

Business Transfer in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, especially in family businesses

Abstract of 'Best practice'

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Abstract

This paper is about a project that aims to develop and test a European programme for Business Transfer (BT) and hence support VET/Higher Education institutions to increase and improve awareness and preparation for (family) business transfer.

There is an increasing interest in the transfer of SME in general and in the transfer of family businesses in particular. In our presentation and extended abstract we point out to six reasons of relevance for this growing interest in family business transfer.

Family business transfer is seen by many as the most important issue that family businesses have to cope with. It is also widely agreed that intergenerational transfer is not a single event, but a process that needs to be planned in advance in order to succeed. However, despite the growing interest in and the importance of the transfer of family businesses, hardly any attention is paid to family businesses and family business transfer in the educational system, which focuses primarily on start-ups and growth. Although a number of initiatives have been taken by the government and the private sector to increase and improve the awareness and preparation for family business transfer, little attention is paid in vocational education to business transfer (BT). Vocational Education & Training (VET) and Higher Education colleges are barely aware of the situation that their students aim to take over the business of their parents, and hardly offer guidance for this to students and parents-entrepreneurs and have almost no training programmes. For this, AVANS business school, as a governmental educational institution, took the initiative to develop a course on business transfer in SME (particularly family businesses) in cooperation with the private sector and partners in four different countries (Belgium, Germany, Lithuania and Portugal). The central theme in the curriculum will be succession planning, an issue that up to now was not being fully addressed in traditional advanced training programmes.

The following 'products' are seen as the main deliverables of the project group:

1. a BT educational programme (curriculum)
2. a cartoon
3. a communication plan

Started October 1, 2009, all deliverables should be available at the end of 2011. In our presentation and extended abstract we elaborate on these deliverables and present the progress with respect to each of them.

More information about our project on BT can be found on our website:

<http://www.business-transfer.nl/index.php>