
Interview of Dmitry Fomenko, Deputy CEO and Director of the Function for the Organizational Affairs

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We must attract new human resources or train those we already employ so that Naftna industrija Srbije (NIS) could be competitive at the global level and use modern technologies. We will increase the scope of investments and once all the organizational issues have been settled, the company will grow by investing in education. We are focused on young people coming to NIS which means that we cooperate with universities and that we invest a lot in bringing young people to NIS; however, we do not neglect the education of existing employees and provide on-the-job training. Only in the last year almost 1.300 employees did complete the training process – says Dmitry Fomenko, Deputy CEO of NIS j.s.c. Novi Sad and Director of Organizational Affairs Function.

What benefits do changes in this sector bring?

Twenty years ago, the business operations of exploration and production of oil required only 17% university graduated staff. Today, this percent is 40, and it is presumed that in 2020 this percent will be 60. This applies to all big companies wishing to be on the top. I don't have the data for refineries, but they also need more and more educated staff.

If we compare refineries in Russia and Serbia, young university graduates in Russia start their work in refineries as common to work as blue collar workers, which is not the case in Serbia.

What do NIS employment programs include?

Educational program is divided in two parts. Degrees, certificates, licenses are mandatory. An electrician must hold a degree as well as certificates which must be renewed after a certain period of time. This is the case with all big companies. Educational development may be technical and managerial. At this moment we are committed to developing managerial skills rather than technical. The reason for this is that we often employ good engineers without managerial skills and competencies, and this is not enough for work in the Company. If an engineer apart from technical skills and competencies possesses also managerial skills and experience, it is a right thing. These include physical fitness patterns, leadership, organizational capabilities... One must have managerial skills and competencies required for higher positions in NIS if he/she wants to advance.

Do you have any new plans?

We have initiated a big educational project in the area of exploration and production, the segment which represents the engine of our development. We negotiate with the University Heriot Watt in Scotland which is one of the best university offering MBA programs to our geologists. We have agreed with Gazprom Neft to provide training for our employees: six of them have already left and we are in negotiations for four of them. They will take over three young geologists and soon 20 of them. It is important that NIS people work abroad and gain new experience, see how other companies operate because they have had no opportunity for

that in the past. If we want to bring our company to the top at the global level we must employ broad-minded people. Employees must feel that they are a part of a big company and they must not be kept under a glass bell. The company's expansion in the region will bring rotation educational programs among daughter companies in Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Will educational programs be conducted both in Serbia and abroad?

Yes. It is not one program but big project consisting of many small projects.

We are mostly committed to the sector of oil and gas exploration and production since it is the initiator of development of all companies with respect to nowadays prices. In parallel with these activities we are constructing a big training centre for retail sales which functions well when personnel are trained with respect to compliance with standards. They will attend the same courses and renew their knowledge. We will have to centres by the end of the year – one in the north and the other in the south of Serbia. In the refinery we conduct the program for training employees for specialist operations, so that they could switch from one plant to another without a problem. We also negotiate with the Technical School in Zrenjanin where our employees could attend short retraining sessions. There are lots of projects which are in the negotiation or initiation phase. Owing to the cooperation with the Centre for Young Talents we have the access to the database of best students in Serbia and we want to attract the most talented ones to whom we open the doors of both Gazprom Neft and Gazprom.

What is your cooperation with universities?

We spend lots of money on those who will come to the Company. Unfortunately, the popularity of technical sciences is low and this is the problem of the state. Serbia produces lots of economists, lawyers, hoteliers and our company needs engineers. There are lots of talented children who attend faculties of social sciences, but the question is whether Serbia needs such human resources. We are in lack of good geologists and we are ready to employ a great number of them. We sponsor Olympic Games in math, physics and Russian language because we want to direct good students to the Faculty of Mining and Geology, Mathematics, Electrical Engineering and to tell them that there will always be enough work for them in NIS, which opens the door for working in the region, abroad and for further advancement. Next year we will support the Olympic Games in chemistry. Serbs are used to working abroad, but we plan to send them there and get them back, to pay tax in Serbia.

You pay special attention to the programs of the Faculty of Mining and Geology.

The faculty has good but general plans. We need specialist skills and competencies. That is why we negotiate with the state, universities, faculties to introduce several programs delivered at the University Gupkin, Oil University in Moscow. We hope that the trainings based on these programs will start in autumn this year. We want that new employees add value to our company.

By cooperating with universities we intend to ensure sufficient number of trained personnel who will make immediate contributions to the company. The slogan of the cooperation with the universities is "Energy of Knowledge".

What is your cooperation with the parent company, Gazprom Neft like?

At this moment Gazprom Neft gives more to NIS than it gets from NIS but this will be balanced soon. NIS is interesting for Gazprom Neft because it offers work abroad which it misses, and

Serbia is not 100% abroad and it is good for getting used to order in foreign countries. We prepare the opening of the Russian School because we don't want the children of employees to continue with education when their parents go to work in Russia. It is a part of social responsibility, but if we don't provide this we will find it difficult to persuade our employees to work abroad.

Source;NIS