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Performance Management and Innovative Human Resource Training through Flexible Production Systems aimed at Enhancing Competitiveness of SMEs

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Abstract: In the current knowledge economy companies need to develop competitive advantages based on an adequate and intensive use of innovation processes and ICT that are becoming essential elements of business success in today's European market. The purpose of this article is to introduce and discuss the benefits of on-line training on automation and innovation fields and try to explain their organizational impact on small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). Besides, it tries to understand what are the main barriers for SMEs with respect to the realisation of their innovative potential and their capacity to improve internal processes by ICT adoption and organizational change. They are becoming particularly important for achieving greater productivity, lower operational costs, and higher revenues (usually characterized by reduced access to external finance, unavailability of wider distribution channels, low internationalization, etc.). The goal of the article is also to synthesize the experience done and the benefits of e-learning and of a specific professional environment in the training process. The described project provides training contents to enhance participants' background and some innovative simulations to improve effectively the specialised knowledge of employees on industrial automation systems.