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Title

Maintaining and Developing Employee Competencies

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Summary

Graduates of P&O study programmes must continue their professional development. Continuing professional development seems to be an effective way how to maintain general competency and develop specialist competencies.

Introduction

An employee competence is a standardized requirement to properly perform a specific job. It represents a combination of adequate knowledge, skills and behavior. It is generally accepted that it is necessary to maintain and develop employee competencies during the professional carrier. There are various reasons to do that - a rapid technological progress in P&O field, legislative requirements, a competitive position on P&O market, employee aspirations etc. Graduates need an early career support following their graduation. Continuing professional development (CPD) of graduates seems to be very effective way how to maintain a general competency and develop specialist competencies. CPD is a long-term process that enables the graduates to become professionals in P&O field.

Methods

It is a core responsibility of employers to support CPD of graduates and other employees. The role of employers consists in establishing the framework for CPD – to define the company/ institution needs, to state goals, to plan activities and to evaluate a contribution of CPD both for a company/institution and an employee. Employers should widely discuss, motivate and encourage employees to CPD.

Employees are responsible to their employers and to themselves for lifetime learning to maintain their professional competence and continue to develop in all aspects of their work.

CPD can be realized by a number of activities both internal and external ones. Internal activities within the workplace could be quite informal – there is a wide range of activities that provide many of the most important learning opportunities. External off-the-job activities are more formal and comprise a wider range of topics related to P&O profession.

Results

There is a wide range of CPD activities – e.g. short courses, conferences, congresses, seminars, workshops, mentoring and teaching activities, participation in product development, research studies, clinical trials etc. These activities could be organized by universities or other educational institutions (BUFA etc.), ISPO, INTERBOR, BIV, national professional P&O associations (AAOP, AOPA, BAPO, etc.), manufacturers (Ossur Academy, Otto Bock Academy, etc.), companies or commercial institutions.

The professional development of employees should not be focused just on clinical and technical competencies but should include the wider range of knowledge and skills – e.g. interpersonal skills (communication, time management etc.), legal and financial issues, learning of foreign languages, computer skills (general, specialized – CAD/CAM, other digital technologies), environmental protection, health and safety, other special fields (biomechanics, design, management etc.).

It is recommended to work out a plan of CPD activities that should be realistic (time and money resources). The activities should be monitored and documented to evaluate the benefits and to review progress (range of knowledge and skills, improvement in productivity, competitiveness and profitability of P&O business, etc.).

Conclusion

Graduates can use a CPD framework for maintaining and developing their competencies to improve their skills and knowledge and to learn from reflective practice.

References

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