

Gain: More competent managers

by MĀRIS ĶIRSONS

Skilled-Up vocational education and training brings plenty of benefits for students and woodprocessing companies. This EU project was launched in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in October 2019 and “Baltic Business Quarterly” asked the participants for their feedback.



Employees are trained to become better managers

GUNITA MEIERE

HEAD OF THE PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AT JSC LATVIJAS FINIERIS

The Skilled-Up programme is based on the experience in Germany and has been adapted to the needs of the Baltic wood industry. In Latvia, it is usually the case that young people find the school and then the school, in turn, looks for the companies where young people can be trained. In Germany it is different. There, employers offer their employees the chance to get additional professional training, which is needed for management positions, for example. Of course, a person's motivation is much greater if they have already found a job and want to grow professionally compared to someone who has never worked

in a real company before. Four of our employees are currently taking part in the Skilled-Up programme. As they learn twice a week, our job is to plan who will replace them during this time. It was also planned to have experience exchanges with colleagues in Estonia and Lithuania. Due to Covid-19, however, it will probably not be possible to do so in the time allotted. I am convinced that the Skilled-Up programme benefits both employees and the company. Another aim of this programme is to develop a training plan which could then be accredited by a university. This would make the possibilities of this programme accessible to a much wider group. At the moment, it is a pilot project for the wood industry, but this valuable experience could later be transferred to other industries.

INGUSS FREIBERGS

SHIFT MANAGER AT THE FUNIERIS PLANT

An important benefit of Skilled-Up training is that a great deal of information is provided about how to deal with people, how to evaluate one's own actions and how to communicate with others. Thanks to the training, I can better assess the employees and find the best way of communication to achieve the desired result. I also appreciate the fact that we can visit other

companies during the training. There are currently 50 people working under my leadership and I view the Skilled-Up programme as a kind of springboard for my career. I started as a simple worker, now I am the oldest shift manager and I would like to achieve even more. But this is only possible if I continue my training and acquire more knowledge and experience, which is what Skilled-Up offers.

Knowledge is the prerequisite for increasing competitiveness

ANDIS ARAKS

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SIA KRAUZERS

Two employees from our company are taking part in the Skilled-Up project. The benefit for the company is that the employees with more knowledge and better qualifications then use their new skills for more qualitative work and are able to complete various processes in the company. Nowadays, knowledge plays a crucial role and increases efficiency in all areas. The Skilled-Up training programme is a great way to deepen knowledge in different areas. It was very good that there were also practical lessons where the students visited corresponding companies and immediately saw the new knowledge in practice.

An Investment in the future competitiveness

GATIS EGLĪTIS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF SIA IKTK

Thanks to the Skilled-up programme, we will have more competent managers who will have a much better understanding of the processes



in the company and will be able to manage production. During this programme, we trained two first level managers who both have a great deal of practical work experience but no background in wood processing. The Skilled-up programme is not a classical education but it is aimed at acquiring practical skills and sharing experiences, which is also a great advantage of the programme. Training the employees in Skilled-up is also an investment in the future and competitiveness of the company. Although there is always a risk that a well-trained employee will leave the company, I believe that the risk is even greater if you do not train the employees and they stay in the company. I can only say that both managers who participate in the Skilled-up training programme have already proposed several novelties which they have seen in an exchange of experiences in other companies. This is also proof of what this training and education programme brings.

ANDREJS DOMKINS
THE PRODUCTION
MANAGER OF SIA IKTK

In almost in every part of the programme, we have worked practically and have been able to prove ourselves. In this way, we have experienced and learned new things. I found the visits to other companies particularly useful because they gave me new ideas. The communication with the other first level managers gave me the opportunity to look at the same problem from several angles and to find different solutions.

Divisional manager expands his knowledge

ANDRIS KORIS
MEMBER OF THE BOARD
OF SIA KONTO

We have trained one of our employees Gatis Kļaviņš with the Skilled-up programme. He has been working in our company for 18 years and was promoted to the position of production manager two years ago. The main benefit of participating in this programme is that, after the training, Gatis always talks with interest about what he has heard, seen and learned. This already proves that the training is interesting and useful. I don't think you can measure everything in numbers only. I very much hope that after this training the new managers will have fewer unfamiliar terms, more contacts, more insight into the processes and more courage to face all production challenges. I also very much hope that the theoretical knowledge gained will give them more conviction and strengthen them as leaders in their teams. When the decision was made on the Skilled-up programme, the decisive factor was the content of the



training – the modules. I found that the 10 modules included practically everything a young production manager needs to know. Of equal importance was the opportunity to visit other companies in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, which is not easy to do otherwise. An important area of training for new managers is dialogue building with the team, how to talk to the employees and how to solve conflicts. It is also important to know what makes the price and how to calculate the costs. This was included in the Skilled-up programme. But the decisive reason was that the training was specially designed for wood processing. I must also mention that the financial conditions for the Skilled-up programme were favourable. All these positive reasons made it possible to cope with the fact that the training took place during working hours.

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 **SKILLED UP**

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

