

Interview with Román Knörr, president of Confebask

‘Everything we do to promote Vocational Training is scarce’

As President of Confebask, the Basque Business Confederation, Román Knörr vindicates the companies' role in the emerging and development of Vocational Training. He also remembers that Vocational Training 'is a very important active for the future development of our business and industrial activity and, in short, for the creation of employment and wealth'.



‘Confebask has always considered Vocational Training as a strategic element for our companies' competitiveness’

- The business world has been involved in the development of Basque Vocational Training throughout its history. Which features would you stand out about that long relationship?

- Actually, Vocational Training history has been very closely linked to business in the Basque Country. We must remember that the officers' and mastery schools emerged from the companies themselves. The big business groups had their own training schools, which gained great prestige and were, in his turn, the origin of many of the business initiatives emerged in those times. Afterwards, there was a second stage distinguished by the Ministry of Education's assumption of Vocational Training. Vocational Training lost its link to the business world and some of its social prestige, in some way. Fortunately, that distancing stage began to vanish when companies, precisely through Confebask and the Shared Vocational Training Programme, took care of bringing nearer both worlds again in the 90s. From that moment, the educational and production systems walked together again, with really good results. In brief, we may say that we must attribute to Basque companies the emergence and development of Vocational Training.

- Which was then the most delicate moment in the development of Vocational Training system?

- Maybe the most complicate moment was the stage following

the Vocational Training Law of the year 1970. Vocational Training became a kind of refuge for failure rates in school. While that people who gained a certain success in their studies were guided to University, those who did not reach that level were sent to Vocational Training. This made Vocational Training entered a rather dark and discredited time. Moreover, it has only started to recover from that during these recent years.

- At present, which is the importance Confebask confer To Vocational Training? In which actions is it concreted?

- Starting from the point that our organisation has always considered Vocational Training a strategic element for promoting our young people's training and employment and our companies' competitiveness, we have been working since the 90s for improving both its quality and its proximity to companies. This work has been represented in agreements with the Basque Government to develop projects, such as Shared Vocational Training first, and Training in Working Centres afterwards. Our confederation has taken part in the design of two plans for Vocational Training in the Basque Country, as well as in the constitution of the Basque Council on Vocational Training.

- Which is the balance you do of the system Training in the Work Place system? What has it meant and which is the satisfaction degree of businessmen?

- Actually, we must firmly say that the balance is very positive. We began with the practical training system in 1991 through the Shared Vocational Training programme. That experience, which was a kind of model, generalised so that all the Vocational Training students make a compulsory period of internship in companies at present. Confebask has carried out several surveys throughout all these years among the agents involved in this process and all of them have obtained very high assessments about the experience. In fact, the companies themselves, supported by the rest of the agents, asked for the extension of this system to generality. On the other hand, we have also seen throughout these years how the initiative became a very important employment factor for students. It was this way not only because they found work in about two months after finishing their internship, but also because many of them remained in the companies where they had made their internship.

- From the business point of view, what is the general idea we have about Basque Vocational Training and about the centres associated to Ikaşlan?

- Fortunately, through the last years, Vocational Training has recovered little by little, but in a very continuous and consistent way, the lost prestige. A prestige confirmed by the generalised recognition of its level and quality, and by the continuous growing of the Vocational Training students too. Ikaşlan has contributed for all that to be possible in a fundamental way, through the different Vocational Training centres, with its positive effort, together with the rest of people and entities involved in this issue.

- What do the Basque businessmen demand in this 21st century from the Vocational Training students?

- We are living a very important moment in a globalised and very competitive world. Therefore, we demand a sufficient adapta-

bility and, above all, polyvalence. The business world is submitted to permanent fluctuations and changes due to the market requirements themselves. In the future, we are only sure that the change will be faster and faster and more intense, which means that the management and production processes must be transformed continuously too. The companies' human resources are obliged to undertake processes of continued adequacy. Therefore, the companies demand a wide training base, as well as other aspects we are always talking about: the liking for a well-done work, the capacity to learn permanently, the sense of responsibility and of being capable of working in continuously improving processes,...

- What do you consider the main pending challenges?

- Very clearly, being a technological reference for small and medium companies, besides providing the human resources with the adequate training in quantity enough to answer the social and business demands, logically. In these times, we specially care about is promoting women's recruitment to industrial jobs, radically removing the cliché saying that professions are linked to gender in some way. Unfortunately, this cliché is still extended. This issue constitutes for our organisation a strategic aim to which we are devoting a great amount of our energy. We want to reinforce this notion and launch through the media a specific campaign, guided to remember everybody that the industrial branches of Vocational Training are also for women.

- In some occasion, Confebask has attracted attention about

‘Actually, the balance of the system Training in the Work Place is very positive’

the existence of employment needs that have not been attended due to the lack of professionals in specific specialties. Do you think that Vocational Training centres make a sufficient effort to attend those demands?

- There still are work posts demanded by the industrial sector that have not been covered due to the lack of adequate professionals. Nevertheless, I think that this fact cannot be attributed to Vocational Training centres, but to society in general, because it is the society who must face the cultural change needed to see Vocational Training as a quality and prestigious professional outcome increasingly.

- Which is the role of Vocational Training in the Basque Country future?

- The Basque Government, through its Educational Department, has realised that Vocational Training is a very important active for the future development of our business and industrial activity and, in short, for the creation of employment and wealth. We have achieved an intense collaboration between the Government and the business organisations, especially Confebask, to promote such an important element. I think that we must be satisfied with the collaboration degree because there is no doubt that the most important thing the companies have is the human capital, independent from other factors. Moreover, the best formed it is, the better conditions we will have to compete, especially in such a difficult and competitive environment as the one we have in view. All we do to promote Vocational Training is scarce.

Interview with Luis Miguel Ruiz Delgado, director Michelin (Lasarte)

‘In a company as ours, we consider it essential to promote Training in the Work Place’

About 700 Vocational Training students have made their internship in the Michelin factory of Lasarte during the two last decades. According to its director, Luis Miguel Ruiz Delgado, the close collaboration with Vocational Training centres 'shows a clearly positive balance'.

- Michelin has a long line of collaboration with several Vocational Training centres in order to make internships. Which global balance do you make about this experience with Training in the Work Place?

- The first agreements for collaborating were started in 1985. Since then to the present, about 700 students have stayed in our working centre. We consider essential this long line of collaboration for a company like Michelin, with a clearly positive balance. Our contribution to young people's training, recruiting them for our working activity, coming into a direct contact with our workers, knowing our organisation and our way of working, allows them to perceive the reality of a company, its working conditions, and professional needs. It is an exchange of viewpoints, which is interesting and useful for all.

- In general, how do you perceive young people's training?

- Undoubtedly, the academic training is faultless. We observe a permanent adaptation to educational innovations and technolo-

gical development. Generally, the students' training follows the evolution line of the companies and the jump they experienced when joining the working world is not very strong.

- Among those Vocational Training internship students, what percentage of them gets to join your staff afterwards?

- There is not a defined proportion among those attending training internships in our working centre, and those who join our company afterwards. We maintain the same level of internships regardless of being in times of more or less recruitment. We must take into account that we work with many students and we will not be able to absorb all of them. Our main objective is collaborating with the needs of our social and business environment.

- In this 21st century, what do companies such as Michelin demand from Vocational Training students? Besides the purely technical training, which other types of skills do you consider important?

- A strategic competitiveness factor is human resources management. The company must offer adequate answers to the staff's expectations, in terms of motivation, working interest, and development, as well as it has to respond to the challenges of competitiveness and added value creation. This permanent challenge requires people to gather a series of concrete characteristics, such as group work, work with a higher level of autonomy, and responsibility for the tasks, with a multi-functional

development (manufacture, quality, maintenance...) more and more diversified and enriched. In short, with the competences and skills typical of responsible organisations. Another important issue is the creation of a culture to sensitize about occupational risk prevention and to preserve the environment in the company. One of the aims of the educational system must be to instil these ideas from the Vocational Training centres. We know that the people in charge of the centres are taking steps in this sense.

- From the point of view of a company like yours, how do you perceive the general situation of Vocational Training in the Basque Country? Which do you consider the main pending challenges?

- Vocational Training is an upward trend in the Basque Country, although it has always had a special significance and a relevant

- Finally, is there any other aspect about the relationship between Mihelin-Lasarte and Vocational Training that you think could be interesting to comment?

- An important issue is the relationship existing between the people of both organisations, Vocational Training centres and the company. The nearness in management and the harmony to face the agreed activity is determining, both in the good results we have obtained with students and in the implementation of a continued improvement.

The main change that I would like to have in Vocational Training in Bizkaia would be to really get women to study on traditional industrial courses. I think that this is a process that cannot be stopped. Another problem is that we need to be able to help to make the working environment as favourable as possible for the inclusion of women.

'The academic training for internship students is faultless'



role in the development of industry and services. The Network of Integral Vocational Training Centres is its maximum exponent. Institutions, social agents, and other instances support and promote actions in favour of its growing and development. The fact of being a company present in many countries allows us to affirm that this is a singular and characteristic fact of the Basque Country. I would say that the most essential challenges is giving response to permanent changes and restructurings of the working market in a reactive way, to the new organising designs based on training, responsabilisation, and guided to the management by competence, as well as to the demands in the implementation of new technologies.

'One of the aims of the educational system must be to instil the culture of occupational risk prevention'

- What plans does your department have for the future of Vocational Training?

- Without needing to pay anyone any complements, the people in the Basque Government Department of Education who work in V.T. are people who are extremely committed to Vocational Training. The truth is that they have done a commendable job, when you see things from the outside. We are really keen to work together and we have had meetings with them to try and find areas where we can collaborate. The associations that work in the field of Vocational Training in Bizkaia unanimously agree that our funding must be used to buy equipment and incorporate new technologies in training centres.

Survey on company satisfaction with vocational training certificate holders

At the end of 2004, the centres that make up the Network of Integral Vocational Training Centres, and other centres that depend on the Vocational Training Direction, made a survey on the companies' satisfaction with Vocational Training graduates. This survey was made at the request of the Sub-Department of Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning and with the collaboration of the Basque Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training. We should stand out that this survey has been made by means of a wide sample, gathering companies from all the fields of good and service production, distributed through the length and breadth of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. The results are specified in the following sections: Survey Technical Record, conclusion and result graphics.



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SURVEY TECHNICAL DETAILS

- Geographic scope:
Autonomous Community of the Basque Country
- Interviewed companies: **864**
- Interviewed companies' size:
From 1 to 10 workers: **209 companies**
From 10 to 50 workers: **389 companies**
From 50 to 100 workers: **115 companies**
From 100 to 200 workers: **60 companies**
From 200 to 1,000 workers: **81 companies**
More than 1,000 workers: **10 companies**



CONCLUSIONS

This is the second survey made with a wide sample, very concise questions relating to key elements in the work made by Training Cycles graduates contracted by the companies, and gathering the opinion of companies from the whole Basque Country geography.

The number of companies in this sample is almost the same, although a hundred less companies of more than 50 workers and, on the other hand, a hundred more companies of less than 50 workers have been surveyed.

These are the most important conclusions extracted from this study by the Basque Agency for the Evaluation of Vocational Training Competence and Quality:

- The results confirm the good results the 2002 survey had already pointed out.
- The companies' general satisfaction with Vocational Training graduates remains almost the same.
- The results regarding the satisfaction with specific concepts remain the same as in 2002, between 7 and 8 of 10, presenting very slight variations in the measured parameters. The maximum variation is of 13 hundredths.
- The most relevant innovation can be observed in the percentage of interviewed companies that have contracted Vocational Training graduates. This percentage has increased from 90% in 2002 to 97% in 2004, which confirms a very high assessment of Vocational Training in the business field.
- The decision of contracting Vocational Training graduates remains in 97%. This means a very slight variation between medium-level and high-level graduates, even less than in 2002.
- Among all the measured parameters, the greatest companies' satisfaction is still produced in the graduates' attitude at work, which is located in an assessment of almost 8 of 10.
- Generally speaking, we can observe a better assessment of high-level graduates with regard to medium-level ones, as in 2002
- Just like the previous survey, the lowest result happens in the technical knowledge of medium-level: 6.68.

Vicational training Institutes gain the certification Investors in people in personnel management

Four years ago, the five centres now CERTIFIED (the Institutes Miguel Altuna of Bergara, Bidasoa of Irún, IMH of Elgoibar, Tolosaldea and Usurbil) decided to work in a project they called GUNEka. It was about learning from an advanced model in business management, known as mini-factories or mini-companies, which is much extended in Basque companies recognised due to their good management.



The ideas of collaboration, involvement, and 'auto-management' are the base of the project, which was regulated by the Department of Education Decree of 5th July 2001 (published in the Official Gazette of the Basque Country on 23rd July 2001) through which those centres were authorised to start this new experience.

Behind the concept of mini-schools in educational centres or mini-factories in companies, there is an important idea. Since the beginning of the new millennium, we have heard many voices of outstanding theorists, coming from very different scientific fields, announcing an important change in the paradigm, the end of an era and the emergence of another one, the passing from the industrial era to the knowledge era, or, as others prefer, the era of creativity and innovation.

All this reflection also points to a change in the type of teacher, the type of educational worker. The concept of teacher with knowledge is almost a thing of the past, that is, the idea of a teacher who acquires knowledge in his training stage, and then improves it with his experience, and 'applies' it in tasks previously designed by the educational administration or the centres' management teams.

Nevertheless, the concept of worker or teacher of the knowledge is being strengthened. A teacher who uses his knowledge, his intelligence to manage his work, to learn from his job and from the collaboration with other teachers, in order to innovate and improve the services he offers with the aim of obtaining better results.

The frontier between the concept of worker with knowledge and the worker of the knowledge is precisely established in terms of decision-making capability and auto-management, which is exercised over the work and its achievements and in the type of organisation that can make them possible.

Well, this is the base of the project of these centres; they are working trying to create an organising context that favours this responsibility and that capacity of management in the centre teams. This means focusing on people and helping them, confiding in our people and delegating.

Investors in people is an international standard on good practices that guides to people's professional training development in order to improve the results. It was developed in 1990 by the Occupational Training Service in collaboration with companies, and staff, professionals and employees organisations; such as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Trades Union Congress (TUC), or the Institute of Personnel and Development (IPD). It is available in 13 countries, but its implementation is very limited outside the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, more than 38% of the workers in the United Kingdom work in organisations implementing the IIP Standard.

The first contacts of our Sub-Department of Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning with organisations that were working with this standard in the United Kingdom go back to 2001. The assessment was positive and, in fact, it was thought to start some experience because it could be interesting. Afterwards, there were some more visits and, although the standard had not gained an important international projection yet, the Agency assumed this challenge and the aforementioned centres started in March 2003 working with this standard a.

The first step was to make a diagnosis about personnel management in the centres and to identify areas and improvement plans to develop in order to reach the level the standard required, to assess the advantages and disadvantages of using IIP as a reference in Vocational Training.

The key focus for IIP is paying attention to fix the organisation's aims clearly, to communicate them to people so that they can get involved in their achievement. It is about loo-

king for a balance between what the organisation NEEDS to do, what people are MOTIVATED to do, and what people CAN actually do regarding their competence. In this sense, the results and the optimal performance of the organisation depend on the results and the people's performance, whether they are optimal or not. In the end, this should be the aim achieved by the centre's systems and procedures.

The Investors in People standard provides a reference point based on four principles: Commitment with people's development in order to achieve the organisation's goals and objectives. Planning to classify which the organisation's goals and objectives are and what people must do to achieve them. Action to make people's development effectively in order to improve their performance and the organisation's performance too. Assessment about the impact of people's development in their performance and in the organisation's performance too.

We must stand out that the diagnosis made in the centres showed they were at a very acceptable level regarding the IIP indicators. The centres passed 2/3 of the indicators, while they need improvement in the rest. Again, we were able to verify that our centres work, and work well.

Furthermore, the experience was positive for the interviewed personnel (the diagnosis and the recently made IIP's audit itself are based on interviews with a wide sample of the personnel).

Therefore, the centres started to work in the second stage: the implementation of improvement plans.

During almost two years, the personnel in these five centres have been involved and have worked in a net-

work of four different improvement plans. The aim was to achieve the levels required by Investors in People, collaborating and supporting each other, and making an important effort.

At present, we can celebrate the results achieved in this work because the Institutes Miguel Altuna of Bergara, Bidasoa of Irún, IMH of Elgoibar, Tolosaldea, and Usurbil have recently passed the audit made by the British IIP UK organisation. Furthermore, they are the first organisations in Spain that have obtained this certificate.



Investors in people (IIP) has represented an opportunity to analyse the reality of this orientation towards people and to improve it.

Occupational Risk Prevention Year 2004-2005: first promotion in the Basque Country.

Present and future of the prevention training

The situation of the Occupational Risk Prevention Training was regulated by the Law 31/95, of 8th November, of Occupational Risk Prevention and by the Royal Decree 39/97, of 17th January, by which the Prevention Services Regulation was passed. The new legal conception proposed the need of an adequate training adjusted to the aims proclaimed by the rule. This Regulation determined the adequate abilities or aptitudes to develop that prevention and established the minimum training required for the performance of the suitable functions in the preventive activity, gathered in three levels: basic with 50 training hours, intermediate with 350 hours and advanced with 600 hours. This last level includes the preventive specialities and disciplines in Occupational Medicine, Occupational Safety, Industrial Hygiene, and Ergonomics and Applied Psychosociology. At that moment, the lacking of academic or professional qualification corresponding to the regulated training levels -except for those relating to the speciality of Occupational Medicine that appears in the aforementioned Royal Decree- took account to the transitory possibility of an alternative accreditation on the required training, until the appropriate authority on the education subject determines the corresponding qualifications. The Royal Decree 1161/2001, of 26th October 2001, established the degree of Advanced Technician in Occupational Risk Prevention and the corresponding minimum training. It was published in the BOE (Official State Gazette) of 21st November, where the Ministry of Education and Science establishes and regulates this Vocational Training degree and its regulation elements.

Even though several years have passed since the coming into effect of the Occupational Risk Prevention Law, there frequently are headlines about industrial accidents. In the same sense, varied articles and records with different accident rates by sectors and jobs are almost daily in the press, showing a worrying reality and the search for new responses.

During the academic year 2003-2004, The Vocational Training Direction of the Department of Education, University, and Research of the Basque Government promoted the starting of the Advanced Training Cycle in Occupational Risk Prevention in the Autonomous Community, among other training proposals and looking for adjusted educational offers. It was a response to the restructuring of the training on the subject of prevention promoted by the Royal Decree 1161/2001, which established the corresponding minimum training to perform the functions reserved to intermediate level Technicians, within this educational offer.

That desire, together with the different demands of the construction sector, among others, lead to make a small research to channel the possible potential demand and to adjust the educational offer. They proposed a centre per province, taking into account the singularity of each of the three territories.

1. A new Cycle of Vocational Training: ADVANCED TECHNICIAN in OCCUPATIONAL RISK PREVENTION

Two years later, the first promotion of Advanced Technicians in Occupational Risk Prevention will come from the three Vocational Training centres at the end of this academic year. This means a new step towards the spreading and awareness of the prevention culture, and the need of a contrast to reality after leaving the school and searching for the best occupational integration. At this moment, the students are doing the module corresponding to Training in the Workplace.

The Superior Degree Training Cycle in Occupational Risk Prevention is structured in eleven modules that are taught in 2,000 hours of classes distributed throughout two academic years.

In this sense, the cycle is made up of 10 modules deepening in subjects such as "prevention management", "risks derived from safety conditions", "physical and environmental risks", "chemical and biological risks", "prevention of risks derived from working organisation and load", "emergencies", "relationships at work", "working training and orientation", "technical language", or "quality and continued improvement".

In addition, this training offer is completed with "Training in the Workplace", a module of 400 hours as an internship period in the company.

Furthermore, we must remember that this academic restructuring means the elimination of the "Intermediate Technician in Occupational Risk Prevention" Degree, which state and private training centres authorised by the Administration was teaching and accrediting. Although it gives similar competencies, the new training module of "Advanced Degree in Occupational Risk Prevention" replaces the previous one, but it can hardly be equivalent to the former "intermediate level", neither the schedule - 350 training hours versus the present 2,000-, nor regarding the abilities they accredit, being the following:

1. Take part in the implementation and development of Occupational Risk Prevention policy in the company.
2. Carry out activities directed to promote the performance of the general and specific regulations of occupational risk prevention.
3. Carry out activities of information, training, and motivation directed to the company workers.
4. Put into practice the measures for identification and control of the specific and general risks affecting the production processes.
5. Always behave in a responsible way in the company, collaborating with the prevention services and with the competent bodies in risk prevention.

The Advanced Technician in Occupational Risk Prevention will be able to form part of a prevention service outside the company, of a joint service, or of a prevention service of their own

and independent from the production process, which will advise and control the actions that originate risks by proposing measures to eliminate, reduce, and avoid them.

Likewise, the Advanced Technician in Occupational Risk Prevention will be able to perform his functions as a worker designated by the entrepreneur in order to be in charge of protection and occupational risk prevention activities of the company and its premises.

2. An experience in each territory 3 centres:

EASO Polytechnic Vocational Training School, Construction Secondary School of Vitoria and Construction Secondary School of Bizkaia

2.1 EASO POLYTECHNIC VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL

During the year 2002-2003, the centre revised and planned a more flexible and innovative educational offer that expanded the pre-existing offer to other fields. One of the important working aims was to complete and give a higher reversibility to other degrees the centre had. Another was to optimise their own resources in the teaching staff of different departments: mechanics, occupational training and orientation, or environmental chemistry, among others; and/or adapt and re-adequate spaces or workshops of other professional families of the centre, such as the physics and chemistry lab or electricity or wood workshops to be able to make prevention practices.

Two teachers of the centre activated the cycle since the beginning. During the preparation months, they undertook the Advanced Technician in Prevention Training of 600 hours, on one hand, and the intermediate training of 350, on the other. Both of them made a course on Prevention Audit of 30 hours.

The first year the EASO VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL put into practice this bilingual educational offer, the Spanish group was completed with 20 students, and 15 registrations were formalised in the Basque group.

At present, year 2004-2005, there are 19 students in the first year in the Spanish group and 15 in the Basque one.

2.2 CONSTRUCTION SECONDARY SCHOOL OF VITORIA-GASTEIZ

We must stand out the big demand that exists in this sector from two different points of view:

- The number of students registered in the first year were 37 (two groups of 19 and 18 people) and in the second year, 34 (two groups of 18 and 16 people). This the training cycle has the highest registration rate in the Vitoria-Gasteiz Construction Secondary School and it is the only one with two groups each year.

- The great success of our students in Training in the Workplace. This year, we had many doubts about these graduates' success in the labour market and, despite the high number of students who had gone to Training in the Workplace (27), we have not been able to cover the demand and some companies did not receive any student.

Finally, we should indicate that about a 70% of the students in the Advanced Training Cycle in Occupational Risk Prevention are women.

2.2 CONSTRUCTION SECONDARY SCHOOL OF BIZKAIA

At our school, we teach training cycles of intermediate and advanced degree, belonging to the Professional Family of Construction and Civil Work. Moreover, just like in the other two centres EASO POLYTECHNIC VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL and VITORIA CONSTRUCTION SECONDARY SCHOOL, the advanced cycle in Occupational Risk Prevention, belonging to the Professional Family of Maintenance and Production Services, was started in the year 2003-2004.

This cycle has created new working expectations and, despite being so recent, we had 19 students registered last year. Nevertheless, throughout that year, different circumstances made that in this year 2004-2005 there were nine students registered in the second year. With regard to newly registered students, they have been 25 in this academic year 2004-2005. Since March, our students of second year are attending the module Training in the Workplace and, up to now, both students and companies share the satisfaction.

For the next year 2005-2006, besides the A model (teaching in Spanish with Basque as a subject), we offer this cycle in Occupational Risk Prevention in D model (teaching in Basque with Spanish as a subject), and we hope to open the cycle in Basque, because a 60% of our present students have done their studies in this language.

3. Occupational integration and good practices

The occupational integration of these new professionals constitutes the next challenge. At these first moments, the fields and challenges go from the increasing demand of the Prevention Services from Outside Sources to the need to strengthen and reinforce their own Prevention Service in companies with more than 500 workers.

A 70 % of the companies collaborating with students' Training in the Workplace are devoted to prevention services from Outside Sources, since it is difficult for the students to attend internships directly in the companies because of the productive structure nature itself, made almost completely of small and medium-sized companies, which hardly have their own prevention service.

However, nowadays, it is difficult for the companies that an employee could access this training level due to the 2,000 hours duration of this degree.

Until the coming into effect of the new regulations, the small and medium-sized companies chose to send personnel from their own staff to attend the former "intermediate level" course. This meant a cost and time of absence from the job post that they could still assume.

4. New challenges

Nevertheless, above all, the consolidation of a prevention culture has to come not only from the effort made in the centre training, but also from the combination of political, economical and social instruments. The legislation, its development and performance, on one hand, the supervision and control of the Labour Authority, on the other, and the company's leadership must join the social dialogue and the all the agents' collaboration, together with the assertive and critical participation of the workers.

We must combine efforts so that the prevention professional can identify and determine the working lines and strategies.

The need to integrate prevention in all the company's activities and in all the hierarchical levels is essential in order that the entrepreneur can guarantee a response to the obligation that belongs to him by law: the obligation to guarantee his workers' safety and health.

The productive structure is subject to constant changes that make the focus on prevention to be, likewise, in a constant revision and adaptation process. The centres must be in harmony with each other. Definitely, the introduction of new technologies and new ways of working determine new knowledge models in organisations that learn they give rise to innovations in the management models: mini-companies management, competence management, personnel management-investors in people-, among others. Since the tertiarisation of the economy, the search for new markets or the immigration and globalisation phenomena are issues that affect and modify prevention fields.