

A Study of Lifelong Professional Skills Development System for White-collar Workers

Part 1. System Construction and Verification of the Validity

ABSTRACT

One of today's serious social problems is that middle-aged white-collar workers are the target of restructuring, including personnel cuts and salary reductions. This is because managers believe that, through ageing, their professional skills have become obsolete although they still receive high salaries. In other words, a mismatching of salary and skills and ability has developed over time.

A hypothesis is proposed that the professional skills of white-collar workers are formed by the following three steps: (1) learning of principles such as theories and general rules, (2) up-grading valuable knowledges and skills by using the principles, and (3) forming networks to share this valuable knowledge.

Based on this hypothesis, a "Lifelong Development System of Professional Skills" is designed, which includes promotion programs to assist personnel to obtain the professional skills needed at each stage of his/her career from the first year to the year of retirement from the organization.

Training seminars on the systems and follow-up programs to verify the validity, which are separately developed, were conducted on all personnel concerned.

The results show that the present management system: (1) lacks coordination between the business management system and the professional skills development system and (2) lacks effectiveness of the above-mentioned professional skills development system. It is made clear that these two points are the cause of the mismatching between salary and skills. The results made clear that the concept of a "Lifelong Development System of Professional Skills" is effective for solving the mismatching.

Key Words: White-collar workers, Mismatching of salary and skills, Lifelong development system of professional ability, and Restructuring