

CHAPTER III

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT FROM NOW ON: PROBLEMS AND MEASURES

[1] HRD paradigm change

1. As mentioned above, the Japanese HRD system whose pillar is OJT has until now functioned well on the whole. Favourable outer conditions, like the high ratio of young people in the labour force, and an expansion of company organizations and corresponding promotion opportunities have contributed to this situation.

Further, the post-war technological progress did not put as high adaptability demands on the labour force as the present ME era is doing, therefore it was not necessary to demand so great and rapid adaptability.

2. From now on, higher utilization and vitalization of Japanese HRD system and its foundation OJT become indispensable in order to be able to respond adequately to the above-mentioned changes in the economic and social situation.

3. For this purpose, a change in the HRD paradigm which is embodied in the term "vocational training" must be sought.

The object of vocational training until now has mainly been centered on the premises of the skilled workers in secondary industries and their fixed job nomenclatures, work concepts and job requirements. This has been understood mainly as initial manual skills training for young workers. It has become clear that this kind of view of vocational training is no longer adequate.

4. HRD from now on must, above all stress workers' adaptability to the changing environment. For this purpose, skills and knowledge needed to handle only immediate tasks and duties are not enough; rather, extensive occupation capacity development is asked for. To put it in broader terms, the basic source for adaptability for future changes is a broad

understanding that enables a comprehension of the meanings of workers' operations in connection with scientific knowledge.

Secondly, continuous training and education from hiring to retirement is necessary not only for workers in production but also for workers in service-related businesses. Accompanying this comes a necessity for workers to determine their own goals and engage in positive self-development and skill upgrading through out their entire working life, instead of simply passively adjusting to the work roles initially assigned to them.

Thirdly, stressing the importance of OJT, many kinds of available training methods should be utilized more systematically and in a planned way, aiming at improvement and development of occupational capacities. (Chart 3-1) Consequently, in pace with the technological progress it becomes harder to acquire necessary knowledge, skills and understanding only by the means of OJT. In order to complement and enhance the function of OJT, the HRD from now on should utilize positively various teaching methods that suit the to learn the knowledge and skills required in the new era.

In connection to this, in order to continue and maintain the motivation for the self-development that until now has supported the function of OJT, the above mentioned introduction of personnel management system in which professionals and specialists have proper roles and positions, and other motivational arrangements should be planned.

5. Further, if this kind of HRD system spanning all periods of workers' working life is realized, some measures for maintaining occupational capacities should be carefully considered so that people can be able to make a soft landing to job retirement, and in this case, retirement age, pension systems, etc., should also be taken into consideration.

[2] The shift to the new concept of a "learning company"

In order to respond to the various problems facing companies, it will be necessary to move towards a new system of

continuous, positive education for employees, in a new age a "learning company."

(1) Clarifying the necessary points for HRD

1. The necessary conditions to pave the way for a learning company is that the management must identify its problems and gain a clear understanding about the role and function of HRD.

2. Large companies and their affiliates, as well as companies with a staff with a flourishing venture spirit, usually have a clear, strategic insight about the importance of HRD. Most small and medium sized companies are still conspicuously lacking insight on this point. As this kind of insight is developed, focus should be shifted to the next step in the development process.

(2) Establish career routes suitable for the new age

1. By utilizing new ME machine tools it is possible that even workers with no experience of conventional multipurpose machine tools can manufacture goods according to blueprints, if they acquire programming skills. But for the training of workers that can effectively program for ME machinery, devise and improve production processes, mastery of conventional machinery is an experience of utmost value. It is necessary to establish career routes for technicians who aim at acquiring this kind of compounded skills.

2. As for white collar workers, it is inevitable that the career routes for those aiming merely at generalists' or supervisors' jobs will be blocked sooner or later. Therefore it is necessary to establish career paths for older employees also in specialized professional fields so that they can develop their speciality after middle age. This same condition applies also to the service-business, where education for specialist jobs will be equally necessary.

3. Further, it can be expected that the number of both white and blue collar workers that have to be transferred from one kind of work field to another will increase. To make this kind of change as smooth as possible, employees must be accustomed to a process of continuous learning from the time of their youth.

4. As the number of jobs for female workers increases, an important item will be the development of second-career routes for women who re-enter the labour force after bringing up their children.

(3) Establishing a consensus through the planning of HRD

1. Many kinds of training and education methods should be combined in striving for an effective HRD system. It is preferable for companies to plan for their own HRD and to choose proper measures from a number of available alternatives. Such a planning will help individual companies to clarify their problems, and to establish a consensus among the persons concerned in order to take a systematic and concerted action to achieve this target.

2. Where the connection between the role and function of HRD and the problems directly faced by the company in question is not adequately grasped it should be expected that a policy plan should increase the awareness of the top management.

3. The problems, objects and methods considered in the plan vary from company to company. However, it is advisable that the plan do not cover formal classroom-type education only, but integrate various methods.

4. In order to ensure that the goals of the plan are achieved, it is necessary to clarify the section in charge of the planning and implementation of education and training. Further it must be ensured that those responsible of education

and training are provided with proper know-how and back-up.

[3] The support for the "learning company"

In order to assist companies to progress in the direction of "learning company" national and local governments should implement a number of measures.

(1) Offer of a wide range of know-how

1. In order to promote HRD in a way that responds adequately to changes in the environment, a necessary precondition is a precise insight into the functions of the existing training and education.

2. Such clear understanding of the functions of training and education is especially necessary in the case of small and medium sized companies, even more than with large corporations. Among these small and medium sized companies there are those who are subject to fierce competition from other firms, those who receive strong demands from their parent companies to upgrade their quality level, those who constantly put effort in to upgrading their own technology, and many other types. As the understanding of the urgency of HRD is generally lacking, the opportunities for raising this consciousness should be taken in order to promote HRD. Further there is the problem of smaller companies that rely fully on programming and blueprints handed over directly from their parent companies, which tends to decrease the flexibility and adaptability of the production workers. Opportunities should be taken to increase the insight on to this point.

3. In order to smoothen the introduction and proceeding of workers' training and education especially in small and medium sized companies it is most effective to get the top managers to understand the functions of training and education.

4. Because the types of companies and their individual

characteristics vary a lot, it is necessary to establish proper guidance and counselling. In addition it should be noted that personnel management occupy a relatively narrow area in the management of many small and medium sized companies. Therefore the assistance should concern not only training and development but also other aspects of company operations like hiring and integration of new employees, working moral improvement, effective utilization of equipment, maintenance skills and so on, thus providing a wide range of consultancy to the companies.

5. It would be necessary also to provide assistance for companies introducing automated machinery, in the form of guidance in utilizing practical examples and experiences.

For this purpose it would be effective to introduce a system of training and education consultants who can visit companies on request.

6. Also for large companies, the technological progress brings know-how related problems and disturbances; therefore know-how about training and education is also necessary for large companies.

(2) The establishment of "Experience Exchange Plazas"

1. The problems that company managers have to confront are of various sorts and types, and especially in the case of small and medium sized companies, the variety tends to become even more diversified. It is certainly not a good idea to require small and medium sized companies to receive standardized training and education to cope with their individual needs. Rather, it is suggested that a more effective way to solve their problems would be to encourage exchange of experiences between the individual companies concerned, (note 8).

2. To encourage this, for example, skill development centers, vocational junior colleges and local skill development associations should form networks and take proper actions in order to assist and facilitate the exchange of experiences

between individual companies. The establishment of a special "Experience Exchange Plaza" for this purpose would be most welcome.

(3) Total aid and assistance for enterprises

1. In-company training and education aims at realizing the management goals of individual companies and to make inherit the "corporate culture". Therefore the help and assistance provided by national and local governments should be undertaken with appropriate respect for the autonomy and independence of the in-company training and education. Following this principle, concentrated measures should be taken in necessary fields.

2. In practice it can be assumed that assistance that is in tune with the HRD plans of each company is most effective. In this case, assistance and aid would be necessary to self-development efforts as well as lifelong training and education covering all periods in a person's working life as a whole. Small and medium sized companies in particular do not have financial resources for a full-scale training effort, but as the amount of problems accumulate with the technological progress, the importance of such programs will consequently rise.

3. Guidance is also necessary to assist the re-entry of female workers to the labour market, especially for the training and development of a suitable frame of mind for working life.

(4) Assistance in setting up guidelines

1. It is useful, especially for small and medium sized companies, to demonstrate certain guidelines for training and development. It is also good if the companies have the possibility for a system that gives them an opportunity to choose proper ones among a lot of guidelines, for this purpose

diversification of guidelines is required.

2. As there exist a wide variety of training and education methods, there should be assistance in making the companies' training implementation follow the general guidelines.

(5) Assistance given by the public vocational training centers

1. In small and medium sized companies and elsewhere, there is a strong demand for upgrading and updating training for key skilled workers who have stayed with the company for 7 - 8 years. It is necessary that the public vocational training centers respond to this need. For this purpose the public facilities should not only provide managerial skill training and development which makes trainees able to utilize computers in their work, but also to answer to various needs of the new age, like promoting training for female workers.

Also in order to support technical cooperation with developing countries the public vocational training centers should cooperate positively and assist companies.

2. Further, the public vocational training centers should, according to the increasing capacity of their training system respond to the needs of in-service workers in the local region and assist in developing these people's occupational capacities.

3. The instructors employed by the public vocational training centers should not limit their activity to teaching within those facilities, but also serve as counselors in the local area and assist companies in training according the respective needs of each company.

4. In order to effectively promote training and education for older people and handicapped persons the Institute of Vocational Training and the R & D Institute of Vocational

Training should develop equipment necessary for the special needs of these groups and the companies employing them.

(6) Promotion of Self-development

In the midst of the fierce changes of the technological progress, ageing of the workforce, etc., workers should not be content with the roles once assigned them, but rather make efforts towards finding themselves personal goals and through out their working life consistently develop themselves and their occupational capacities. This will become more and more important. To furnish an environment favourable to this, more utilization of paid training and education leave system would be necessary. If people undertake training at their own expense, a system to relieve the financial burdens of this should be devised as a part of the necessary planning for promotion of self-development.