

SUPPLIERS PILOT TRAINING REPORT

Bulgaria, Kardzhali, 4-5 April 2013

Sofia, 15 April 2013

Subject: Report for the Pilot Training - “The RESPECT Project: Training for SUPPLIERS”

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1. INTRODUCTION

RESPECT is a 2-year project that started in late 2011, and is co-financed by the European Union Leonardo da Vinci program. Project partners are the Balkan Institute for Labour and Social Policy, New Age, Gabrovo, Fair Labor Association, Switzerland, ESCEM Business School, France, CSR Turkey, Limelight Consulting, France, MAC-Team, Belgium, Gibor Alfa, Turkey.

RESPECT is focused on increasing the role of Suppliers and their empowerment through capacity building

The project aims to develop innovative methodologies and tools to help key stakeholders create change in the way purchasing practices are made in supply chains. RESPECT puts special emphasis on the increasing role of suppliers and empowers them through capacity building.

Training objectives:

The training described here is a pilot training for suppliers in Bulgaria (garment factories). Consequently, the pilot training objectives were:

- to provide professionals from suppliers' factories with appropriate tools for improving their position in the Supplier-Buyer relationship;
- to test and improve the training content.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

Following the discussions and agreement on the training materials 19 packages in Bulgarian language were prepared (translation, reproduction, binding) and 7 in English language. Electronic copies of the package in English were delivered to all project partners.

The Perperikon hotel in Kardzhali was selected as a venue for conducting the training according to the following criteria of selection:

- suitable location/easy access for all the participants, on relatively equal distance from the most distant factories – Gabrovo and Stara Zagora; the other participants were from the vicinity of Kardzhali;
- satisfactory facilities for training - a hall enough to accommodate around 25 participants with the opportunity to separate groups for class-work,
- prices within the per diems anticipated for the local participants in the project.

The training was conducted according to the previously agreed training plan (Appendix A).

The training was attended by observers from the project partners' organisations and Mr. Stirling Smith – Director of Projects at Just Solutions Network, Great Britain and expert in training of adults in the fields of CSR, conflict resolution, social dialogue, and others. The participation rate and the level of the trainees was very high. Appendix B includes lists of all the participants and the observers.

All the trainees were highly motivated to participate in the training. There were no absences from the workshop in Day 1 except representatives of Bultex. The first day was attended by 8 factories and the second day by 5 factories. The absences during Day 2 were due to the busy schedules of the participants. These absences were not because of lack of interest, motivation or understanding but because of lack of time, which was emphasized by the participants many times.

One interpreter was recruited for the workshop. The project management team handled the preparation of the teaching packages, organizing the logistical support of the workshops (reproduction, catering, copying during the workshops, preparation of badges, driving, etc.)

At the end of the workshop the participant assessed the issues related to the organization of the training and the training content. The results from the evaluation are presented in Appendix C.

3. RISKS IDENTIFIED

One of the risks which the project management identified was the risk of non-attendance and the other – the risk of not sufficiently active participation. These risks were not realized.

4. PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

The only problem identified during the implementation was the length of the training. Most of the participants shared that two days is too long a period for them to be absent from work.

Yet, the issue about responsible purchasing practices needs much more time to be properly addressed and elaborated. Some strategic decisions could be made in order to tackle this discrepancy, e.g. changes in training content with more focus on responsible purchasing practices.

5. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

As this was a pilot training, a solution would be to use a revised training content during the supplier training in Turkey and see if the above problem can be resolved.

Another solution would be to propose further amendments of the training as an outcome of the training in Turkey.

Proposal on how the outcomes and conclusions from the course can be utilized to further improve the effective delivery of training and achievement of the goals and objectives of the project has been made by the British expert Mr. Stirling Smith in a separate report.

6. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

- The pilot training brought together managers from different factories in an international environment, including observers from the project partners' organisations and a British training expert, which allowed them to share and communicate with their colleagues from Turkey and the European experts.
- The participants experienced new interactive training methods, e.g. brainstorming and role plays. This aided their active participation.
- The participants were presented various CSR/Purchasing practices issues and how the suppliers can contribute to the improvement of these issues.
- The training included also presentation of various skills and tools for self-diagnosis and problem solving, some of which were new to the participants.
- Part of the training included upgrading of the communication and negotiation skills in order to improve the communications with the buyers, other stakeholders and the consumers.

7. COMMENTS ABOUT TRAINING

The focus is on education issues and implications. This report is not designed to cover all aspects of the workshops for future activities and implementation.

DAY 1

Face to face interviews

Took longer than planned, since it was done in pairs. Individual introductions would have taken maybe half the time.

Context

Went according to plan.

Brainstorming exercise

The exercise involved sharing experiences of how commercial pressures can make it hard to comply with codes of conduct. All participants shared very actively and lively their personal experiences and gave a lot of examples (overtime due to delayed supply of materials, delayed payments, overselling capacity due to lack of long-term relations).

Respect project

Presented the Respect project and the survey. Due to translation the time was slightly exceeded.

Tool 1: Root cause analysis

Presentation went according to plan. The group exercise with the Fishbone diagram appeared to be quite difficult for the participants. The problem reviewed by all the three groups was Overtime, as identified during the brainstorming session. Difficulties were experienced both in terms of methods (identifying the large factors and causes) and in terms of substance – were the identified causes actually deriving from conflict between the purchasing practices and code compliance. The participants identified causes for Overtime, but not directly related to purchasing practices.

This led to difficulties in the next plenary interactive exercise – Classifying the causes. The aim was to divide the causes into internal and external sphere of influence. The participants understood and performed the task well. Nevertheless, because not all the causes were related to purchasing practices, the classification did not result in proper large groupings.

Pareto principle was introduced, in order to help participants perform the Prioritization Matrix exercise.

Examples of causes in external sphere:

- Varying payment terms and deadlines
- Lack of information about samples
- Short lead times
- Frequent changes in fashion trends

Examples of causes in internal sphere classified in large groups and prioritized:

Cause from Fishbone diagram	Group	Points from Prioritization matrix
Capacity and production planning and organization	Capacity	41
Overselling capacity	Capacity	
Staff lacking education and skills	HR	25
Delayed or irregular supplies (from foreign countries)	Materials supply	30
Wrong sampling process	Lead times	30
Frequent change of models	Lead times	
Obsolete or missing equipment due to insufficient funds for investment	Equipment	30

The Prioritization Matrix exercise resulted in the above points awarded to each of the large groups of causes. **Capacity** was ranked first.

Brainstorming about solutions

Three groups brainstormed about solutions to the problems from the prioritization matrix and presented their results on a flipchart.

Solutions of the three groups are listed below:

1. Group 1

- Planning and accepting orders according to capacity
- Orders to be accepted depending on the available equipment
- Purchase upgrading accessories for the equipment in order to increase capacity
- Staff training
- Establish rationalization group and provide stimuli

2. Group 2

- Training for new skills
- Social policy and benefits
- Headhunting

3. Group 3

- Professional recruitment of staff
- Training and stimuli
- Provide funds to upgrade the equipment
- Person to check if needed materials are supplied and appropriate

Voting by dots

This exercise was omitted due to lack of time.

Action plan and skills mapping

The action plan was rather an improvement plan. This activity was extended to the morning of Day 2. New Age presented verbally their action plan in the end of Day 1. Two of the other factories presented action plans on flipcharts in Day 2.

Example of action plan:

What: Train a person to work with Excel spreadsheets in order to calculate quickly lead times for each stage of production of a product.

Who: Head of HR

Deadline: 5 days

Skills needed: does not have the skills needed to create Excel spreadsheets.

DAY 2

Action plan and skills mapping (continued, see above)

Communications theory

Went according to plan.

Orta Anadolu case study

CSR Turkey presented a case study concerning innovative communications with buyers. Went according to plan.

Perceptions exercise

Was not implemented in groups but in plenary. A picture was shown with some garment workers lined-up. The participants were asked to share what they think these workers are doing. Some of the results are presented below:

- Waiting
- Listening
- Meeting
- Instructions
- Singing the anthem
- Physical exercise
- Fire drill
- Check-up
- Penalty

Everybody agreed that a thing can be perceived differently depending on personal experience, attitude, etc.

Body language

After a short introduction the plenary was asked to share their opinion about the feelings of two persons on a picture. The participants made relevant comments.

The “Body language” exercise was omitted, since it repeated to some extent the previous activity.

Pitch

Some theory was presented according to the plan. The participants were asked to prepare verbal presentation by factories. One of the observers played the role of a grumbling buyer. The participants were very active in trying to persuade the buyer to work with them. There was a participant, who volunteered to come out and sell some equipment to the buyer. He did that quite successfully. Overall this activity was very interesting for the participants.

“Negotiations” role play

The role play took place after the lunch break. The participants were divided into groups of three – supplier, buyer and observer. Each of them was presented the role and each of the groups of suppliers, buyers and observers had time to discuss their strategy. The observers knew the roles of both the buyer and supplier. The participants achieved different levels of success, depending on their personal experience. During the plenary discussion after the exercise, the participants shared their observations of both their opponents and themselves. The observers reported in very adequate and detailed manner.

All participants except one liked this role play and thought it was useful. One of the participants shared that this was his first experience in the “shoes” of a buyer and said it might help him in the future during actual negotiations.

Individual action plan

This activity was not implemented, because of the unsatisfactory results from the action (improvement) plan from Day 1.

“David and Goliath” exercise

This exercise was not initially included in the training program. One of the observers Mr. Stirling Smith volunteered to present a small role play of how “small” suppliers can gain leverage over the “large” buyers. An example was given with a recent bad publicity case of H&M – “Conscious collection” H&M leaves seamstresses unconscious about garment workers in Cambodia. The exercise made the audience very lively and actively discussing the case.

Workshop evaluation

See Appendix “C”

8. GENERAL REMARKS

Overall the training achieved its aims, but some corrections of timing are necessary. Some of the planned activities appeared to be quite difficult for the participants; therefore the results deviated from the expectations. Some of the slides must be more focused on the issues they discuss.

The content could not make the participants focus adequately on the main issue “the conflict between the purchasing practices and CSR compliance”. The participants

come with quite a “narrow” attitude as suppliers and need more activities that would make them realize their leverage potential in their communication with buyers. In trainers’ opinion some of the communications and negotiations theory can be omitted and more activities included instead.

9. APPENDICES

- A. Training plan
- B. List of Participants
- C. Result of training evaluation

Reported by:

*Trainers: 1. Zlatka Gospodinova
2. Georgi Peev*

APPENDIX A: TRAINING PLAN

Day 1

09:00 – 9:55

Welcome and introduction of the Team
Introductions – activity in pairs
Context

9:55 – 10:15

Compare experiences about purchasing practices and Codes of Conduct

10:15 – 10:35

Presentation of the RESPECT Project

10:35 – 11:00

Break

11:00 – 12:30

TOOLS FOR SUPPLIERS
Tool 1: Root Cause Analysis

12:30 – 13:30

Lunch Break

13:30 – 14:45

Tool 2: Problem solving

14:45 – 15:15

Break

15:15 – 16:40

Tool 3: Action planning & skills mapping

16:40 – 17:00

Wrap-up of the day and next day planning

Day 2

9:00 – 9:10

Summary of Day 1 and Objectives of Day 2

9:10 – 9:20

How can communications solve problems

Communications within and outside your company is essential

Why working on communications skills can have a positive impact on purchasing practices

9:20 – 9:50

The Orta Blu Case study

9:50 – 10:20

Oral communications with buyers during negotiations and commercial relations

10:20 – 10:45

Break

10:45 – 11:10

Personal communication & Body language

11:10 – 12:10

The 6 key questions to ask yourself before communicating with buyers

Pitching & oral reporting to buyers

12:10 – 13:15

Lunch break

13:15 – 14:45

Negotiations – Role play

14:45 – 15:15

Individual action planning

15:15 – 15:30

Wrap-up and evaluation of the training

15:30 End of the workshop

APPENDIX B: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

№	Participant	Company	Status
1.	Krastina Borisova	New Age	participant
2.	Ivelina Koleva	New Age	participant
3.	Kalina Stancheva		participant
4.	Velko Bonev	Vetex	participant
5.	Sezai Feizula	Diamant 06	participant
6.	Emil Pashov	Mtex	participant
7.	Dilian Iliev	Modak	participant
8.	Aleksandar Iliev	Modak	participant
9.	Vasil Milev	Tuna Denim	participant
10.	Zaro Iliev	Tuna Denim	participant
11.	Veselin Chaushev	Panotex	participant
12.	Vania Gineva	Natalia	participant
13.	Miroslav Kolev	Natalia	participant
14.	Stirling Smith		observer
15.	Sabrina Bosson	FLA	Project manager
16.	Isilsu Vural	FLA	observer
17.	Elif Sari	CSR Turkey	observer
18.	Feride Dogan	CSR Turkey	observer
19.	Serpil Buyukaltincizme	CSR Turkey	observer

APPENDIX C: RESULTS OF TRAINING EVALUATION

Topic	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Training content in line with objectives/expectations				2	4
The course had achieved its aims and I met the learning outcomes				3	3
Training methods and materials		1		3	2
Trainers' ability (communication, listening skills, mastery of the subject)				3	3
Applicability and transferability to the job/business			1	2	3
Organisation of the workshop				2	4
Training room	1		1	2	2
Accommodation					6

Some examples of the open-end questions:

What were your **objectives** in attending the training?

- Upgrading the knowledge and experience
- Meeting new colleagues
- Interesting topic
- Education and sharing experience

What did you **enjoy most** about the training?

- Exercises
- Role plays
- Interactive work
- Everything

What did you **enjoy the least** about the training?

- Exercises should take into account the region of the factories
- Long hours
- Role play
- Nothing

I wish we had spent **more time** discussing....

- Real situations

Additional topics should be included such as...

- Opportunities for contacts with buyers

