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Boosting the Enterprise Learning Process with Fully Integrated Learning Quality Management

What has been reality in the area of marketing for a while, now also applies to inner-company education: internal and external suppliers of trainings are more and more required to bring proof that their training measures are effective and of excellent quality. This however is only possible by a continuing and measurable connection between company goals and training objectives. Efficient processes thanks to the use of automated controlling tools are one precondition to successfully put quality management into operation in the area of training and education.

Learning & Development as Competitive Factor

As one of the leading finance institutes worldwide, Credit Suisse places high value in the quality of consulting services and the specialist competencies of their customer advisors. Therefore training campaigns are initiated intensively in order to support these goals with the in-house Business School. The requirement that customer advisors master the diverse disciplines at a high level entails self-responsible and continuous education, specifically in the dynamic private- and corporate-customer-segment.

A key factor for success in the consulting and advisory process is the capability of the advisor to tap, in a structured process, the entire knowledge of a global corporation in order to generate true added value for customers. In this sense, IT-Tools play an important role regarding efficient knowledge mining, however the most important part still lies with the customer advisor, who needs to apply her/his abilities in the field in order to succeed. This is the only way that learned knowledge can be transformed into value for the corporation, and that the investments in training and education provide an adequate return.

Quality as primary objective

For the Credit Suisse Business School, the quality of training and education is reflected in the degree that the initial objectives are attained, measured by defined performance- and learning-goals. The actual measurement is performed via several process steps.

As a starting point, a structured analysis of requirements is performed, in order to be able to define current and future requirements of employees in regard to training and education. These requirements are then transferred into measurable performance- and learning-goals, and stored in order to be able to formulate a retrospective and exact statement regarding the success of a training program at a future date.

Further measurement steps are an online-survey immediately following a course, and the measurement of the cognitive learning success by way of tests. By far more valuable quality measurement data, regarding effectivity, is gained by so-called transfer measurements. These can be observations, tests, or questionnaires which are performed about three to six months after the training programme by original programme participants or their respective superiors. In this manner it is possible to measure to what

degree the training contents can be transferred into the day-to-day workplace, and whether performance has improved in regard to the goals defined. For selected programmes, a further step evaluates the influence on actual bottom-line business figures (Business Impact). This impact evaluation can be based on monetary (return on investment) and/or qualitative key figures (e.g. customer satisfaction) depending on the original training goals.

Challenges of a good process implementation

The complexity of these process steps in a large corporation cannot be handled anymore using classic evaluation studies, rather a systematic, automatized QM-approach is required.

In order for a QM-process to become an integrated part of all measures within the area of education, adequate approaches need to be found. For reasons of efficiency these should be available on-line, and should also satisfy high methodic expectations. In summary, the following conditions need be satisfied:

- Definition of an efficient QM-process to systematically evaluate trainings
- Utilization of an automatized QM-tool, which satisfies high methodic expectations while supporting repetitive steps with a minimum of workload
- Introduction of all involved parties into their respective tasks and duties

Efficient performing of the evaluation processes

In order to support the entire evaluation process, Credit Suisse Business School uses the i-qBox Learning Quality Management System, which was developed in close cooperation with the leading Swiss E-Learning Company Comartis AG. This entirely web-based solution not only makes a standardized and efficient evaluation method according to Kirkpatrick/Phillips available for all Business School Personnel, but also allows the linking of learning contents and measurement instruments as well as a targeted timing of measurements, and analysis of the results in real-time.

The i-qBox system encompasses, among others, the following functionalities:

- Comprehensive management of Users, Courses, Classes, Docents etc. with interfaces to numerous existing systems
- Creation and maintenance of Online-Tests and –Surveys
- Design and planning of complex QM-prcoesses for training measures
- Steering of communications (mails to participants, tasks- and measure-management, gathering of feedbacks, generating of certificates etc.)
- Monitoring and Control of the programme flow (return of surveys, reminders etc.)
- Reporting over accrued data with interfaces to Human Resources (HR) and Management Information Systems (MIS)

Introduction trainings as a guarantee for success

Within the introduction of the QM-process at Credit Suisse introductory trainings are offered, custom tailored to the respective target group. The training for the program managers, as it is offered at Credit Suisse, consists mainly of the following elements:

- Basics of QM-processes. After the training, the programme manager knows the most important evaluation methods and can place them at their respective positions within the automated QM process.

- Design and planning of QM processes. Building on the basics, the programme manager can understand the design of a predefined evaluation method. She/he knows the differing interests of the parties involved, can recognize the possible conflicts and understands the necessity of a binding declaration of objectives.
- Tools and Methods of the QM process. . The programme manager knows the instruments and methods and can employ them in a targeted fashion.
- Test- and Questionnaire-Development. The programme manager knows the criteria for success for a given measure. She/he is capable of formulating questions regarding knowledge and learning goal measurement, and can apply the methodic principles to choose the adequate question types.
- Implementation and analysis within the evaluation process by employing the QM-system. The programme manager knows, that the measurement of data must happen in similar conditions for the data to be comparable.

Summary

Systematic controlling of satisfaction, learning success or transfer performance within the area of training is still an exception in most places today. One reason for this is the understandable fear that the required effort could be unacceptably high. The necessity of proof of success should, however, be beyond doubt in this day and age. The approach of systematic quality management takes just this objection into account and allows the Credit Suisse Business School to integrate the QM-evaluation as a routine element of all training- and education-processes with a very reasonable workload.