

corporate culture that should be dealt with properly in order to help foreign employees integrate well into local companies. Thinking through, employing foreign laborers is appropriate to the globally thinking way when Vietnam becomes a WTO member and integrate more fully into the world market where movement of labor is widespread. Tin Nghia Company, a one-member limited company in HCMC, is considering hiring a foreign director, which is an encouraging sign of innovation of the private sector. Moreover, local companies have to work out policies to keep well-trained laborers in order to avoid brain drain which has been common among state-owned companies.

- Estimate of employees: The company has to build a system and standards for estimating the employees. Top managers could be estimated according to objectives set by the business strategy, middle management according to targets assigned to them and common employees according to tasks they complete. Results of regular estimates will help work out programs to train employees and managers.

- Corporate culture: The corporate culture must be suitable to long-term strategy and objectives of the company. When both employees and managers share common ideas about values, standards and goals, they could contribute better to the achievement of the company long-term objectives. At present, the centrally-concentrated way of running the company as if it were a family business should be removed because it prevents the company from securing full participation from employees in operations ■

Self-Education and Learning Conditions for Employees

by LÊ PHƯƠNG PHƯƠNG



One of advantages of Vietnam is its cheap labor force but this advantage is not profitable enough because of its poor quality. Foreign students at both elementary and secondary schools have learned how to study and do experiments by themselves. University students usually discuss and argue with their teachers and present their own opinions instead of repeating what were written in books. Employees and managers of foreign companies do their jobs professionally and strive for new ideas. What have made them so different from Vietnamese counterparts? Is it right that the Vietnamese education system paid no attention to learning and working skills?

Let's have a look at the business circles in HCMC to envisage some solutions to the development of high-quality laborers. A survey conducted by the Institute of Development Economics Research under the



HCMC University of Economics of some 2,000 learners in ten CEO training programs shows that some 65% of these CEOs came from the management of state-owned companies. They were usually promoted because of their achievements in their professions instead of their excellent managerial skills; some 15% of them came from families with long business traditions; and some 20% from other walks of life.

In the training programs, emphases are put on six working skills:

- (1) thinking and criticizing independently;
- (2) Working out strategic visions and leadership;
- (3) mastering international laws and business codes;
- (4) people and presentation skills;
- (5) ability to building brand names and marketing campaigns; and
- (6) team working.

The need to perfect these skills becomes more urgent when Vietnam is facing shortage of skilled human resource for economic growth. At present, according to the VietnamWorks.com – the leading international employment website in Vietnam, the source of highly-skilled labor can meet only 30% or 40% of the market demand. When the fact that more and more international companies and organizations come to Vietnam is inevitable, highly-skilled labor has been a matter of life and death that affect directly success and failure of the company.

With the shortage of talented CEOs, local companies tend to look for experienced and qualified Vietnamese expatriates who want to come back to Vietnam or

excellent graduates from famous local universities, but both of these supplies of talents are limited. Most competent expatriates have had good jobs in foreign countries and they only return to Vietnam on vacation or tourism while the excellent graduates are not as



numerous as expected. From some 1,000 graduates with good and excellent records, the Unilever can pick out some 100 ones who are qualified to take part in its apprenticeship program. Similarly, the Merck Pharmaceutical can only recruit some five out of 300 leading graduates from local universities every year.

In such a situation, self educating and helping top employees to learn becomes important to Vietnamese CEOs. Besides attending courses in people and working skills in prestige training centers, CEOs can give training courses at their workplace in which experienced managers offer their knowledge and skills to their understudies; form learning groups for all departments; organize specialized workshops and encourage their employees to self-educate by gathering information from the Internet, etc. They are all feasible and effective plans.

Learning is an endless path. Each leg is a mark of new success and a gate to a new development stage. One of reasons that make Vietnamese businesspersons decide to take training courses at the Institute of Development Economics Research is the fact that its high-quality courses have attracted CEOs from many international groups and leading local companies, such as Roussel, RMIT, ManuLife, Acecook, Colgate-Palmolive, Euro Window, TUV Rheinland, Sheraton Hotel, Toyota, Kinh Đô, Thành Công Clothing Company, Vinamilk, Trung Nguyên, Samco Engineering Corporation, First Hotel, Bến Thanh Beer Company, Chương Dương Beverage, Imexpharm, Việt Á Bank, REE, Vina Control, Casumina and Cotec, etc.

Efforts made by CEOs to study economics and management or on-the-job training courses will be enhanced and perfected with help from economic experts and experienced CEOs from leading companies who can give more analyses, explanation and systematization to the training contents ■