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IT workforce roadmap to get the sector working

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A project to turn Vietnam into an information and communication technology powerhouse, launched by Vietnamese government, means the nation will need at least one million skilled IT workers by 2020.

Ngo Van Toan, vice president of Global CyberSoft Vietnam, said that local software companies faced an acute shortage of human resources and this problem caused negative impacts on software development and outsourcing contracts.

Poor quality human resources and a humble number of graduates in IT or related fields failing to meet businesses' requirements were a big problem, he said.



"Now, the rate of recruitment in some companies is below 10 per cent or even under 5 per cent," said Toan.

According to a Renesas Vietnam's recruitment report from 2008 to January 2011, the number of final qualified candidates were very low, 13 per cent in software technical test, 17 per cent in hardware and 15 per cent in English tests.

A Renesas leader revealed that its R&D centre's labour demand in a few coming years was at least 1,000 skilled workers.

The foreign software producer GHP Far East, which last week opened a new subsidiary office in the Mekong Delta's Can Tho city, plans to boost the number of its employees to more than 700.

In particular, it said it needed around 20 software developers and IT specialists, 20 language assistants and project managers and about 100 operators.

Meanwhile, HP which has recently received investment certificate for its software research and development centre in the Quang Trung Software City (QTSC) announced that it could expand the centre by up to 2,000 employees after 2012, depending on the ability of Vietnam to satisfy the centre's future growth.

Totally, a million IT workers are expected by 2020 to develop Vietnam's IT industry, said general secretary of the Ho Chi Minh City Computer Association Pham Thien Nghe.

To address Vietnam's shortage of skilled IT workers, Toan had some advice.

He said: "Vietnam needs a long-term strategy and consistent policy which must be carried out concurrently to deal with two issues. Firstly, training programmes must provide harmony among advanced theories and practices and technology trends. Universities and colleges should tighten the cooperation with industrial experts."

In addition to that, the solution might come from the model of a training organisation based on

intensively and efficiently leveraging the community of Vietnamese expatriates, both professors and experts.

Secondly, software programmers should map out their own education and training programmes and actively provide training courses for their staff because they cannot expect new graduates to well undertake their jobs immediately, said Toan.

“Universities are not enough for all students, we might need more vocational training schools,” said Frank Schellenberg, CEO of GHP Far East.

Schellenberg also said that improving language skills of Vietnamese IT workers was equally important. “Vietnamese IT engineers should enhance using English as their second language as well as their counterparts in the Philippines, India and Singapore,” he said

Currently, QTSC which is the first concentrated software park in Vietnam with 102 software companies, has attracted education and training institutions such as Hoa Sen University, FPT University, Ho Chi Minh City Information Technology Training Centre, SK Telecom IT Centre and Saigon Tech to take part in the park. These institutions’ training capacity has increased by six times compared to 2005’s, according to QTSC director Nguyen Duc Hien.

Investors in QTSC have operated more than 50,000 square metres of facilities for research, training and incubation.

The Ho Chi Minh City Institute for Computational Science and Technology has been underway of construction on an area of 7,100sqm, which will create an effective association between universities, research and technology transfer institutes, software business incubating centres and the community of experts and software businesses in the future. Also, the Quang Trung Academy of Technology project will be taking shape in the coming time.

Ngo Duc Chi, general director of Global CyberSoft Vietnam and member of the Quang Trung Academy of Technology, said that the project would offer direct training from foreign professors and experts as well as online training.

Evaluation criteria	Value
Revenue/person/year	\$13,500
Added value/person/year	\$7,500
Labourers with university degree upwards	62 per cent
Labourers with at least two years' experience	69 per cent
ICOR	2 per cent
Revenue growth rate	134.6 per cent