

# The impact of the training system on a company's attractiveness

## El impacto del sistema de formación en el atractivo de una empresa.

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Received: 01/03/2019 • Approved: 10/05/2019 • Published 10/06/2019

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#### ABSTRACT:

The article examines the impact of the training system on the attractiveness of small, medium and large businesses from the perspective of job seekers. The authors suggest the methodology, which consists of two stages of research and is based on general scientific and specific methods. The online survey and focus group made the empirical basis of these methods. The results obtained in cooperation with HeadHunter showed that the majority of applicants (80%) had a positive attitude toward companies with a training system and the availability of personnel reserve. Among the leaders, there were candidates without work experience and those having work experience of no more than six years. The majority of respondents supported traditional refresher courses (65%), internships in other branches/offices of the company (49%). "Personal motives" turned out the most important motivator of staff development. The identified stable inverse proportionality determines the scientific novelty of the research: the lower is the work experience of the job seeker, the higher is the significance of additional training in the company. Moreover, the study revealed a tendency of a controversial, temporary and unstable nature with a possible change in the vector of development: a decrease in the number of job candidates considering "the training system in a company significant for

#### RESUMEN:

El artículo examina el impacto del sistema de capacitación en el atractivo de las pequeñas, medianas y grandes empresas desde la perspectiva de los solicitantes de empleo. Los autores sugieren la metodología, que consta de dos etapas de investigación y se basa en métodos científicos generales y específicos. La encuesta en línea y el grupo focal formaron la base empírica de estos métodos. Los resultados obtenidos en cooperación con HeadHunter mostraron que la mayoría de los solicitantes (80%) tenía una actitud positiva hacia las empresas con un sistema de capacitación y la disponibilidad de personal de reserva. Entre los líderes, hubo candidatos sin experiencia laboral y aquellos con experiencia laboral de no más de seis años. La mayoría de los encuestados apoyaron cursos de actualización tradicionales (65%), pasantías en otras sucursales / oficinas de la empresa (49%). "Motivos personales" resultó el motivador más importante del desarrollo del personal. La proporcionalidad inversa estable identificada determina la novedad científica de la investigación: cuanto menor es la experiencia laboral del solicitante de empleo, mayor es la importancia de la capacitación adicional en la empresa. Además, el estudio reveló una tendencia de naturaleza controvertida, temporal e inestable con un posible cambio en el vector de

career growth" and "rather important" with a simultaneous increase in the number of candidates considering this criterion "not at all important" or "hardly important" for career growth and the attractiveness of the company. Formation and branding of the training system by the company, development of the HR brand increase its attractiveness and allow for a better selection of the most professionally trained candidates. The use of research results by domestic and foreign companies, in practice, will reduce their personnel costs while increasing the efficiency and quality of the recruitment of new personnel from the most qualified candidates.

**Keywords:** training system, HR brand, attractiveness, staff development, personnel reserve

desarrollo: una disminución en el número de candidatos a puestos de trabajo que consideran "el sistema de capacitación en una empresa importante para el crecimiento profesional" y "bastante importante". "con un aumento simultáneo en el número de candidatos que consideran este criterio" en absoluto importante "o" apenas importante "para el crecimiento de la carrera y el atractivo de la empresa. La formación y la marca del sistema de capacitación por parte de la empresa, el desarrollo de la marca de RR.HH. aumentan su atractivo y permiten una mejor selección de los candidatos más capacitados profesionalmente. El uso de los resultados de la investigación por parte de empresas nacionales y extranjeras, en la práctica, reducirá sus costos de personal al tiempo que aumentará la eficiencia y la calidad de la contratación de nuevo personal de los candidatos más calificados.

**Palabras clave:** sistema de capacitación, marca de Recursos Humanos, atractivo, desarrollo del personal, reserva de personal.

## 1. Introduction

The competition in all sectors of the economy is escalating significantly in the modern world. It becomes particularly difficult for companies to compete in the labor market. After all, to attract and retain the best-trained personnel, it is necessary to create favorable working conditions (Prichina et al., 2017; Rogach et al., 2016; Vinichenko et al., 2016a; 2016b), the opportunities to reveal and fully realize the potential of employees (Buley et al., 2016; MacLeod et al., 2010; Sonnenfeld et al., 1992), and stimulate effective work (Avanesova et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2016). It is essential to promptly and correctly invest (Veretekhina et al., 2018; Volchkova et al., 2009) and receive dividends (Belousova et al., 2016).

That can be fully applied to the ongoing battle for talents (Michaels et al., 2006; Robertson, & Abbey, 2003). Companies use various technologies to identify, develop and retain talented employees (HeadHunter, 2018; Efron et al., 2014; Batteris et al., 2005), especially youth (Melnichuk, 2017; Milovanova, 2017), to include them in the personnel reserve (Bednova, 2014; Kirillov et al., 2017; Chulanova et al., 2017). Specialized consulting and recruitment organizations (agencies), companies' personnel management services are actively involved in this process. HeadHunter is one of the leaders in this area in Russia. In addition to solving the problems of employment, the company is engaged in the identification of talents, training of candidates for vacancies and staff. This is not an accident. Training in this company is considered as a critical element in achieving the success of any company in the market of goods and services. Availability of the training system is positioned as a competitive advantage in the labor market, as well as in the goods and services market. This fact works on the HR brand, increases the attractiveness of the company, allowing it to feel more confident in the business environment.

Not all companies create their training systems. This is due to several reasons – insufficient material resources, poorly developed personnel management service, a particular company's management attitude to this issue, etc. However, research in this area suggests that having a training system has a positive effect on the company image and its HR brand (HeadHunter, 2016).

Several researchers argue that the presence of gamification of the business processes (Wittenbaum et al.; 2004; Alvarez et al., 2017), and the issues related to age and gender characteristics of gamification (Marti-Parreno et al., 2016), security and privacy (Baxter et al., 2016), personnel training (Miguel et al., 2017; Kirillov et al., 2016), including cognitive aspects (Lumsden et al., 2016) are of great interest to the company's employers and employees. The availability of a training system in the company attracts highly skilled professionals and the most qualified employees with a migrant background (Ushakov, 2016).

In general, the problem of determining the impact of the training system on companies' attractiveness from the point of job seekers is relevant and is considered by many authors

from different angles. However, there is no complete work on this topic yet, which motivated the authors to conduct this research.

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## 2. Methods

The author's methods focused on achieving the purpose of the study: to reveal the impact of the training system on the companies' attractiveness from the point of job seekers.

The research methodology included a complex of general scientific and specific methods: content analysis, synthesis, online survey, expert assessments, focus group, participant observation, methods of mathematical statistics, etc. Online survey and focus group were the necessary empirical tools.

To identify the impact of the training system on the companies' attractiveness from the point of applicants, the authors conducted a study, which consisted of two stages: the first was held from January 21 to April 21, 2017; the second – from June to November 2018. At the first stage, the main research methods were content analysis and sociological survey using electronic services, at the second stage – expert assessments and focus group.

The first stage resulted in a scientific and methodological base revealing the nature of the system of scientific knowledge on the impact of the training system on the companies' attractiveness of from the point of job seekers. The authors have also determined the order of conducting a sociological survey.

The survey was conducted in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation from 27 January to 8 February 2017 in the form of an online survey. According to the number of respondents, the subjects were as follows: Moscow – 29%; St. Petersburg – 13%; Moscow Region – 7%; Krasnodar Territory – 3.4%; Samara Region – 2.9%; Republic of Tatarstan – 2.8%; Rostov Region – 2.3%; Nizhny Novgorod Region – 2.2%; Sverdlovsk Region – 2.2%; Novosibirsk Region – 2.1%; Voronezh Region – 2.0%; Republic of Bashkortostan – 1.8%; Chelyabinsk Region – 1.3%; other regions – 28%.

The sample size was 5,991 Russian applicants. Among them were: heads of department/division (middle manager) – 19%, specialists (excluding production) (analyst, economist, marketer, etc.) – 20%, production specialists (engineer, technologist, etc.) – 9%, administrative staff (salesman, secretary, driver, security guard) – 9%, representatives of creative professions (designer, photographer, decorator, etc.) – 3%, workers (installer, carpenter, electrician, etc.) – 3%, civil servants – 2%, not working at the time of the survey – 35%. The maximum size of the error for this sample was no more than 4.5% with a confidence level of 95%. During the training, the respondents were briefed on the procedure for filling in the questionnaires to achieve the required quality and reliability of results obtained.

According to their professional characteristics (from the applicant's resume), the respondents were distributed as follows: sales – 15%, information technology, Internet, telecom – 11%, entry level, students – 9%, administrative staff – 6%, accounting, management accounting, finance companies – 6%, production – 6%, construction, real estate – 4%, transport, logistics – 4%, marketing, advertising, PR – 4%, top management – 3.7%, banks, investments, leasing – 3%, personnel management, training – 3%, lawyers – 2%, tourism, hotels, restaurants – 2%, working staff – 2%, others – less than 1%.

The respondents were presented with small, medium and large businesses. The company's personnel in which the job seekers worked was distributed as follows: up to 50 people – 30%, 51-100 people – 15%, 101-250 people – 11%, 251-500 people – 10%, 501-1,000 people – 9%, 1,001-3,000 people – 9%, more than 3,000 people – 15%.

The working group collected, summarized and analyzed the obtained results.

At the second stage, a focus group participated in the study, which included 12 experts: domestic and foreign scientists, faculty members, and business representatives. The focus group was provided with the necessary equipment, which allowed receiving data from the Internet and discussing it with the colleagues based in remote locations. The focus group

activity focused on identifying the main directions of increasing the companies' attractiveness from the point of job seekers.

### 3. Results

In the course of the sociological survey, the authors revealed that job applicants treated companies with a training system with respect (Table 1).

**Table 1**  
The general attitude of applicants to the companies with a training system and the availability of personnel reserve\*

<i>Applicants</i>	Total	No work experience	Less than 1 year	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	From 10 years
<b>A</b>	70%	75%	74%	71%	72%	66%	68%
<b>B</b>	10%	8%	7%	10%	9%	11%	10%
<b>C</b>	17%	14%	16%	15%	15%	19%	18%
<b>D</b>	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
<b>E</b>	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%

\*A – Positively, all companies must have a staff training system;

B – Mostly positive, but only if the training is optional;

C – This would be a plus for the company, but its absence is not critical;

D – Negative, there are no adequate training systems in Russian companies, it is a waste of time and money;

E – Indifferent, I do not care whether the company has a training system.

Analysis of the data in Table 1 shows that the majority of job seekers (70%) have a positive attitude towards companies with a training system. Among the leaders are candidates without work experience and those whose work experience is less than 6 years. The category of supporters of training in companies can also include those who are more likely to respond positively to the training if it is optional (10%) and its absence is not critical (17%). Only 3% of the respondents spoke negatively and indifferently of training.

A comparative analysis of the segmented labor market revealed the leading areas of the economy in which applicants were most serious about learning (Table 2).

**Table 2**  
Applicants' attitude toward companies with a training system, by sector of activity\*

Applicants	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
Banks, investments, leasing	80%	5%	10%	4%	2%
Sales	77%	7%	13%	2%	1%
Security	76%	5%	12%	7%	0%
Tourism, hotels, restaurants	75%	6%	14%	4%	1%
HR management, trainings	74%	12%	12%	1%	2%

Top management	73%	10%	12%	3%	2%
Production	73%	8%	16%	1%	1%
Medicine, Pharma	72%	9%	11%	8%	0%
Car business	72%	8%	15%	4%	0%
Early career, students	71%	8%	17%	3%	2%
<b>All professional areas</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>
Transport, logistics	69%	7%	18%	2%	3%
Construction, real estate	68%	8%	20%	2%	2%
Accounting, finance companies	67%	10%	20%	2%	1%
Working staff	67%	7%	22%	3%	1%
Administrative staff	65%	11%	20%	3%	1%
Purchases	64%	9%	21%	5%	0%
Lawyers	62%	10%	25%	1%	1%
Arts, entertainment, media	60%	14%	22%	2%	1%
Information technology, Internet, telecom	60%	18%	18%	3%	1%
Marketing, Advertising, PR	59%	13%	22%	3%	2%

Applicants for the banking sector, leasing and investment, sales, security, tourism business were the leaders (75-80%) among those who treated the availability of the training system positively. They are followed by such areas of activity as personnel management, top management, manufacturing, medicine, pharmaceuticals, automotive business and early career, students (71-74%). On average, 70% of respondents chose this criterion.

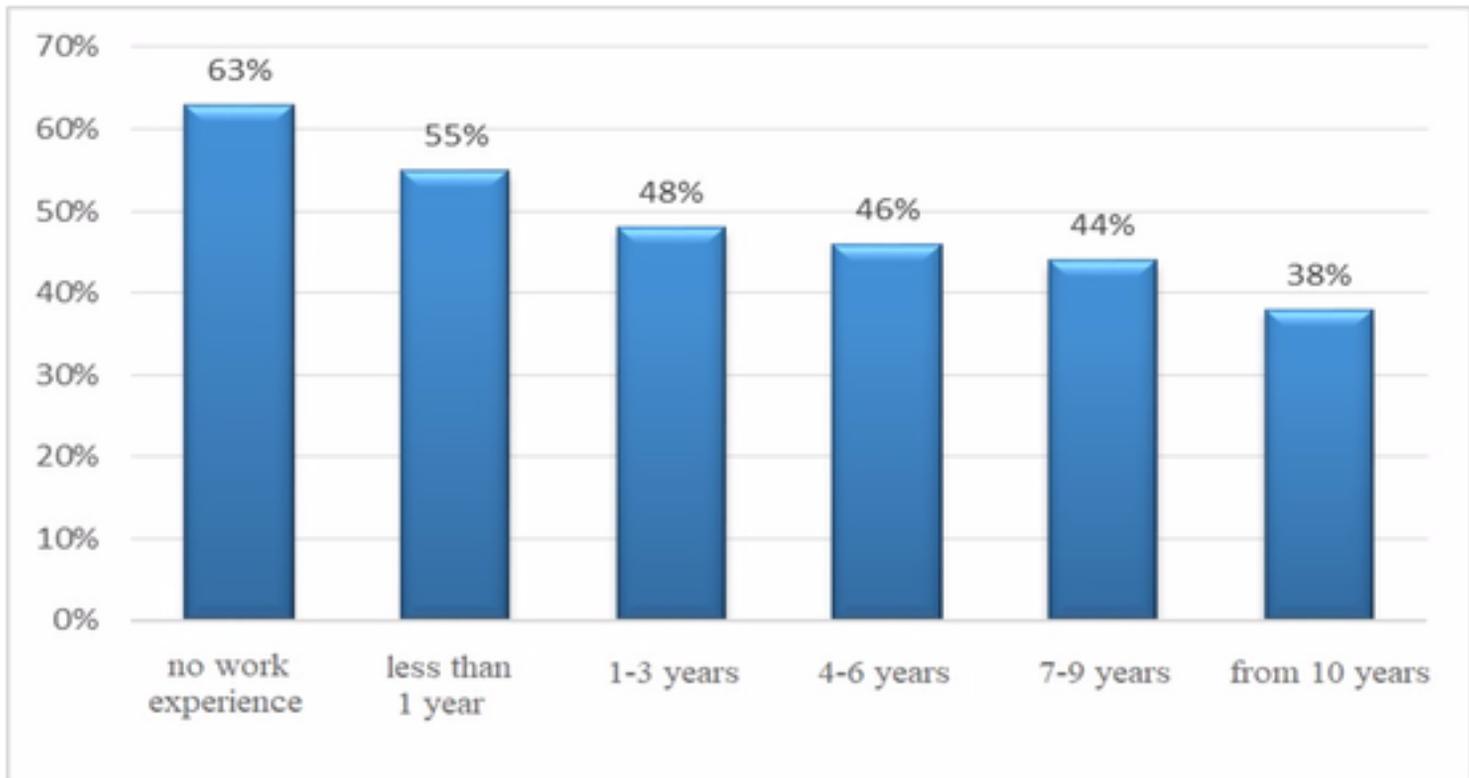
The study revealed that in 2017 (compared to 2016), the number of candidates who considered "the availability of a training system in a company important for career growth" decreased by 4%, and "rather important" – by 2%, while there was an increase in the criteria "not important at all" or "rather not important" in total by 2%.

By categories of applicants, the administrative staff and production workers considered "the availability of a training system important for career growth" and "rather important" (49%). Civil servants (47%), middle and lower managers and the unemployed (46%) gave a slightly lower score to this criterion. Representatives of creative professions (designers, photographers, decorators, etc.) and specialists (43%) were in the last place.

The study of the importance of obtaining additional training in the company in the context of work experience revealed the applicants' preferences (Figure 1). The top three included candidates without work experience (63%), with work experience of less than a year (55%) and work experience from 1 to 3 years (48%). At the same time, there is a steady dependence of increasing importance of obtaining additional training in the company on reducing the job experience of the applicant: the less experience the job seeker has, the higher is the significance of receiving additional training in the company.

**Figure 1**

The importance of obtaining additional training in the company

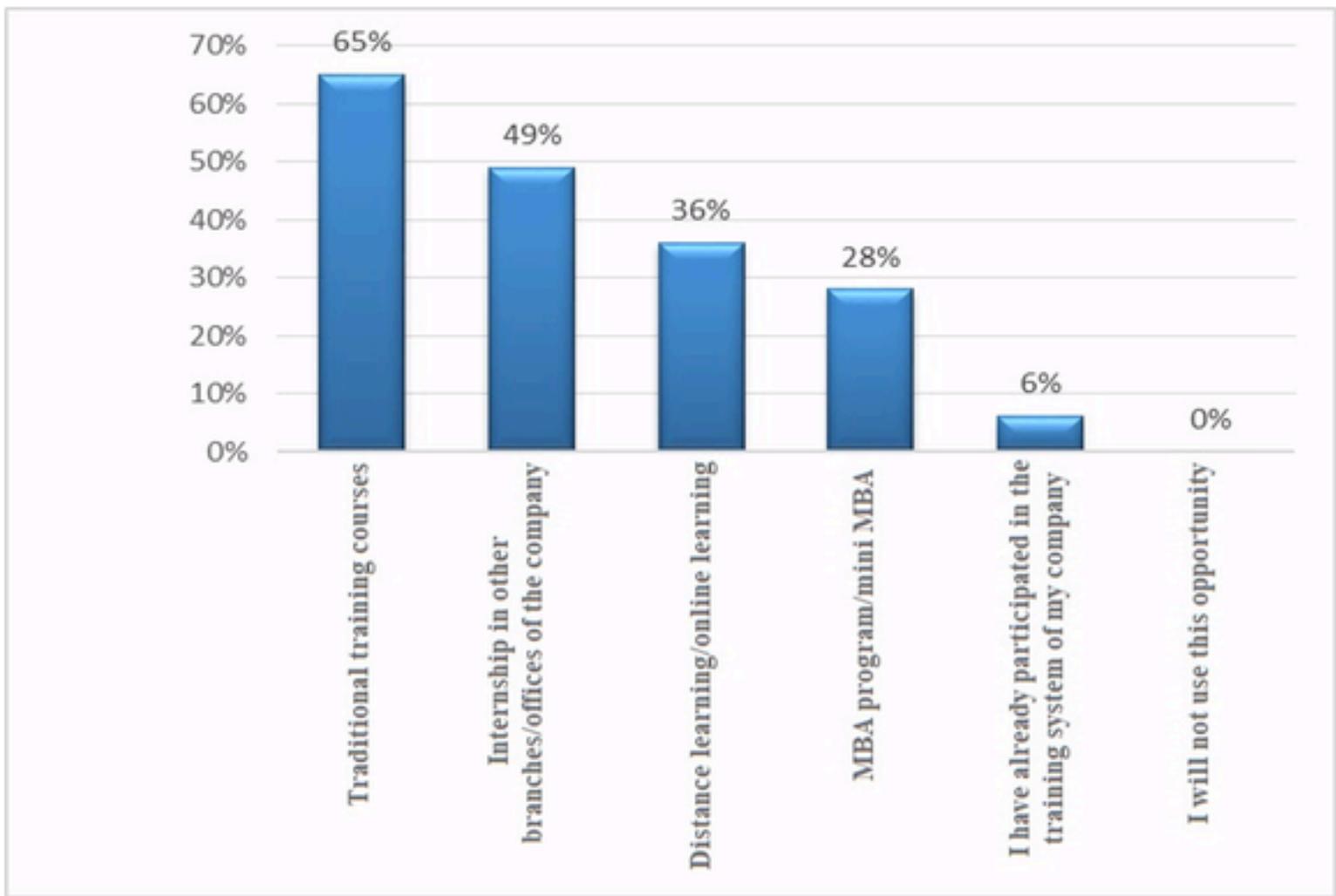


The training time for applicants, in general, was distributed proportionally: it did not matter (48%) or was only during working hours (47%). Only 4% of respondents chose the option "outside of working hours".

Traditional training courses were among the most popular forms of staff training (65%), training in other branches/offices of the company accounted for 49%, while distance/online learning accounted for 36% (Figure 2). Those were followed by MBA/mini MBA programs (28%), and the answer "I have already participated in the training system of my company" (6%). By areas of activity among the leaders in traditional advanced training courses were information technology, Internet, telecom (71%), internships in other branches/offices of the company – tourism, hotels, restaurants (60%), distance/online training – information technology, Internet, telecom (51%), MBA/mini MBA – top management (46%) and management staff (40%).

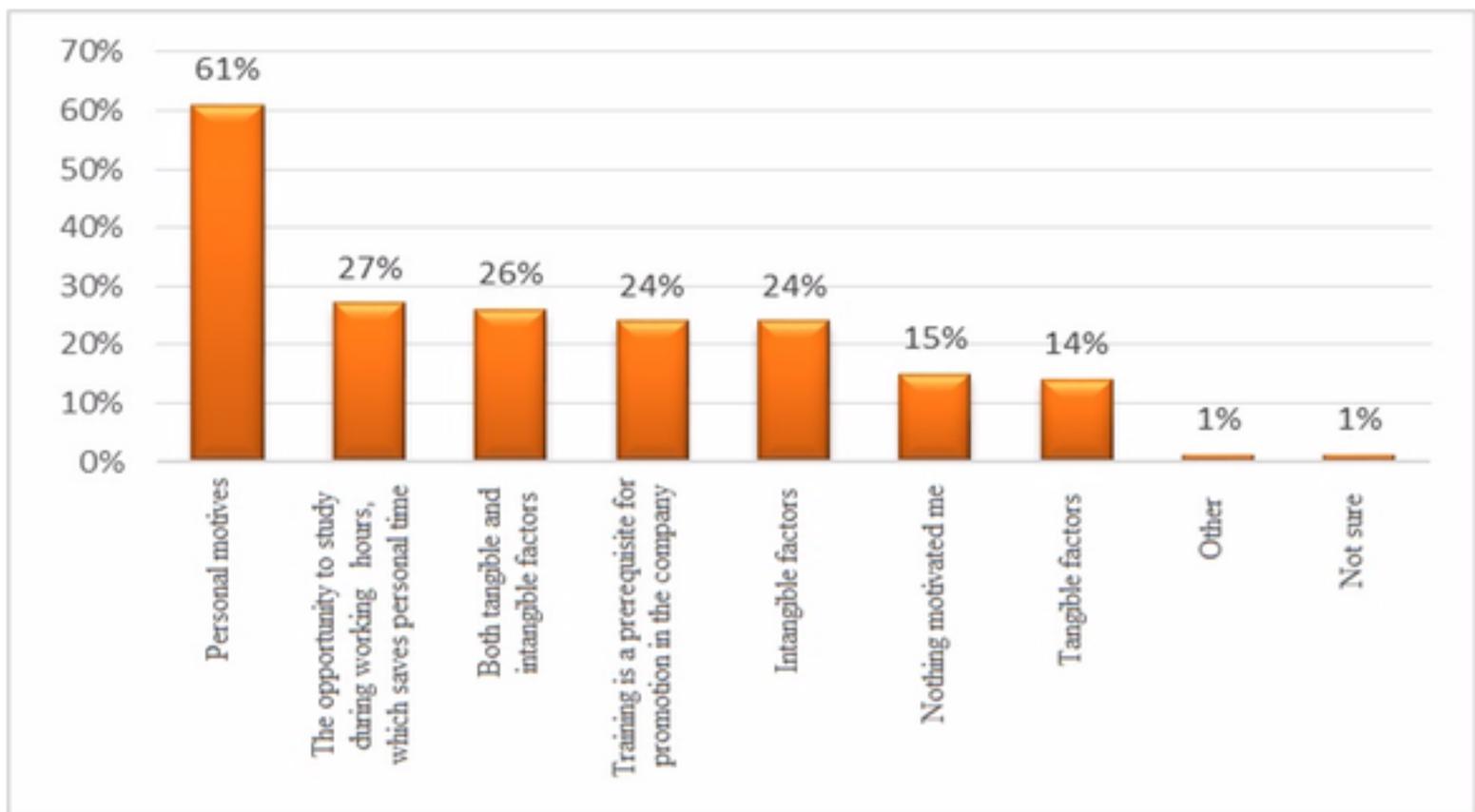
**Figure 2**

Preferable forms of training for applicants



Job The most important motivator for the development of respondents was "personal motives" – the desire to learn, acquire new knowledge, self-development, and self-improvement (61%) (Figure 3).

**Figure 3**  
The answer to the question "What motivated you in 2017?"



Almost equally important were "The opportunity to study during working hours, which saves personal time" (27%), "Both tangible and intangible factors" (26%), "Training is a prerequisite for in the promotion in the company" (24%) and "intangible factors" (recognition from the management, certificates, rating of employees, etc.) (24%). The criteria "Nothing motivated me" (15%) and "tangible factors" (bonus, salary increase, promotion, etc.) (14%) scored least of all.

The evaluation of training was of a peculiar character. The respondents expressed the

highest satisfaction by "absolutely satisfied" and "rather satisfied" criteria with the courses to improve current qualifications in an outside organization (81%), courses on acquiring new skills not directly related to their profession (80%), and online training organized by the outside contractor (74%). The internal training school in the company (for sales, programmers, etc.) (73%), various one-day/two-day training courses with invited business trainers (73%) and internships at the company's expense (70%) also showed good results.

Second stage. The focus group was given the results of generalized scientific research, content analysis, and sociological survey. The experts discussed the survey results, claiming the benefits of the companies with a training system. It was indisputable that candidates without work experience and having work experience of no more than 6 years generally supported the availability of a training system in the future company and were willing to get into the personnel reserve. It was logical that the focus group confirmed a steady inverse proportionality of the increase in importance of obtaining additional training in the company from the reduction in job experience of an applicant. The desire to obtain additional competencies during training in the company by top management raised doubts. The downward trend in the number of candidates who considered "the availability of a training system in the company significant for the career advancement" and "rather important", with a simultaneous increase of the criteria "not important at all" or "rather not important" caused a debate among the experts. The focus group concluded that this trend was temporary, not sustainable, with a possible change in the vector of development.

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## 4. Discussion

The attractiveness of companies with a training system for job candidates identified in the course of the study is logical and unquestionable. The training system and the availability of personnel reserve are especially essential for employees who do not have much work experience (less than 6 years). By category of respondents, training is most important in companies that actively use advanced technologies, with continuous development, and significant permanent and seasonal changes. Those include representatives of the banking sector, leasing and investment, sales, security, and tourism (75-80%). The desire of top management and students at the beginning of their careers to gain additional competencies during training in the company is questionable (71-73%). In this case, the essence of learning is diametric. Top management presented by the senior deputy managers are willing to reach a new, higher level. However, it is difficult to make this step within the company due to the system of balances and high competition in these positions. However, the desire is evident, though it conflicts with the existing realities. For former students, training replaces the concept of adaptation. It appears as a tool to facilitate adaptation to a new working life. The levels, obstacles, and cost of training vary significantly between these categories.

For all categories of candidates, the main factor for development was "personal motives" – the desire to learn, acquire new knowledge, self-development, and self-improvement (61%). This indicates that there are quite a lot of applicants in the labor market motivated for productive work with great creative potential. Hiring such candidates will increase the company's competitiveness. At the same time, the availability of the training system will increase the company's attractiveness among talented candidates.

The revealed tendency of increasing the number of candidates who consider "the availability of a training system in a company significant for career growth" and "rather important" with a simultaneous increase in the number of those who believe "the availability of a training system in a company does not influence career growth at all" or "rather does not influence", is contradictory, temporary and not sustainable with a possible change in the development vector. First, those who support the positive impact of the availability of the training system in a company, generally belong to administrative and service personnel and workers (49%), civil servants (47%), middle and lower managers and the unemployed (46%). Secondly, changes are expressed in a small amount – only 2%, which can be random. Thirdly, the demands of the market for goods and services, and the labor market for the quality of products are growing steadily.

The revealed stable inverse relationship between the importance of obtaining additional training in the company and the job experience of the applicant allows increasing the attractiveness of companies with the need to attract talented staff with little experience.

The sociological survey has shown that those who want to acquire additional knowledge during training in the nonworking hours are negligible (4%). Either the respondents want to study during working hours or this is not fundamental to them. Almost half of the respondents do not want to sacrifice their free time for their self-development. This should alarm the employers. Such candidates will hardly fit into the corporate culture and treat the company's problems as their personal. In this case, they cannot be expected to significantly improve the labor efficiency and the company's competitiveness.

The majority of respondents support traditional refresher courses (65%), and internships in other branches/offices of the company (49%). On the one hand, the usual form of training can have a positive effect on learning. On the other hand, in the dynamic market of goods and services, the advent of new technologies and the introduction of the classic forms of learning can have a deterrent effect on the quality of education. In this regard, it is necessary to use gamification elements that will positively affect the results of the educational process. Distance learning/online learning with elements of digitalization, the introduction of innovative technologies, and informatization of education (Moore et al., 2017; Veretekhina et al., 2018) will also contribute to the professional development of employees. MBA and mini-MBA programs are in demand by top management (46%) and personnel management (40%). This kind of a diploma significantly increases the demand for and capabilities of these categories not only and not so much within the company, as in the labor market as a whole. Herein lies a contradiction and danger to the employer – to develop staff and at the same time create conditions for the transition of a valuable employee in another company.

The respondents most highly rated the quality of training in ongoing professional development courses at a third-party organization (81%), courses on acquiring new skills not directly related to their profession (80%), and online training organized by a third party (74%). It should be noted that along with the classical form of education, the respondents highly rated the quality of online courses. This indicates a growing demand for additional knowledge and skills with minimal time spent on organizational issues, time spent on traveling to the place of training, along with an increased quality of online courses.

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## **5. Conclusion**

Any organization that invests in its development wants to get real results that positively affect its competitiveness. The formation and development of the training system, the availability of personnel reserve should attract the majority of job candidates, especially the most qualified ones. The study suggests that the overwhelming majority of respondents show a positive attitude towards companies with a training system and give priority to such companies when choosing their future place of employment. Under this condition, the personnel management service needs to have modern evaluation procedures and tools to identify the best, most qualified applicants for the company's vacancies.

The study has revealed a steady inverse relationship between the importance of obtaining additional training in the company and the job experience of the applicant: the less experience the job seeker has, the higher is the importance of receiving additional training in the company.

The study also revealed a tendency of a contradictory, temporary and unstable nature with a possible change in the development vector: a decrease in the number of job candidates who considered "the availability of the training system in a company important for career growth" and "rather important" with a simultaneous increase in the number of candidates who considered "the availability of the training system in a company not important at all" or "rather not important". This is due to some temporary fluctuations in the labor market towards the increasing demand for less technological jobs that do not require constant staff development.

In general, the training system has a positive effect on the companies' attractiveness to the job seekers. The formation and branding of the training system by the company increases its attractiveness and allows for a better selection of the most professionally trained candidates. The analysis allows arguing that the practical use of research results by domestic and foreign companies will reduce staff costs while increasing the efficiency and quality of recruiting new employees from the most qualified candidates.

## Acknowledgments

The publication was prepared with the financial support of the RFBR, project No. 17-03-00059-OGN.

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Revista ESPACIOS. ISSN 0798 1015  
Vol. 40 (Nº 19) Year 2019

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