

Designing Integrated Business Training Programs Focused on the Unemployed in the Post-COVID-19 Era

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Abstract – Human resource development and continuous training are a precondition for organizational and socio-economic resilience and development. It is also vital to build integrated training programs, especially for the unemployed nowadays, considering the major challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis in various labor markets internationally. This article aims to distinguish fundamental theoretical and practical dimensions of structuring business training programs and supporting learning and innovation after investigating critical trends of conceptual readjustment of modern management theory. A significant conclusion is that a business training program has to synthesize the organization's strategic, technological, and managerial potential and goals (Stra.Tech.Man approach), valorizing the basic principles of integrated planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling. A novel training program framework is suggested, attributing particular weight to developing structured mechanisms for training unemployed population groups at the local level.

Keywords – Training program, Unemployment, Post-COVID-19 era, Stra.Tech.Man approach, Modern management, Human resource development, Innovation, Knowledge development.

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1. Introduction

The challenging global environment emerging in the post-COVID-19 era increasingly seems to impose the need for continuing human resource development and learning, as acquired skills are a precondition for productivity and competitiveness [1]. Systematic human resource training leads to enhanced efficiency, capability growth, improved performance and contributes to firms' overall development [2]. The firm should not consider the training program as an extra cost but a productive investment that serves its needs. A successful program has to provide learners with space and time to gain new knowledge and develop new skills, fostering the inspiration and motivation needed to achieve predetermined objectives [3].

Therefore, the training of workers and unemployed is critical, acquiring significant theoretical and practical interest nowadays, amid the ongoing restructuring of globalization and the fourth industrial revolution [4]. Since the early 1980s, the dynamics of globalization have been a primary reversal force of various organizational dimensions in the capitalist economy. A "new economy" emerges, synthesizes, and is unbreakably attached (in its very foundations) to the dynamics of globalization, perceived as a new model of the capitalist economy not so much in the sense of a formal and static depiction of reality but as a model of action under construction and continuous reconstruction [5]. The "new economy" emerges as an evolutionary system that profoundly reshapes all economic activity in terms of producing, communicating, exchanging, distributing, and managing change. This "new capitalism" and the capitalist enterprise in this globalizing process (amid nowadays the COVID-19 crisis) inevitably enter the orbit of substantial transformations while all these mutations are gradually diffused, at a varied pace, within the different socio-economic systems across the world [6].

This article explicitly examines the critical components of modern management theory and practice, resulting from the current readjustment caused by globalization's restructuring dynamics. In this context, since management theory and practice seem to be rapidly transforming nowadays due to the current COVID-19 crisis, the basic dimensions of setting up training programs also seem to be acquiring complex and highly specialized content, especially in cases where jobs are at risk of extinction. To this end, this article aims to answer the question of what an integrated training program could be and what it could include for all kinds of socio-economic organizations. It ventures on a semi-systematic and introductory exploration of management and training and development literature [7], oriented towards distinguishing prevailing trends and arriving at a repositioned framework for understanding and implementing business training. Emphasis is also attributed to the effort to support and increase sustainable employment. Specifically, the next section analyses the issue of the dynamics of globalization and innovation. The third examines a basic framework for designing training interventions, while the concluding section recapitulates, also trying to conceptualize a new theoretical framework of understanding and promoting relevant training programs focused on reducing unemployment and increasing employability.

2. The Dynamics of Globalization and Organizational Innovation

Irrespectively of size, each firm is a socio-economic organization that evolves within a very dynamic and volatile socio-economic environment (such as the current of the post-COVID-19 era), constantly confronted with the fundamental and insoluble principle of economic scarcity, meaning limited resources against an increasing volume of needs. The economy's productive abilities as a whole and of each enterprise strive to develop through the accumulation and increase of available production factors and improved technology and management effectiveness. The constant problem is how to maximize the benefit-to-cost relationship, reducing costs and increasing efficiency in managing the available resources [8]. Nowadays, each socio-economic organization's survival presupposes the ability to adapt within a dynamically globalized environment (Figure 1).

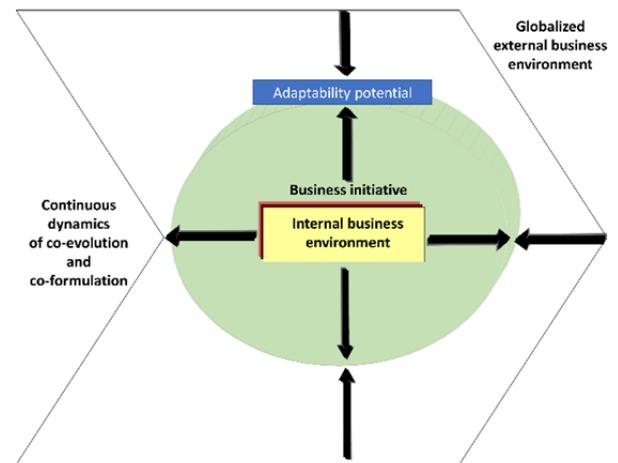


Figure 1. The business initiative as a dynamic synthesis between the internal and external organizational environment

In these circumstances, adaptability potential and competitiveness reinforcement are emerging as the new principal issues for all actors in globalization's fast-paced restructuring phase. From an overarching perspective, the competitiveness of all kinds of socio-economic formations, and at every level of analysis, is linked to the ability to survive, reproduce, and develop within the external socio-economic environment's evolving conditions. Competitiveness derives from the continuous dynamics of co-evolution and co-formulation of the internal and external environment [9]. In this external socio-economic environment, production opportunities are always limited, survival chances are not abundant, and there is a conflict over the acquisition and distribution of available resources. In this sense, the competitiveness problem primarily refers to the broad issues of socio-economic development. In more specific terms, it could be said that a firm's competitiveness refers to its ability to offer to markets (local, national, international) products and services in a way that is and remains efficient in the changing conditions of actual intensified globalized competition. In other words, being adaptable in business terms means managing to sell, profit, and grow in the context of today's globalization dynamics [10].

In this globalized competition of increased velocity and intensity, the systematic search for innovation is of paramount importance because it concerns designing and implementing novel actions that improve organizational performance. The dynamics of innovation originates in and is synthesized through the structures of demand and supply, feeding socio-economic development and becoming the primary

source of “real revolutions” in overall socio-economic terms. From a Schumpeterian perspective [11], these entrepreneurial innovations concern the appearance of new products or the improvement of existing ones, the application of new production and marketing methods, the opening of new markets, the acquisition of new sources of supply of raw materials or semi-finished products, or the reorganization of an industry and the creation of a monopoly position. In this new globalized context, the level of operational efficiency does not stop rising. It is no longer sufficient to “do the job right” (efficiency) but “doing the right job right” (effectiveness) nowadays is the most critical path for sustainable development [12]. This effectiveness is dictated by how every socio-economic organization successfully combines (fruitfully and creatively) its available strategic, technological, and managerial potential, effectively synthesizing internal and external resources and dynamics to innovate (Figure 2).

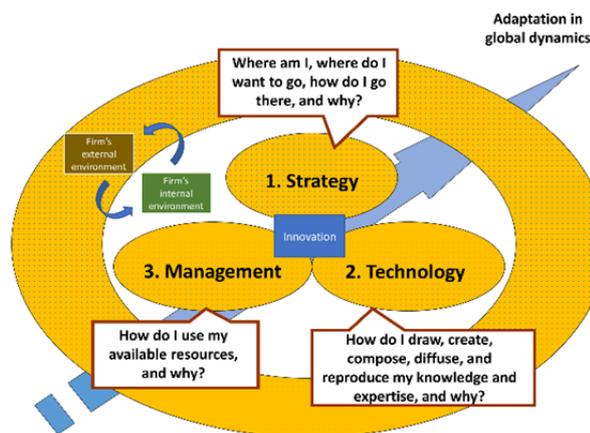


Figure 2. Synthesis of strategy, technology, and management at the organization's core

According to Vladoš [13], the synthesis of every socio-economic organization's strategy, technology, and management lies at the core of innovation creation and development. This “Stra.Tech.Man” approach (from the initials of strategy-technology-management) suggests that socio-economic organizations are complex and evolving entities that strive to dynamically adapt to their environment by answering three profound sets of questions, either explicitly or implicitly:

- ❖ Strategy: “Where am I, where do I want to go, how do I go there, and why?”
- ❖ Technology: “How do I draw, create, compose, diffuse, and reproduce my knowledge and expertise, and why?”
- ❖ Management: “How do I use my available resources, and why?”

In this context, it becomes gradually widely conceivable—especially from the most effective

firms nowadays—that the necessary adaptability on the part of each successful business initiative has not “by definition” a single, passive character. The dynamic firm adapts by playing according to the rules and actively transforming them, aiming to reap future benefits. For any organization of any kind, nationality, or size which is part of today's globalized markets, the challenges are now multiple and multifaceted. If it fails to reinforce continuously and rapidly the broadly conceived quality of its products, it has no other way but to “violently” compress its costs. If it cannot squeeze its costs, it has no other way but to offer a set of quality that gallops upwards [14]. This evolutionary trajectory of radical transformations should not be surprising. It is neither random nor incoherent. When the external environment changes swiftly and subversively, every “living organization” must organically assimilate these changes, adapt to new reality either energetically or passively. The deeper the changes in its environment, the more the new organization that will survive will differ from its ancestor, and this adaptation cannot be superficial. This is what happens precisely with capitalist firms nowadays, and this is how their evolutionary transformation unfolds on different sides of today's global socio-economic system, reproducing an insatiable variety in their “architectures” [15]. Overall, it is the multiple transformations in the markets (production factors and various products) that drive the capitalist firm's action in the dynamics of globalization, leading to a dialectical reaction with a view on organizational survival. Either the firm reacts, improves in innovative terms, and evolves or dissolves and becomes extinct.

3. Modern Management and the Firm's Human Resource Knowledge Development and Training

In the emerging post-COVID-19 era, everything shows that the world is in front of acute challenges. All organizations need to reconsider the functionality and effective development of their strategies, technology, and management. The era of theoretical glory of “conventional” Taylorism (classical, mass, or mechanistic management) seems to have passed, at least concerning the already developed and highly efficient in terms of innovation industrial systems [16]. Nowadays, it becomes increasingly challenging to identify modern strategic management approaches focused on the “virtues” of the progressively sophisticated division of labor. Newer methods seem to be moving away from the dimensions of the unidimensionally skilled worker, the advancing hierarchical structure, the strictly directed and centralized operational control, the significance of

the “written rule,” and the utmost respect to established organizational routines [17]. It could be said that modern integrated management takes into account the four basic principles of planning, organizing, staffing, and control from a synthesizing and evolutionary perspective (Figure 3).

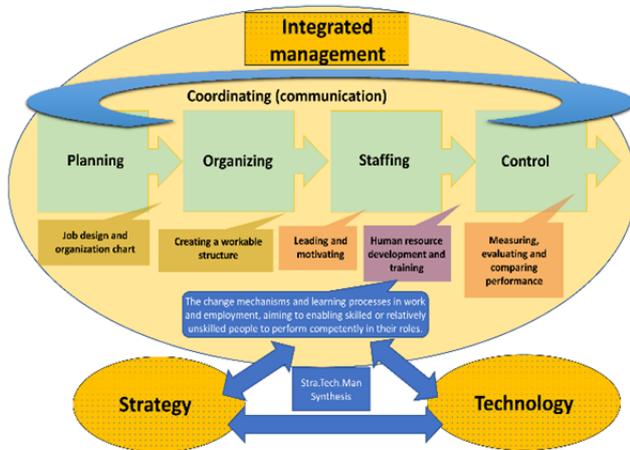


Figure 3. Management functions and structure from an evolutionary perspective

Planning lies at the basis of every modern management effort, concerning job design and organization chart designation. The organizing perspective is about creating a workable structure while staffing concerns leading and motivating and human resource development. Each organizational dimension results (or should result) in a control, and the control refers to measuring, evaluating and comparing performance from an integrated management perspective. Modern management approaches argue that these four dimensions should be coordinated under appropriate and targeted communication. The suggested evolutionary perspective of modern and integrated management initially means that the four fundamental functions (along with the necessary coordination as a fifth function) are not cut off from the socio-economic organization’s strategy and technology. In this respect, the field of human resource development and training has to serve the evolutionary set of the synthetic dimensions of strategy, technology, and management [18].

A catalyst for the theoretical repositioning against mass and conventional Taylorist management was the appearance and impressive competitive dynamism of the “Japanese management” on the world market, especially since the mid-1970s—today seems to gain increasing interest with the advent of the COVID-19 era. This flexible “Japanese” model, in addition to its broader functional specificities, assimilated and implemented an entirely different response to the question of “what effective management means,” contrary to the already established model of the massive “American type of

corporation.” It managed to win one competitive battle after another, flooding the world’s developed markets with Japanese products. So how did this model operate in terms of management? The following points reflect this evolution [19], [20]:

- In terms of planning, the “kanban” system and the Just-in-Time logic (the input at the right time) proved that the classic Just-in-Case (on a case-to-case basis) was practically much slower and expensive, leading to large amounts of stocks and capital immobilization.
- In terms of organizing, it made clear that the classic Taylorist type of organization chart with high-level, slow, and strict hierarchies could only prove increasingly inefficient in the rapidly transforming day-to-day administrative practice. On the contrary, the “Japanese” principles favored horizontal coordination of action through less departmental levels and almost flat organization charts, based on relatively decentralized and autonomous project teams. In this model, adaptive and interactive networks appeared between the internal “customer” and “supplier”.
- In terms of staffing, the principle of lifelong employment, while cultivating a spirit of feeling responsible for the work conducted in “our trusted company,” was seen as much more efficient than the classic management logic of “hire and fire without any qualms.” Japanese model’s primary interest in attracting human resources was clearly different from that of the massive corporation, implementing a motto like “we do not care so much what our employee has learned so far but what can learn from now on”.
- In terms of human resource development, contrary to the massive logic of ever-deepening and narrow specialization, it successfully counter-proposed multi-specialization and the tacit or inexplicit cultivation of collective knowledge.
- In terms of motivating the human workforce, contrary to the principles of the massive administrative logics, traditionally practiced in the “carrot and stick” method, it accurately counter-proposed a hierarchical system of multiple incentives, both material and immaterial, in the long and short run. Thus, without limiting the fruitful competition between the workers, the systematic reward of team success (all those who took part are remunerated) managed to continuously maintain, cultivate, and reinforce a strong team spirit.
- In terms of leadership, the rigid bureaucrat and strict overseer are replaced. A team leader substitutes them by functioning as a coach and consultant rather than a classic boss. This team

leader is a manager who draws respect not so much from hierarchical order and status but from the team's confidence.

- Management control ceased to rely on the high-level audit of the outcomes, attributing a new role to horizontal, comprehensive, and continuous control of the processes producing those results. The group and decentralized self-control proved able to both limit financial costs and achieve higher quality products.
- Finally, in terms of internal communication and coordination of functions, overcoming the one-dimensional vertical pattern (the bottom-up flow of requests and top-down flow of orders of the Taylorist corporation), and effective networking practices were followed. It favored communication to and from all directions and coordination based on free access to information.

All administrative innovations of "Japanese management" were firmly based on a new, comprehensive philosophy that highlighted inclusiveness in the day-to-day operational decision making. Co-decision, labor democracy, respect for the ordinary worker, and teamwork recognition as the primary source of business success were far from "Western capitalist management" until that time. On this basis, the new flexible manufacturing systems and the so-called lean production were introduced, which is "lean" because it uses less quantity than mass production half a human effort in the factory, half an industrial space, half an investment in tools, half a year to manufacture a product. It also requires far less than half the inventory retained in the production unit, leads to a much rarer occurrence of defective products, and produces an ever-increasing variety of products [21]. More generally, based on Japanese management, the Total Quality Management methodology has been developed and structured, which nowadays finds an expanding application area worldwide [22]. In the new globalized framework of action, management's conceptual and applied potential within all innovative private or public enterprises and organizations are rapidly repositioned and reoriented. In this way, the new, advanced, and flexible management methodologies emphasize people and groups' role within the organization, practically realizing that the group is always something more substantial than its members' simple sum. They also focus on the results to be achieved, meaning the objectives and not only the activities and procedures to be carried out. They conceive individual goals as part of the organization's goals since there is the human behind the worker, an actual stakeholder of the entire socio-economic organization that dialectically co-evolves with its external environment [23].

These modern management approaches appear for today's challenging conditions of the post-COVID-19 era as much more complete in theoretical terms and more effective in operational practice since they are focused on a flexible, highly adaptable, human-centered, and open-minded management approach, fertilizing a new generation of systemic administrative methodologies. They cultivate a unique, in-depth, and systematic way of managerial thinking in which the process of choosing solutions involves assessing the impact of the output on the entire organization and not only on the area of the problem. This thinking also considers that challenges and solutions do not remain unchanged but constantly transforming since solving management problems is a strategic and evolutionary process [24].

These reorientations in the overall management perspective inevitably also affect the conception and action of human resource management. The modern management approach focuses mostly on the effectual use of human and information resources, while the continuously improving achievement of the overall objective requires adaptable and highly efficient human resources. In this context, business training goals are radically repositioned, as they prioritize knowledge and skills development and not merely stimulating the employees' short-term operational efficiency. In this sense, the purpose of training planning is to continuously reinforce the enterprise's competitiveness and open new prospects for success [25]. The various training interventions undertaken have to be closely interconnected and consistent with the firm's overall human resource performance framework. The primary and most usual form in human resource performance planning can be reflected as moving around an action agreement, in which the knowledge potential acquires increasing significance. This performance planning process starts by building an evaluation form or implementing an interview. Within the "action agreement" framework, a work improvement plan, a possible remuneration review, and corresponding transfers or promotions must be drawn up [26].

Therefore, the center of gravity seems to be now shifting from maintaining static efficiency to claiming overall adaptive effectiveness. In the background, modern management requires consolidating a business culture that continually seeks improvement by acquiring new knowledge, and this process is incredibly demanding and complex [27]. Today's training intervention and methods are not limited to merely supplying more information. A more considerable amount of information cannot lead to new knowledge without enriching the ability to process it and transform different people's beliefs. The next section examines the basic outline of a training intervention, analyzing and systematizing the different steps.

4. A Basic Framework for Designing Training Interventions

Designing training interventions in a modern organization begins from a systematic and comparative understanding of organizational performance. By comparing the actual performance with the planned execution, the organization’s senior management measures the achievements and “milestones” over time. The aim is to determine the relative degree of success or failure in the present, obtain an insight into the organizational evolution over time, and to be informed on the firm’s position against the competitors. Based on this strategic audit approach, the organization’s training issue has to be placed [28]. Training interventions and programs are essentially the actors or levers of achieving the organization’s change and improvement goals and have to be clearly hierarchical as they are the structured expression of the generic and secondary operational objectives. They have to refer to specific, clear, and measurable results by also being dynamic and evolving since yesterday’s successful performance patterns may be ineffective for the future. Therefore, training interventions have to follow a systematic succession of steps to fulfill these complex targets, in the sense that modern management “advocates” (Figure 4).

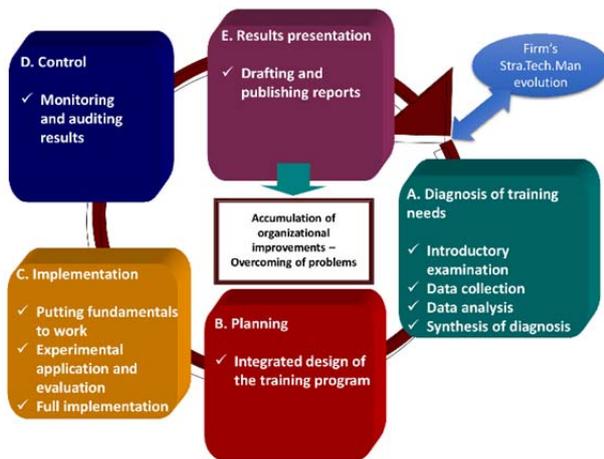


Figure 4. The five critical steps of training intervention: The full program’s cycle

Step A refers to diagnosing training needs based on a preliminary examination, data collection, data analysis, and final diagnosis synthesis. In turn, Step B is about planning and designing an integrated training program that considers the evaluative external and internal organizational environment.

Step C refers to the implementation process, meaning to put the fundamental actions that need to be taken to work, first initiating an experimental application and evaluation, and then heading towards full implementation. Step D is related to control, which includes monitoring and auditing the implementation results. Finally, Step E is about drafting and disseminating the required reports to communicate the training program’s outcomes. The various training interventions cannot become long-term and substantially efficient if they operate autonomously and sporadically, in the absence of understanding the underlying strategy-technology-management synthesis. In the direction of reinforcing this synthesis, it can be useful for training interventions to form part of an integrated framework for addressing organizational problems and improving the business, combined with comprehensive research, auditing, and consulting (Figure 5).

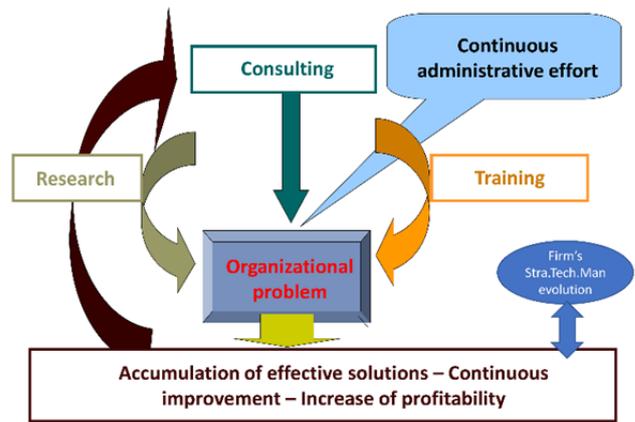


Figure 5. The problem-solution cycle: Step-by-step continuous improvement

To this end, the problem under investigation continues to gather administrative effort, which, according to modern management methodologies, has to valorize respective training and development approaches and techniques. These training programs often combined with external and internal consultancy and the use of resources of research calibrated at solving the specific problem, can lead to a relative accumulation of efficient solutions. In turn, these solutions are expected to lead to continuous improvement and, consequently, increase profitability. Also, understanding the administrative operation’s continuous flow can prove a significant task for future development. This is because business training never occurs in a “utopian environment” where production activity is or can be temporarily halted (Figure 6).

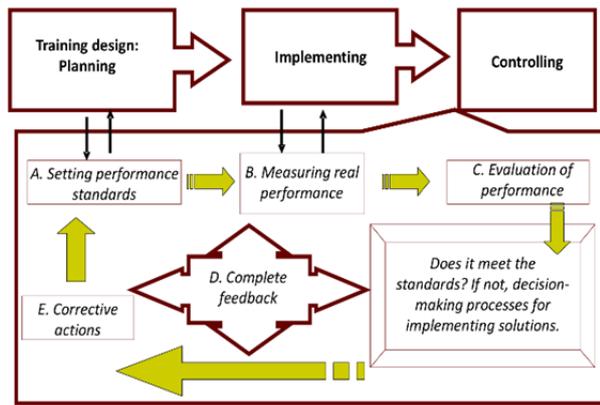


Figure 6. The systematic training planning process is never cut off from the organization's continuous administrative operation

The training planning process is also the first step here, identifying and designing specific performance standards. These standards drive to measuring “real” performance during the implementation phase, followed by the corresponding evaluation in the control phase. From then on, the organization's central administration must respond in time whether performance meets the standards that have been set. If not, decision-making processes have to be taken for implementing solutions. This feedback phase acts as the preamble of subsequent and necessary corrective actions, aiming to start all over again by designing a new round of such experience-based training programs. The next subsection explores how a firm starts building a training program based primarily on diagnosing the specific training needs.

4.1. Diagnosis of Training Needs

Identifying and analyzing training needs that every job position requires is a nodal point. The firm's organizational and hierarchical structure meets with the actual management by structuring a generic delegation framework and a reward planning and motivation framework. This “meeting” is perhaps the most critical point of reinforcing (or not) the firm's adaptive capabilities because the diagnosis of training needs in the context of a modern human resource development methodology are usually a multilevel and comprehensive process [29].

At what levels should training needs be established? In a “360-degree feedback” approach, we start from the individual level [30]. Although this level's importance can be easily understood, especially from a behavioral perspective, more emphasis is consistently placed on the overall organizational performance (group, department, entire organization). It seems that significance also is gradually attached at the group level to diagnose the specific training needs. The third and corporate level for identifying training needs is still central but not

exclusive. Finally, the fourth and external level concerns factors outside the company's reach, such as suppliers, partners and customers, who are now an organic part of the process of identifying training needs [31]. Therefore, the diagnosis of training needs concerns identifying evolving operational needs, whether at the individual, group, or corporate level. In this sense, it offers the ground for a marketing approach and perspective in the design of training programs. At this point, it has to be made clear that it is one thing to “push” and another to “create” the conditions for practical absorption of the training intervention and “product” based on the employee's (customer) and firm's evolving needs. If the trainee is considered the consumer or buyer of the training “product,” then the following reasoning in marketing terms can be applied [32]:

- The buyer analysis: Consumer analysis aims to identify the sections or population groups with similar and convergent needs so that the firm's training planning efforts focus on these “market segments.”
- Central questions in buyer's analysis: Which needs category are we addressing? Who buys and uses the product? How is the purchasing process structured? How necessary is the purchase of the product for the buyer? What is the product market today, and how can it be effectively segmented?
- The training program is a product: Every “training product designer” has to maximize the quality-to-price relationship that the customer gets.

Therefore, it is understood that designing training interventions requires systematic data collection, decision making based on this specific information, and orderliness in applying the procedures. It has to be underlined the fact that no system for diagnosing training needs can be built in such a way as to keep its effectiveness intact forever. To sum up, it could be said that effective systems for diagnosing training needs cannot be static. On the contrary, they have to be endowed by design with strong adaptability to remain effective over time.

4.2. Goals, Strategy, and Structuration of Training Programs

For a training plan to make sense, all its components have to work in the same direction. It has to be internally consistent and coherent and support (and supported by) the organization's overall strategy [33]. The training plan's different goals have to be result-oriented, realistic, hierarchical, consistent with each other, measurable, and cost-efficient. It could be said that training programs follow a cyclical process, calibrated towards the overarching organizational goals (Figure 7).



Figure 7. The circular succession of training planning borrows elements from the overarching business strategy

Step 1 refers to where the organization lies currently, venturing on knowledge audit, analysis of specific and corresponding indices, competitors, and training “customers.” Step 2 is about clarifying the desired destination, broken down into the particular business mission and strategic goals, training “market” segmentation, and determining where the organization should focus its powers. Step 3 refers to how the organization might reach its destination, based on analyzing possible alternative training strategies and tactics, together with alternative training programs. Step 4 distinguishes (or tries to) the best way to move by monitoring qualitative and quantitative performance criteria. Finally, step 5 is about figuring out what can be done to ensure the goal’s achievement, analyzing specific problems to overcome and respective strengths to exploit.

Moreover, every training intervention or program should be perceived as an integrated project, part of the overall management audit and planning. Project is defined as each explicit series of actions to exploit a specific variety of resources, designed to achieve a precise result of predetermined specifications, within clear frameworks of a preset budget and schedule [34]. Therefore, a training program should be derived from the overall strategic planning and be accurately specified (Figure 8).

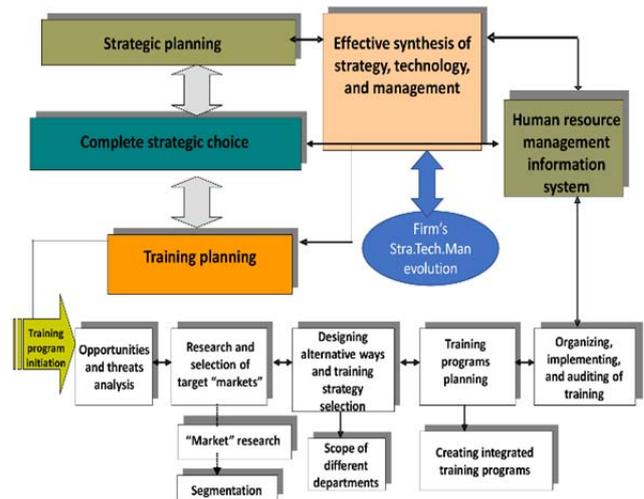


Figure 8. The circular succession of training planning borrows elements from the overarching business strategy

The initial strategic planning, which results from the efficient synthesis of strategy, technology, and management, drives the specific and complete strategic decision for training planning. In modern organizations, this system is complemented by sophisticated human management information and feedback system that dynamically interacts with the training goals and processes and the senior management. In terms of this specialized training planning, the following successive steps are indicative for complex organizations:

- Analysis of opportunities and threats;
- Research, selection, and segmentation of targeted “markets”;
- Designing alternative ways and selecting training strategies, possibly based on the scope of different organizational departments;
- Planning actual and possibly integrated training programs;
- Organizing, implementing, and auditing of training.

For this reason, the choice of an integrated strategic, technological, and managerial audit at the corporate level must always precede the design cycle of different training programs. Each training program has to explicitly serve the overarching “Stra.Tech.Man business synthesis” and the corresponding human resource enhancement actions. In the next subsection, the more specific aspects of training programs evaluation and auditing process are discussed.

4.3. *Audit and Evaluation of Training Programs*

Within a modern organization management mechanism, it has to be understood that measuring efficiency attempts to improve the firm's prospects continuously. What is measured should correspond to the real business activity, calibrated towards the prespecified goals and performance standards. Simultaneously, it has to be realized that senior management has to control both quantitative and qualitative content. In this context, the primary challenge for efficiency is to reliably and adaptively build mechanisms to turn the collected qualitative data into clear, quantified performance measurement indicators [35].

Concerning the performance control of training programs within a firm, it should be stressed that the systematic evaluation of performance is based on the actual performance's deviation from the prescribed performance standard. More profoundly, performance evaluation is about giving meaning and substance to this deviation and, therefore, it requires critical thinking and the ability to synthesize different perspectives. In this sense, it can be easier to understand that a thorough readjustment of training programs evaluation mechanisms cannot be effectively supported within a firm without a clear and cohesive internal evaluation mechanism. Therefore, the conclusion of training interventions evaluation in an organization should effectively be communicated and disseminated, with the feedback process being a crucial link in the whole audit process [36].

As a result, very often, expensive (and "grandiose") training program measurement mechanisms fail because their feedback processes are (deliberately or not) inadequate and misplaced. If the complete picture of the organization's problem to assimilate new knowledge is not fully understood in its source, any top-down corrective action has a limited chance of successful implementation.

5. **Research Implications: Toward an Integrated Business Training Policy for the Unemployed**

This article presented a modern management perspective of human resource training in the post-COVID-19 emerging global economy, focusing on creating training programs within modern and flexible organizations. It highlighted the primary points of how a business training program should be structured; focusing on the fact that it should start and follow the firm's strategic approach and goals. As this is also a management process, the training program has to implement the basic principles of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling. Emphasis was placed on the fact that it can solve a

business problem, combined with the consulting and research dimensions oriented towards that problem. A performance evaluation perspective of training programs was suggested, presenting an operational framework that could probably be exploited within all firms (socio-economic organizations), following the basic management principles and focusing on feedback issues and implementing corrective actions. The training program cycle was also described from a strategic, technological, and managerial planning perspective. Finally, a proposal to understand specialized training planning has been structured, which has to be coordinated with strategic planning and should concern the following steps in their succession: Analysis of opportunities and threats; research and selection of target "markets"; designing alternative ways and training strategy selection; training programs planning; organizing, implementing, and auditing of training.

Especially nowadays, implementing such a policy mechanism to structure and develop sophisticated business training programs seems to acquire increasing significance to deal with the challenges arising in the post-COVID-19 era, which profoundly restructures all labor market dynamics at the global level [37]. Most significantly, unemployment has dramatically increased in the recent reorganization of industries due to the fourth industrial revolution acceleration caused by COVID-19. According to the International Labor Organization [38], approximately four hundred million full-time jobs is the outcome of COVID-19, at least considering the earlier projections. The global socio-economic system seems to be facing today a colossal challenge to maintain existing jobs and to find effective ways to re-absorb a large part of the workforce that has been "out of order" due to the pandemic, systematically reinforcing its adaptability and employability.

To this end, in this concluding section, an example of a mechanism to promote training is suggested, focusing on the unemployed, who are defined as jobless people in need of work, seeking actively to be occupied [39]. In this sense, an attempt is made to illustrate public organizations' training planning process besides private enterprises. This proposed management framework attributes particular weight to developing mechanisms capable of monitoring the local labor market's dynamic evolution and exploiting this local structure composed of both private and public organizations. This local business environment has to be organically taken into account to implement and valorize the trained persons' knowledge potential under the program. In this way, the unemployed can be substantially helped to be integrated into their chosen professional direction (Figure 9).

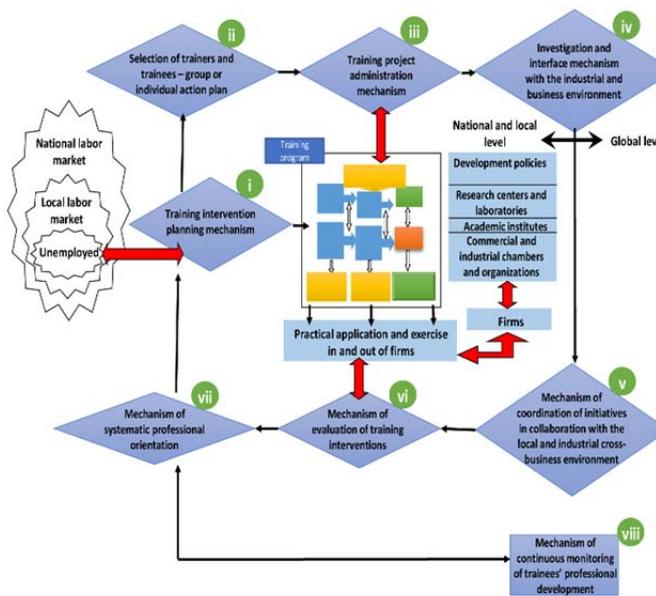


Figure 9. Operational organization model for training the unemployed

This integrated system aims to systematically accumulate the training experience and expertise generated during implementation, including eight distinct and interconnected management levels:

- i. Training intervention planning mechanism: This refers to forming the initial project, following the created need at the national or local level.
- ii. Selection of trainers and trainees group or individual action plan: It involves the program's staffing.
- iii. Training project administration mechanism: It means building a coordination and communication process.
- iv. Investigation and interface mechanism with the industrial and business environment: Environmental research, focusing on the global sectoral activity.
- v. Mechanism of coordination of initiatives in collaboration with the local and industrial cross-business environment: Focuses on the local environment's cross-industrial activity.
- vi. Mechanism of evaluation of training interventions: It refers to the program's controlling phase.
- vii. Mechanism of systematic professional orientation: It is calibrated towards offering the essential training service ("product") to the unemployed.
- viii. Mechanism of continuous monitoring of trainees' professional development: Drafting and publishing relevant reports, according to the recorded outcomes.

This program, which any national or local government could implement, could target the interconnection between bodies that are probably uncoordinated so far, creating a one-stop-shop tasked with re-interconnecting academia, industry, and government, and focused on innovation reinforcement. Acting as an intermediate organization could link development policies, research centers and laboratories, academic institutes, commercial and industrial chambers and organizations, and gain feedback and experience from practical application and exercise in and out of business and return this to the local society. This type of training interventions could be carried out within broader mechanisms to support local development and treat the wounds left behind by COVID-19.

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