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<p>Lead organisations</p>		
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UNIT 5 - Professional development, networking & intercultural skills

Introduction

The faster and faster, more and more complex, digital and interconnected radical changes in markets have significantly transformed the variables that condition the competitiveness of companies.

In fact, production techniques, companies' logics of communication, marketing and purchasing, networks management methods, alliances and collaborations are changing. Finally, the balance of power between companies and those between businesses and consumers are also changing, with a considerable increase in the variability of consumption.

Therefore, in this changed and changing context, it is increasingly necessary for businesses to have suitable competences and a high degree of flexibility of workers to effectively respond to the changes taking place.

The Unit Professional development, networking & intercultural skills explains the key role of competences for business development in the current economic context, providing learners with an overview of the main skills needed by the labour market, of the applicable business training models, of the features and basics of business networking, as well as of intercultural communication.

At the end of the training course, learners will be able to:

- identify the one's main competence gaps and those of one's organization
- support management in the adoption of a people strategy aimed at developing workers' skills
- apply the main rules of business networking
- effectively communicate in intercultural contexts

THE KEY ROLE OF COMPETENCES FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The topic introduces the growing importance of the themes of professional development, business networking and intercultural skills by offering an excursus on the evolutions that have characterized companies and presents the learning organization, i.e. a company intended as having a distinctive skills set, as a reference model to face the challenges of the future. Particular attention is, therefore, paid to the concept of competence (know how to act) and its two constituent elements: knowledge (know that) and ability (know how).

SOFT SKILLS AND LIFELONG LEARNING AS KEY TO INNOVATION

The topic illustrates the conceptual differences between hard and soft skills, also providing an overview of the main categories of skills (personal efficacy skills; interpersonal and service skills; impact and influence skills; realization-oriented skills; cognitive skills), as well as of the ten soft skills of the future, namely:

- Cognitive flexibility
- Negotiation
- Service orientation
- Ability to judge and make decisions
- Emotional Intelligence
- Ability to coordinate with others
- People management
- Creativity
- Critical thinking



- Problem solving in complex contexts.

Finally, the topic illustrates the concept of lifelong learning and its importance for professional development.

HRD - Human Resources Development

The topic presents the main aspects of an effective people strategy, as well as the main phases, methodological approaches and tools to define a training course aimed at developing human resources skills, with particular attention to digital ones, which are increasingly crucial for business success. In this sense, there is a specific focus on the digital & creative readiness assessment process.

HOW DOES BUSINESS NETWORKING WORK?

The topic illustrates the characteristics, phases and techniques of business networking, highlighting the advantages that companies can derive from it in the current global competitive scenario, also in terms of openness to foreign markets, both through face-to-face and online activities.

CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The topic focuses on the main aspects of cross-cultural communication, including those related to non-verbal communication, and its main elements (place, time, topic, tone), offering practical advice on business etiquette rules to be respected in specific contexts, such as, for example, business lunches and dinners, as well as business netiquette. The final part of the topic is dedicated to negotiation in intercultural contexts, illustrating the phases and main techniques to be adopted in order to reach win-win agreements.

FINAL QUIZ - videogame

The video game is a formative graphic adventure in which, through a playful dynamic, the learner/player will take on a specific professional role and receive, as in a final test, an assessment of the learning achieved following the use of the entire training unit and related topics. More precisely, the learner/player will be able to take on the role of an Indian, Innovation Advisor dealing with an intercultural negotiation to purchase services from an Italian company during which the player will have to apply his/her negotiating skills as well as soft skills. During the game, the player will be able to choose between different dialogue options, interact with objects in the environment, resolve small puzzles and manage attitudes and postures that will change the narrative evolution of the game and will affect the player's final score, which can be compared to his/her degree of learning of the concepts expressed in the topics. Furthermore, it will be possible to access a "help" panel that will remind the player of the topic notions staged at that moment of the game and will also suggest in which topic to find them if he/she wants to further investigate the matter. The use of the aid will entail a penalty in the final evaluation phase. At the end of the game, the user will receive a "map of actions" which will show him/her, in relation to the principles of negotiation, in which parts of the game experience he/she has adopted behaviours in line with what he/she learned and when he/she has made mistakes, also illustrating what should have been the correct behaviour or the right action to take.

