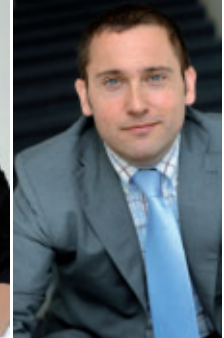


LIFELONG LEARNING

A NEW, COMBINED CONCEPT FROM ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT DIVISION (ERAM) OF INTEREL PR & PA

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'IT'S NEVER TOO SOON OR TOO LATE FOR LEARNING' IS THE UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY OF A LIFELONG LEARNING ATTITUDE THAT HAS BEEN ADOPTED AROUND THE WORLD BY CITIZENS AND ORGANISATIONS. NOWADAYS, LIFELONG LEARNING IS THE FINAL OUTCOME OF INFORMATION LITERACY* DELIVERED THROUGH CLASSROOM SESSIONS, DISTANCE LEARNING, E-LEARNING, CONTINUING EDUCATION, EXECUTIVE TRAINING AND CORRESPONDENCE COURSES.



By following lifelong learning programmes, professionals all over the world pursue the same goals: improving their qualifications, bringing their skills up to date or retraining for a new line of work. Corporate training has similar goals, with the concept of lifelong learning used by organisations to promote a more dynamic employee base, better able to react to a rapidly changing environment.

One of the reasons why lifelong education has become so important is to keep up with the acceleration of scientific and technological progress. The knowledge and skills acquired during formal education are usually not sufficient to support a professional career spanning three or four decades. Therefore almost all businesses have adopted aspects of lifelong learning. Do associations follow the same trend?

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES PROPOSED BY THE INTEREL TRAINING CENTRE (ITC) TO ASSOCIATIONS ACROSS EUROPE

Interel's training division, Interel Training Centre (ITC), regularly organises and delivers seminars for association executives. These training sessions are held either in Brussels or in client / member locations and are usually designed around three main content axes: interest representation with the EU, modern communication techniques and management training.

INTEREST REPRESENTATION WITH THE EU

Today, almost every business sector or civil society branch is represented in Brussels through a trade or professional association. Over 850 European

and international associations or federations have their offices in Brussels. Most of them struggle with impending legislation and the complexity of the EU system. ITC's sessions dedicated to interest representation with the EU foster a greater understanding of the EU dimension and how it impacts the working environment, providing insight into public affairs by demystifying lobbying and its methodology. They offer an invaluable background for association and member organisation staff who deal with European legislation and EU institutions. Some federations invite their member organisations to send representatives for group seminars held in Brussels; others organise workshops on EU affairs for their own staff groups. These seminars help organisations manage their policy monitoring and advocacy campaigns professionally.

COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

Dealing with corporate communications in an online world has added a whole new dimension to training any communication professional. The 24/7 online information economy has dramatically shortened the time in which organisations have to respond to breaking news. Employees not only need to know about the workings of Google, blogs, Wikis and YouTube, they also have to be able to develop a proportionate response when their company is mentioned in any of these new media channels. Using a hands-on approach, we therefore developed a series of courses that cover in-depth the communications potential of these new online phenomena. Step by step, participants cover a range of subjects from the challenges of online media relations, to developing a successful online campaign strategy, to how to write for the web and how to manage websites effectively.

In the true spirit of the medium, some of these courses are also available online.

MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Part of associations' internal professional development programmes, these courses are run internally by ITC for some associations and provide a new tool for performance management and aim to better assess and enhance employees' skills and knowledge, identifying talent and to ensuring the right people for the right job. When skills and staff potential are correctly identified and developed, organisations benefit from a higher degree of management efficiency at all levels. Professional development contributes not only to a better integration - it also leads to a higher degree of staff retention as it helps people build more meaningful careers.

Each employee attends courses taught in-house on an instructor-led basis, via e-learning systems or at outside seminars. Traditionally, training and development areas covered are: management, finance, professional and personal skills, language classes, IT, and in some cases mentoring and coaching programmes.

For associations, the value of lifelong learning programmes is not limited to improving operational capacity and efficiency. Learning communities integrate their members better, allowing participants to develop new bonds, a strong identity and higher degrees of motivation, while pursuing a common goal.

***Information Literacy: The skills necessary to locate, access, and use information in today's society.**