist:

1. Are you satisfied in your present job?
2. What would you prefer to work with in the coming years? (assignments/projects)
3. Which targets would you set for these assignments/projects?
4. How do these assignments/projects support the business plan of organisation?
5. Where will you be (in terms of your development: technically, pedagogically and personally) in one year?
6. How does that support the organisation's business plan/strategy?

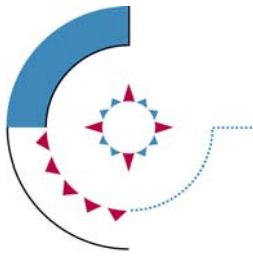
Your Own Remarks to the Checklist:



***Question Area Sheet E:
Development and the future***

1. What do you consider your main needs for development in relation to your future job tasks (courses, training, coaching, supervision etc.)?
2. What are your wishes for your future at organisation – and how do you see your job developing over the next 3 years?

Your Own Remarks:



Conclusion of the Compass Dialogue

General information	
Name	ID no.
Job function	
Area	Leader
Development wishes/needs	
	Activities:
Projects:	
Job targets: (Changes, training activities, coaching, changes to job description etc.)	
Development targets:	
Research by the employee::	
Research by the leader:	
Date for follow up on agreements re. wishes/needs	
Date:	
_____	_____
Employee	Leader/team leader

Annex B

COMMUNICATION PLAN

If your resources, time and money are limited, the strategic communication plan will help you focus those limited resources on the most important tasks and set priorities. Without the plan you risk to respond to the external events in an inappropriate way, wasting good opportunities for communication.

A good plan asks for discipline and clear thoughts that will help you define (specify) objectives and target groups formulate the message and understand better the environment you are going to send your message to.

The strategic communication plan will help you integrate all of your work on communications, including not only the media activities, but also establishing cooperation with the decision makers, potential associates and donors.

A good plan will help the whole team to be on the same side when the team members communicate with the rest of the world, to support the same attitudes and pass the same messages.

The strategic communication plan will help you improve your media plans. And the well – developed media plan is important because the media are one of the educational forces in modern society, they have the influence on the attitudes of the public and they help the public think about numerous issues.

Who should be involved in planning?

Several people should be involved in planning – forming the group for communication is the first key step. A good plan asks for the participation of all the people who work towards achieving the same goal.

The contents of the typical communication plan

Communication work is more an art than a science. A typical plan should look like this:

1. Situation analysis: Background information
2. Situation analysis: Environment
3. Goals
4. Communication goals
5. Target groups
6. Message
7. Strategy
8. Tactics
9. Timing
10. Schedule

Situation analysis: Background information

If you make a general communication plan, it is important to think first about the position of your organization within your community.

- Background information about the organization
- The facts about the topic you are discussing
 - Why is this topic so important? (give statistical data whenever it is possible to do so)
- The services that the school provides for the community
- People who have the direct benefit from your services (not only the direct users, but the whole society)
- The main function of the school (basically, this is the mission statement, the answer to the question about the duties you perform, for whom, how and why you do all these things. Quite often this part can be similar to the answer to the question about the service you provide.)
- The role of the school in education

-
- What is your position in comparison to other schools?
 - How is education seen in your community?
 - Work indicators
 - The number of clients
 - How did your work help to change the society?
 - Competition analysis
 - Who provides similar services?
 - What makes you different from your competition?
 - What makes you better from your competition?

Situation analysis: Environment

It is important that you are aware of the external threats or opportunities, of those who might be against your messages so you should have a good feeling for the audience (the environment) you are going to send your messages to.

- How does the local community (the general public) see your school at this moment?
 - Do they see you as the organization that is necessary for the community?
 - As a reliable organization?
 - As an innovative organization or as the usual one?
 - How do you want them to see your role?
- Is there the record (the archive) of your letters or enclosed documents about your work?
 - Letters to the editor?
 - Radio interviews?
 - Newspaper articles?
 - In other words, how much were you present in the media?
 - What was your position in the media (up to this moment)?
- Were you involved in some study or a review?
- Is it necessary to carry out additional researches in order to estimate the attitudes that the public has towards you?
- Are your activities the cause for debates, the questions of the media or the legal issues? In other words, are your activities well – known to the public? Would you be satisfied if most people saw them as new activities?
- Is there anyone who is lobbying for you? (Do you have your lobbyists?)
- Do you have rivals?
 - What are their messages?
 - What effect do those messages have on your work?
 - What are their strengths and weaknesses?

Key aims

Answers to these questions should reflect the mission. Media coverage is not and should not be the aim, since the communication work of any kind is the means and support for achieving the aim.

- What is your ultimate aim?
- In what way will the fulfilment of the aim influence the community?

- How do you want to be seen by the public?
- How do you want the public to see your activities?
- What kind of image should your community have in public?
- What is the time frame for the fulfilment of your aims?
- For each of the aims you have set, you have to develop specific and measurable results that can be achieved.
- What are your other goals – fewer winning situations or mini – goals?

Communication aims

Why do you want to start your communication campaign? Your aims (both communication and general aims) have to be realistic and measurable in order to be real.

- What is your ultimate aim?
 - Example: to persuade those who decide on the next year budget to earmark (give) some money for two specialized IT classrooms or for a new gym...
- What exactly do you want your target group to do? What is your “action call”?
 - Do you want the target group to write the “letter to the editor”?
 - Do you want to have phone – in shows and debates?
 - Do you want them to change their behaviour?
- How are you going to measure success? What will be the measure of success?
 - 100 calls until a certain date?
 - The sum of 2 million dinars raised by the sponsors?
 - The tickets for the event you are organizing are sold out?
- Do you want to give some new information to your target group?

Target groups

Primary target group

- Who do you want to influence?
 - Write down the names. “Leading business people” is not good enough. You want to influence Pera Peric, the company director.... You don’t want to influence “politicians” and “decision makers”, but the Minister of Education, the mayor.
- In what way will you reach the target group?
 - Does the Minister have the advisor?
 - Does the advisor have the assistant?
 - Who are they? Find out their names. Write them down in the order of importance so that you could achieve your aims.

Secondary target group

- Who supports your work?
 - Who criticizes your work?
 - These people may be addressing your target group, too. Find out what they are saying and prepare to give answers if necessary.
- How do the media present (cover) your activities?
 - Find out the names of journalists who favour you (who like you). Find out when they publish their columns / broadcast their shows. Follow them.
 - Find out the names of journalists who don’t favour you (who don’t like you). Find out when they publish their columns / broadcast their shows. Follow them, too.
- Are the people who use these services your target group?

- What kind of message do they want to hear?
- Are your employees, donors or friends your target group?
- What is the message you want to send them?

Messages

There are many different ways in which you can talk about the same topic. It is important to know which ideas, words or phrases will have the influence on your target group. Some research techniques, such as testing informal groups or questionnaires sent by e-mails, are sometimes necessary to understand fully the expectations and motives of your target group. Testing the message is an important step in making sure that you have made a good communication campaign.

- What is the `catch`/`hook`?
 - What are the specific words and phrases that make your message simple and understandable?
 - Can you write down your message on stickers? Deliver your message in only one sentence. A little longer than that and the thought is not adequately focused.

Strategies

Do not start making the communication plan by developing the strategy. First, go through the planning process – identify the objective, come up with the message and specify (determine) the target groups. In this way you will develop a more effective strategy. The media coverage is only one kind of strategy and it may happen that the media are not the most effective for the topic or the problem you are dealing with. Maybe it will be more effective and more efficient, for example, to concentrate on the meetings with the decision makers than to choose the strategy which implies sending 1000 faxes to their offices. The strategy you choose depends solely on the situation, objectives and the clear picture of who makes your target group and what will motivate them to act.

- Is your strategy proactive or reactive?
- Locally or nationally - based?
- What are your main communication options?
- What can obstruct your activities?
- What are your strengths in relation to communication?
Clippings, good spokesmen, people who have good connections in the community, etc.
- What kind of partnerships and cooperation does the school have?
- Does your approach allow for the paid advertisements in the newspapers, on the radio and television (assuming that you have the resources for that)?
- Who are your rivals?
 - What do you think your message will be in connection to your announcement (notice)?
 - How will you respond to that message?
- What are the possible weak points in your story?
- How can you be creative?
- Does your strategy include the development of a special media strategy?
 - What kind of media coverage will have the greatest influence on decision – makers?
 - Is the news great, interesting enough to the media to come to the press conference?
Exclusive?
 - Are you going to present the story during the briefing to only several journalists you have chosen? Or during the meeting with the editorial staff of only one medium?
 - Can your story be covered with the recorded material? Are there ways in which the story can be presented or supported by the recorded material?
 - When will the statement for the press be given? How will it fit in with other events? What are the current priorities of the editor of the particular medium?
 - Should you inform the government representative if the media asked him / her to give the statement as the answer to your statement? How much time will you give them? Don't forget that the

government representatives have their own media staff (PR officers) and that it might be in their interest to lessen the importance of your message.

Tactics

There are, indeed, a lot of ways in which you can address the public. When you choose the tactics, think about the following:

- How big is the budget you have at your disposal?
- Who are the staff members you can count on?
- How much time will they have to spend on dealing with communication issues?

- In short, how do you plan to convey your message to the target groups?

Example: If your strategy is to inform the minister in great details about the importance of the actions you are carrying out (and you think that his associates are not well informed about that topic), the tactics should include preparing and organizing the briefing during which you will present the set of materials:

- Prepare the necessary documents
- Be well - informed about the political background of the problem
- Find out when the decisions will be made or when the changes of the policy in relation to the problem will take place

Timing

Timing means events that are related to your activities. For example, if the decisions about the budget are to be made, and if that may have the influence on your activities, be ready to act. Be active and contact the media and the associates of the minister or the mayor before they make decisions and make them public. Plan your activities well in advance so that you could organize the campaign at the right time.

Schedule

Make the internal schedule of activities in accordance with the timing. Make it as detailed as possible. If you make the set of materials in order to inform your target group with the activities, include every detail of the research or making materials in the schedule. If you skip this step, you will be surprised how fast the date of the meeting at which you have to present the materials has approached or it may happen that you don't have enough time to prepare all the materials that you need.

Public relations officer

Decide who will talk about the activities – it should be the person the target group believes most. You may even want one particular person to address (talk to) the government, and somebody else to address other target groups. Choose those people who have good relationships with the media and who don't feel anxious when they talk to journalists in front of the cameras.

Carry out your plan

Don't forget about the work you have done; don't put the plan you have made on the ice. Use it. Check regularly what you have planned and coordinate your activities. Include the control process in the schedule. The greatest benefit from making the strategic communication plan, besides the fact that you carried out a good campaign on the basis of that plan, is that next time, when you make a new campaign, you will have most of the job done. And if you monitor your results, successes and the things you are not best at, you will be able to plan your further activities in accordance with what you have learnt the first time.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

Basic information

It was planned to build a new workshop for practical lessons in 2001. The lack of space in which the students of '.....' school will have their practical lessons lead to questioning the viability of the profile which is becoming more and more necessary in the new factories in town. Despite the huge number of the unemployed in our town the employers are forced to employ workers from other places in order to satisfy those needs. In 2001. the local authorities refused to meet with the school representatives, and during the last two years they have been putting off serious talks about the possibilities of financing the construction work. The needs for the workers of this profile have already been considerable, and with the planned economic development in the next few years and the fact that in the surrounding area of 150 kilometres there is no school which educates students for this profile, these needs will be even greater. The school will carry out the research on the labour market needs. The meetings with the employers will document the need for the workshop construction and the whole community and the region will benefit from re-establishing this profile. The research will be supported by demographic facts.

Environment

The viability of certain educational profiles is being questioned in many schools and some of the profiles do not exist any more. The representatives of the local authorities support such decisions of the Ministry of Education to a large extent. The local media ignore these situations. There are only a few journalists who seriously deal with these issues and who showed interest in dealing with this problem.

Objectives

The main objective is to construct the workshop for practical lessons so that students could be educated again for this profile...

Communication goals

- Raise the awareness of the community about the importance of personnel training for the local economy
- Change the attitude of the local authorities towards the need for the workshop construction in the school.

Target groups

Primary:

Minster of Education
Mayor

Secondary:

Directors of the sector companies
The representatives of the Chamber of Commerce
The representatives of the Employment Service
The representatives of the Employers
Parents of primary school students
.....

Message

- Providing education for students in that profile will reduce unemployment in the next 10 years.
- Providing education for students will enable the employers to have well – trained workers and they will not have to pay for the additional training courses and travel and accommodation expenses.
- Providing education for students in this profile means that the school will become the regional training centre for the workers for that profile, as well as for the professional development of adults...

Strategy

Carry out the research and gather information – single out (provide) the stories of the employers and workers that illustrate how the lack of the profile affects the shortage of the workforce and the need to hire workers from other towns; the representatives of the Employment Service will talk about the fact that more than 30 people are ready to be re – trained for the profession that is needed...

Prepare the press material in which you have highlighted the most important facts that are the result of the research.

Organize a meeting with the representatives of the community. Support the actions of different participants; send letters to the Minister of Education, the Minister of Economy, the Minister of the local government and the companies that are willing to take part in the activities.

Media strategy

Give the local media the materials and statistical data.
Send the materials to the programme units of the national television stations that deal with regional or economic issues.
Write letters to the editorial staff of the local newspapers; take part in the phone – in programmes on the radio and television.

Tactics

Prepare a series of events that will inform the community about the need for the workshop that will enable educating students and adults for the particular profession (Career Day, Job Fair...).
Write a series of texts based on the conducted research.
Make a video about the needs of a successful factory in town.

Timing

Debate about the municipality budget: December
Municipality Day: 19th February
Regional Educational Committee meeting: the first week in March
Regional Educational Fair: the end of March
Career Day: April

Schedule

The research ready to be presented to the public: beginning of December
Partners identified: beginning of January
Press materials prepared: 1st February

The people who will address the public

Pera Peric, the principal
Jovana Jovanovic, practical lessons coordinator