

THE PRACTICAL HANDBOOK FOR WBL MENTORS

WBL

ACCELERATOR



THE PRACTICAL
HANDBOOK
MAGAZINE
ABOUT SUCCESSFUL
WORK-BASED
LEARNING
STRATEGIES IN EURO-
PEAN COMPANIES.

BEST PRACTICES

HANDS-ON MATERIALS

CASE STUDIES

FURTHER RESOURCES

**DEFINING THE
ROLE AND TASKS
OF WBL MENTORS**

PLANNING, MONITORING AND
RECOGNITION OF WORK-BASED
LEARNING

**YOUTH CULTURE &
COMMUNICATION**

Find more information and practical learning materials for your everyday routine at wblaccelerator.eu/mentor-training or here ►►►



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Project coordinator: Verein Auxilium, Geidorfplatz 2, 8010 Graz, Austria

Layout and Design: Carina Maas, Verein Auxilium

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CONTENTS

Induction of Management and Mentors

What is WBL? (in progress)	
Company's Role in WBL (in progress)	
Comparing Apples to Oranges — A Dilemma?	3
Impress With Your Professional Jargon	7
Comparability for Your Pleasure	11
Is WBL the Recipe for Best VET Practice?	15

Planning, Monitoring, and Recognising WBL

Planning In-Company Training	19
Rocket Man: The Modern WBL Mentor	23
Securing Employees Beyond the Horizon	27
Recognition ensures Quality Recruitment	31

Role and Tasks of WBL Mentors

Daily Life of WBL Mentors (in progress)	
What Does It Take to Be A WBL Mentor?	35
Pedagogical Options For WBL in Companies	39
Mentoring/Counselling Sessions (in progress)	
Core Tasks of WBL Mentors	43

Youth Culture and Communiation

Humanizing Companies	47
Motivating the New Generation Employee	51
Interpersonal Communication (in progress)	
Communication using digital tools (in progress)	
Are You Ready For Generation Alpha?	55
Global Youth Initiative by Nestlé	59

Infographic?

WHY DOES THIS MAGAZINE EXIST AND WHAT IS INSIDE ?

A short introduction to the WBL Accelerator project and the contents & structure of the magazine. Short overview and introduction of partners.

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FIND MORE INFORMATION

- > WWW.WBLACCELERATOR.EU
- > [KEY EU LINKS](#)
- > [ETC](#)

***“COMPARING
CERTIFICATES OR
DIPLOMAS FROM
APPLICANTS IN A
COMPANY IS LIKE
COMPARING APP-
LES TO ORANGES.
WITHOUT ANY
EXTERNAL COMMON
REFERENCE THIS
WILL BE LIKE
THROWING DICE.”***

*Georg Müllner, PhD,
Senior lecturer , 2019*

COMPARING APPLES TO ORANGES – A DILEMMA?

Understanding competences of applicants can be a challenge as you can hardly compare their certificates and diplomas. Find out how to access the information you need!



Imagine you are trying to cover a job vacancy for an administrative staff in your company. From the job description you probably have, you have defined key qualifications or competences needed which are crucial to fulfil this job. At the same time you are defining a certain degree of independent work ability with more or less supervision required from colleagues or direct line managers.

The same challenge approaches when your task is to provide internships or any other kind of work based learning for e.g. apprentices, VET students and you should try to estimate the competences and degree of independent work ability they are bringing with them.

**THE ONLY SOLUTION
TO COMPARE THE
INCOMPARABLE IS TO
DEFINE A MUTUALLY
AGREED EXTERNAL
REFERENCE POINT.**

All this is, however, still fairly easy if the job applicants or potential VET students with need of practical training are coming from your country since they are trained and equipped with competences from your education and training system. It will be quite difficult if you are requiring e.g. excellent knowledge in bookkeeping and your applicant approaches with a certificate with a mark 6 in the field of administration and bookkeeping from a different country.

What can you expect from a person with a mark 6 in bookkeeping and administration? How much supervision would he/she need? Is a bookkeeper with a mark 6 from e.g. the UK a better bookkeeper than a person with a mark 2 from Germany? Both are trained in different education systems, have had different priorities and are tested and certified upon different rules and approaches. This is the challenge of comparing apples with oranges.

Of course to solve this problem mostly larger companies are applying the tool of an assessment centre where they are simply testing the potential applicants and their competences against the challenges of their

company and the future work tasks in the job. However, especially for smaller companies (SMEs) it is nearly impossible to plan and organise such assessment centres out of time and cost reasons. You would probably need different and easy instruments to allow the comparison between apples and oranges.

The only solution to compare the incomparable is to define a mutually agreed external reference point. If we know what a mark 6 in one country says in a scale of e.g. 1-10 (1 being bad and 10 being good) and what a mark 2 in another country says on the same external reference scale – voilà, here we are with the comparison.

For the past 15 years, the European Union and its member states have been working on the development of such mutually agreed reference scales for competences, qualifications and also the estimation of degree of independent work ability.

You are now in the lucky position to freely use and benefit from these 4 European transparency instruments to solve your challenges of finding the best applicant for what job, placement, apprenticeship, internship etc. you are offering. For your daily work as WBL responsible person or HR staff in your company we have defined four crucial ques-

tions / challenges where transparency tools are ready to use and help (see on the next page).

By applying these instruments (EQF, ECVET, CERFL and Europass) you have four powerful instruments that allow you to compare “apples to oranges”. There are many advantages connected to these tools e.g. they are free to use, they are well tested and developed including all materials needed and they are the same in all European countries.



SUCCESSFUL AND TRANSPARENT
VALIDATION OF QUALIFICATIONS
IS KEY TO MANAGING EMPLOYEES

*Author: Georg Müllner,
PhD. Auxilium, Austria*



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4 KEY QUESTIONS

***"ALWAYS STAY
UP-TO-DATE WITH
BUSINESS JARGON,
BECAUSE
IF YOU SPEAK
PROFESSIONALLY,
YOU SOUND COMPE-
TENT AND SMART
IMMEDIATELY."***

*Carina Maas,
Project Manager, 2019*

IMPRESS WITH YOUR PROFESSIONAL JARGON

Show-off your expertise with professional language and impress co-workers and superiors with state-of-the-art vocabulary used across Europe and beyond.



EQF, CEFR, ECVET and Learning Outcomes...? Talent Management, Know-mads and FOBO? What does that mean? It is almost like learning another language! Is it really worth it? Why should anyone remember these acronyms and terms? And does anybody use them, really?

The answer is quite easy: Yes, it is worth it and yes, professionals really use these phrases. And they have many reasons to do so!

While at first encounter, some of the terms may seem new and complicated, they contribute to a clear communication among various parties that probably do not share the same language in other areas. This applies to educational bodies such as vocational education and training centres as well as

international business partners.

For example, if your company is offering work-based learning, your trainees probably arrive in your company with a certificate of their vocational centre that states a certain amount of ECVET credits points, an EQF level and verbal learning outcomes. Since this is mandatory procedure of VET centres all across the European Union, you can expect this to be valid in all member states.

As the person responsible for the work-based learning processes in your company it is up to you to put these terms into context. But what do they mean to you and your work?

In a nutshell, the ECVET credits provide you with information on how much time your trainee invested in learning their craft and the learning outcomes summarise what kind of knowledge and skills your trainee is able to do after finishing their training. The EQF level indicates how much autonomy and responsibility you can expect from your trainee based on their competences.

The handy benefit is that these terms stay...

BE AWARE OF THE
MEANING OF MODERN
BUZZWORDS – SUPERFI-
CIAL SEMI-KNOWLEDGE
CAN BE DANGEROUS.

constant in their meaning across Europe. So even if the scope and quality of vocational trainings may differ, you have these transparency terms that help you encode the educational jargon.

It may take some effort to memorise these buzzwords and their meaning, but in the long run you can save hours using these transparency terms. No more long and complicated explanations, because these transparency terms could be the shortcuts you need in your everyday routines. If you know the meaning, you can immediately put actions in motion that are on point and efficient.

Apart from these EU relevant terms, there are a myriad of other modern buzzwords, which are used all the time, but not always understood in the same way. For example: What is the difference between Millennials and Generation Z? How would you describe talent and how would you implement talent management in your company? What is knowledge management and is it related to Knowmads?

If you are already up-to-date: Congratulations! But be aware of the true meaning of these buzzwords – superficial semi-knowledge may be dangerous. Be sure you understand what you are talking about and what others want to say or you might create

more misunderstandings than before. Realistically, you will come across these terms sooner or later and their use will probably increase in the future. So, now is your time: get a head start and inform yourself!

It pays off to be confident using these terms and putting them into practice. Use them with co-workers and superiors – or with your trainees! It is not only about sounding smart, but also about understanding those around you. From professional jargon to the simplified and yet complex languages of millennials – know your buzzwords and be on top of everything.



Find all EU relevant terms, phrases and acronyms collected in the WBL Accelerator Glossary and benefit from the additional information provided.

Carina Maas
Verein Auxilium, Austria



**MORE INFORMATION
◀ HERE AND AT
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VET

Vocational **E**ducation
and **T**raining

ECVET

European Credits for
Vocational **E**ducation and
Training

FOBO

Fear **O**f
Better **O**ption

CEFR

Common **E**uropean
Framework of **R**eference
for Languages

THIS PAGE IS JUST A DRAFT.

**“FOR OVER
A DECADE, [...] HAS BEEN A KEY
TOOL TO SUPPORT
BETTER
COMMUNICATION
AND
UNDERSTANDING
OF SKILLS AND
QUALIFICATIONS.”**

*Marianne Thyssen,
European Commissioner responsible for
Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and
Labour Mobility, 2016*

COMPARABILITY FOR YOUR PLEASURE

Granted, managing job applications is not a pleasure for everyone. However, use this tool to your advantage and make your life easier! Can you guess what it is?



This tool is especially helpful when you are dealing with foreign job applications and consequently foreign qualifications, as it gives you comparable information about relevant details of your applicant's professional journey. If you are dealing with an applicant within your country, this tool is suitable when you are looking for hard facts you can easily compare. Do not expect a lot of creative design options, though! Your applicants use a standardised template and only the information sets the individuals apart. But do not worry, this is only to your advantage as you will find the same information in the same place – always.

Another crucial part of this tool is that it uses distinct codes to capture complex information that you can assess at a glance.

YOUR ADVANTAGE IS THAT YOU WILL FIND THE SAME INFORMATION IN THE SAME PLACE – ALWAYS.

These codes are easily comparable and transferable across EU borders and beyond! You may find it irritating at the beginning to learn the codes, but it is much easier than you would expect! Once you get the hang of it, you can assess the scope of training that your applicant has accomplished, the level of professional responsibility that can be expected, and the level of command of any language in the areas of reading, speaking and understanding. And yes, there is a difference and it depends on your requirements which areas are most important to the job.

Furthermore, this tool saves you from false expectations! As you may already know, education systems in Europe are quite different and you can probably not expect all graduates of a certain field of vocational education and training to have the same qualifications when they have gone through the training in different countries.

Qualifications are compiled from their knowledge, skills and competences of a certain field and as the trainings differ, so does the realistic expectation of job performance depending on the country of an applicant.

This is mostly related to different requirements in the countries. But there is a solution in place to help you understand what you can expect and it is called certificate supplements. These supplements are mandatory part of VET certificates in the EU and they state exactly what you can expect from a graduate of a certain vocational sector. By the way, this also exists for university diplomas.

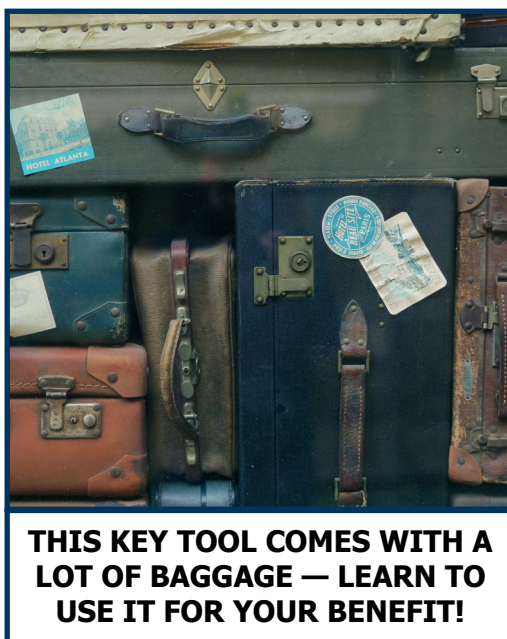
One more benefit this tool brings to your table is an aid to meaningless statements concerning periods spent abroad. Given that every trip abroad provides people with valuable experiences, this is especially true for stays abroad with a professional focus of an internship or similar. The tool described in this article offers a standardised certificate issued by an involved company and lists all necessary information about location, timeframe, acquired skills, knowledge and competences as well as involved parties of a professional mobility stay.

Last clue: This tool exists since 2005 and its scope has been expanded in functions since then. One of the functions is creating a standardised CV and this has been done more than a 130 million times since it started! That is a lot of CVs to compare... Luckily, there is another feature only for

employers and it is called interoperability. This lets you transform all CVs in a handy spreadsheet, where you can easily compare information. This could be useful for managing the qualifications and further training needs of you current employees, too.

Did you guess it? The tool described was: the Europass by CEDEFOP—the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training! Did you know all these benefits?

Learn more using the links below and start making your life easier – the pleasure will come as side effect!



Author: Carina Maas Auxilium, Austria.



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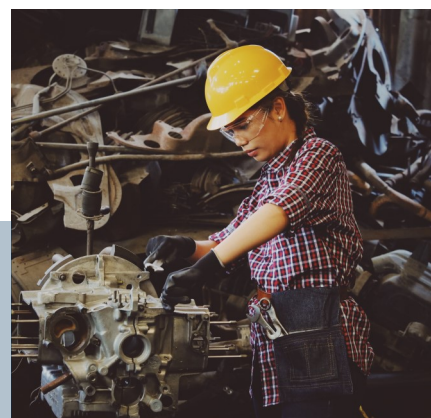
Europass Template

***"IT'S GETTING
HARDER AND
HARDER TO GET
THE RIGHT STAFF.
HOWEVER,
IN APPRENTICESHIP,
YOU HAVE
THE STAFF
IN YOUR HANDS."***

*Mitja Gregorič, MLINOSTROJ,
company for the construction
of technological facilities, 2018*

IS WBL THE RECIPE FOR BEST VET PRACTICE?

Hands-on practice shows promise that it can help increase students' workplace competencies and benefit employers, who gain more qualified employees.



There is not just one straight answer or a good example. It depends on countries' school systems and companies' policies.

Internship, externship, job shadowing, practicum, (basic) training, tutelage, traineeship, studentship, probationary period, trial/test period, indentureship, apprenticeship, WBL, etc. – so many synonyms and so many ways to implement them.

All research, analysis, and interviews from the companies say the same. Young people are coming to companies with too little skills and, consequently, it is very difficult to introduce them to the work process. As a result, we have dissatisfaction on both sides, on the side of the employers, because the new employees do not show them the re-

sults and skills that they expected, and on the other hand, the employees who are often too desperate and unsatisfied, so they start looking for a job elsewhere.

The top characteristics today's employers are looking for in candidates include listening skills, attention to detail and attentiveness, effective communication, critical thinking, interpersonal skills, and active learning. However, a lot of employers say it is very or somewhat difficult finding qualified candidates, and they also say schools have not properly prepared students for jobs. Students agree with that. For them finding a job is more difficult compared to their parents' generation. They believe their education has not adequately prepared them for the workplace.

For this reason, the companies must connect with the schools and give the young ones the opportunity to get experience directly in the companies, where they can learn from the best ones.

That is one of the important tasks of every business entity. Providing students the opportunity to practice is just one of the ways the companies can make a contribution.

EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR CANDIDATES CHARACTERISED BY EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION, CRITICAL THINKING, INTERPERSONAL SKILLS AND ACTIVE LEARNING.

Perhaps it is time to stop looking at this as just an act of goodwill, and rather accept it as opportunity if wanting to have qualified staff.

The other part of the reason for dissatisfaction is the generational gap which is becoming an increasingly serious problem for companies lately. It is very important that the companies adapt their business policies to the generations that are joining the labour market. These are young people who have grown up on significantly different concepts.

In order to acknowledge them, we need to understand them first. The mentoring program provides the opportunity for more experienced team members to encounter the generation of late Millennials, and partly the Generation Y, in a business setting. Having people with a new, fresh mindset at your disposal is important for companies.

WBL programs and apprenticeships often serve as a workforce pipeline for companies. Employers participating in WBL programs can train students and then hire them upon graduation. Work-based learning's hands-on practice shows promise that it can help increase students' workplace competencies and benefit employers, who gain more qualified employees.

But how to convince students to come to their companies for practice?

The answer is by connecting with the schools and promoting. With a good promotion, there will come student's applications.

But it is also important to have in mind that choosing the right student is just half of the job. It is also very important to give students the best mentors who will guide them through the learning process from the beginning to the end. To get a fully qualified worker, you need to put a lot of effort into it, but in the end, it will be worth the effort.



IMAGE CAPTURE TEXT

*Author: Petra Sternad,
CCIS, Slovenia*



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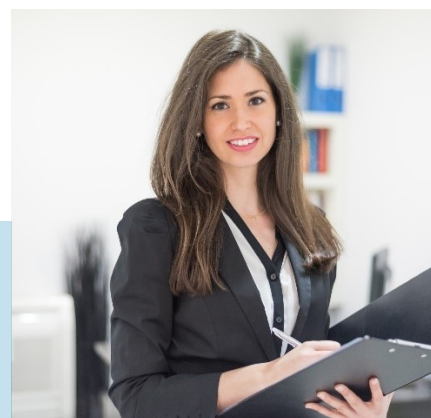
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***"THE IN-COMPANY
TRAINING PLAN
HELPS BOTH
OUR TRAINEES
AND THEIR
TRAINERS & MENTORS
NOT TO LOSE SIGHT
OF THE QUALITY
OF VOCATIONAL
TRAINING
IN THE WORKPLACE."***

*Heike Bähre,
Certified trainer at the German Chamber
of Trade and Commerce, 2019*

PLANNING IN-COMPANY TRAINING

Apprenticeship programmes are an instrument for successful employee recruitment, career planning and personnel development in the company. An example from Germany.



Dual vocational training is one of the export successes in the internationalisation of German companies - not only in Europe, but now worldwide.

On the basis of the Apprenticeship Regulations, there are standardised apprenticeship framework plans for the individual occupations in Germany which, according to § 5 Para. 1 No. 4 BBiG, represent "instructions on the objective and temporal structuring of the teaching of vocational skills, knowledge and abilities". Companies in Germany draw up an in-company training plan structured on this "apprenticeship framework plan" and based on work and business processes typical of the occupation. Upon this framework, an individualised apprenticeship plan is

drawn up for each trainee. See how this works in the following case study:

Jessica Bianco* from Italy (* name changed) has successfully completed her studies in German and English at the University of Genoa, Italy and would like to gain professional experience abroad. Through an internet search via recruitment portals she learns that a large hostel chain in Germany offers various positions and is subsequently invited by the house manager of the hostel in Leipzig for an interview. There she is offered a two-year vocational training as a hotel manager; a combination of work-based learning in a hostel/hotel and attending a local vocational school. The house manager explains that in this way, after her academic training, she can now attach a commercial training to her qualifications. Although this vocational training is formally subordinate to the academic training she previously completed, she would be well prepared to take on management positions at the hostel shortly after completing the training as a skilled worker. Jessica learns that normally she would complete three years of vocational training, but due to her school and aca-

TYPICAL WORK AND BUSINESS PROCESSES ARE THE BASIS OF PLANNING APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE WORKPLACE.

ademic expertise she can complete the training in two years. The house manager explains to her that she will spend three days a week in a hostel and two days at a vocational school. The apprentice allowance would be higher for her compared to apprentices who join the company immediately after finishing school.

This extra-tariff bonus would mean that she would receive a higher apprentice allowance and would also be able to attend trainee management seminars in addition to her apprentice training.

Jessica quizzes the house manager on the apprenticeship scheme:

- ▶ What will her individual apprentice plan be based on? Does she have a say in this?
- ▶ Is there another contact person for her, a mentor, for her vocational training in the hostel?
- ▶ How does her individual training plan interfere with the training planning system of her fellow trainees?
- ▶ Can she gain experience in other European countries during her training?



WBL Mentor and trainee are discussing the apprentice plan.

In the meantime, Jessica has now completed her apprenticeship and was delegated to a new hostel opening in a large Italian city, where she took over the house management after a short training period of only 3 months. As well as this, she has also begun to pass on her experiences from Germany to

the local vocational schools and vocational training partners in Italy and assists in developing the dual vocational training system for partners in the region.

*Author: Heike Bähre,
Fachhochschule des Mittelstandes (FHM), Germany*

References:

Dickemann-Weber, B. (2016). Ausbildung der Ausbilder Ada (IHK). Vorbereitung auf die Ausbildereignungsprüfung nach AEVO mit allen Handlungsfeldern und den wichtigsten Gesetzestexten. Dickemann-Weber Verlag: Erlenbach.



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***“ALL OUR
TALENTS
INCREASE IN
THE USING,
AND EVERY
FACULTY, BOTH
GOOD AND BAD,
STRENGTHENS
BY EXERCISE.”***

*Anne Brontë,
Novelist, 1820-1849*

ROCKET MAN: THE MODERN WBL MENTOR

How can mentors ensure that their trainees will be successful in the structure of their apprenticeship program and that they will reach their target?



Rockets and Missiles: both objects of vast potential, power and energy, and once launched capable of an immense impact.

A rocket is propelled towards its target, unguided and with no steering ability. Once a rocket is launched it cannot change its course to adapt to changing elements in order to correct its trajectory. It may hit its target, however it may also drift off course, oblivious to changing conditions and fly miles from its objective in the wrong direction.

A missile, much the same as a rocket, is propelled towards its target, but instead uses control systems to guide itself in flight, towards its target. After being launched, it can continue to correct its trajectory, based

on a continuous process of feedback from external forces and changing conditions. It has the ability to process feedback, to correct its errors and make necessary adjustments in order to reach its objective.

The modern apprentice begins his/her apprenticeship. Young, dynamic, full of energy, immense potential and capable of delivering so much for their employer, each are launched into a fixed path of learning, mapped out step by step over 3 years to reach their learning objective, and emerge as a highly capable craftsman in their own right. Yet, only under the careful guidance and control of a knowledgeable mentor with critical input and well-timed feedback can the young eager apprentice correct his/her errors, make the necessary adjustments, and change trajectory to get back on their flight path to achieving their end objective.

It is the mentor that ensures that the target is reached. To ensure that each and every apprentice reaches their target, it is the mentor who acts as the control system by putting in place a monitoring structure that delivers critical input and allows the apprentice to perform continual learning and proc-

THE RECIPE FOR A SUCCESSFUL APPRENTICESHIP? CAREFUL GUIDANCE OF A KNOWLEDGEABLE MENTOR WITH CRITICAL INPUT AND WELL-TIMED FEEDBACK.

cessing of feedback. This control systems needs to be both rigid to provide stability and structured learning to apprentices, but also flexible to adapt to the individual needs of each apprentice and their personal way of learning effectively. How you deliver feedback to one apprentice may not be suitable for a different apprentice, but it all functions within the framework and foundation of solid monitoring structure that ensures the feedback is delivered and processed.

Flexibility too is required, to ensure the continual improvement of the control system itself, by learning from the apprentices and their valuable feedback and critical input that they can provide to mentor and his methods, and to the monitoring system.

How feedback is delivered, how it is timed and how the adjustments are implemented to prevent the repetition of errors to allow real learning for the apprentice to take place. A control and monitoring system that can process feedback, learn, correct errors and make the necessary amendments and improvements to not only reach its target, but to aim beyond its current capability to even further targets and higher objectives.

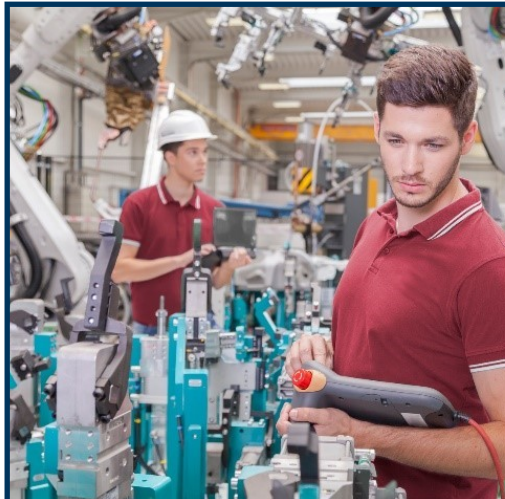


IMAGE CAPTURE TEXT

Author: Heike Bähre, Fachhochschule des Mittelstandes (FHM), Germany



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***"THE
LABOUR MOBILITY
IN EUROPE
OFFERS NEW
OPPORTUNITIES,
ESPECIALLY FOR
APPLICANTS FROM
REGIONS WITH HIGH
UNEMPLOYMENT,
TO OBTAIN
QUALIFIED TRAI-
NING AND
JOB OFFERS."***

*Ian O'Donovan ,
International Project Consultant
from Ireland working in Germany, 2020*

SECURING EMPLOYEES BEYOND THE HORIZON

Securing qualified employees or apprentices on local or regional level can be a real challenge. The following case study from Germany shows that alternatives may wait beyond the border.



In North East Germany on the border between Mecklenburg and Brandenburg, the rolling green hills stretch as far as the eye can see. Between the heavens and the serene countryside, the horizon is dotted with countless colossal wind turbines, standing proud and weathering every wind; Germany's great green hope for next generation energy. And high above the green grass, tucked in behind the rotor blades is where Steffen Schmidt settles in to begin his workday.

Steffen and his team of eight workers cover wind turbine maintenance in the region for a prominent Asian turbine company. With the Asian company investing heavily in this part of the country, these maintenance contracts

meant that for Steffen and his team, each of them born and raised in the region, are some of the very few locals who haven't been drawn away to the large cities of Hamburg or Berlin to seek work.

Demand in this sector is growing, and ideally Steffen would like to take on an apprentice to help him cover the growing workload, so he can finally diversify his client base and bid for maintenance contracts from some of the other large companies building wind turbines in the region. But even with help recently from the local government recruitment center, Steffen has failed to secure candidates for his apprenticeship offer for the last two years running. The local recruitment official advising him, explained that almost all small businesses in the region have the same issue when hiring young people:

"You might get a few applications, maybe even an interview, but the good candidates all end up leaving to go to the big cities and are snapped up by the big companies."

Steffens has more work than his small team can cope with and the very real prospect of

SURELY WE CANNOT ALLOW BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH TO BE HINDERED BY A SCARCITY OF QUALIFIED WORKERS AND APPRENTICES

more contract opportunities, surely, we cannot allow business and economic growth to be hindered by a scarcity of qualified workers and apprentices.

Steffen speaks with his brother in-law Gregor living in the opposite end of the country. He too runs his own small business but in the IT sector and has faced the same recruitment issues as Steffen. After failing to find suitable candidates for job openings, Gregor began also to look in neighbouring countries outside of Germany when hiring new employees. After a slow start, Gregor eventually hired a young Spaniard almost nine months ago and he is very happy with his performance on the job.

A flood of questions race through Steffens mind as he thinks about trying to recruit someone from a different country.

- ▶ Will he have to organize a work permit for a foreign apprentice?
- ▶ What about the language barrier?
- ▶ How would a young foreigner fit in with the other 8 local colleagues on his work team?
- ▶ Where would he even begin to search for foreign candidates?

Steffen wonders if he could seek a similar

solution for his apprenticeship recruitments. But Steffens brother-in-law works in southern Germany, and works in IT, which is a very different sector of the economy to Steffen.

After speaking with the local government recruitment center, Steffen logs on to the EURES homepage; a website established by the European Union to facilitate business owners who are in exactly this recruitment situation, just like Steffen. Here Stefan has access to thousands of CVs from enthusiastic young candidates from all over Europe. Through the standardized format of

the CVs Steffen can check suitability and candidate language skills. Many of the questions that phased Steffen at the beginning of the recruitment are now beginning to be solved as he sees the wave of opportunity that has been opened to him and his business

Author: Heike Bähre, Fachhochschule des Mittelstandes (FHM), Germany



SECURING YOUNG TALENT, A PROBLEM IN MANY PLACES IN EUROPE



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*Ian O 'Donovan ,
International Project Consultant
from Ireland working in Germany, 2020*

RECOGNITION ENSURES QUALITY RECRUITMENT

In the modern economy with a diverse mobile workforce, how can employers ensure they recognise what qualifications are being presented to them by job applicants?



Outside a large building site in the downtown area the workers clamber down the scaffolding for an early morning tea break. Dozens of work-teams, a dozen different trades, speaking a dozen different languages. All working together as the building slowly begins to take shape.

The building site is overlooked by the city central hospital, and the elderly patients on the 5th floor. Each patient being cared for by a half dozen different nationalities, with a diverse range of professional experience and diverse qualifications. The medical and electronic equipment throughout the hospital is operated by the staff, but serviced by a company with young eager staff sent from a head office that sits in a different urban

center, in a different country, far across the continent. This is modern Europe; a dynamic economy, embodied by a dynamic and mobile workforce, and the entire continent in a fixed state of constant transition.

In this dynamic economy, companies across Europe strive to remain competitive, and seek out high quality candidates to fill their vacancies. On the one hand, each business wishes to gain from the benefits that a diverse mobile workforce can deliver, in order to compete in the global market.

With such a range of diversity, and varied pool of talent, how can companies ensure they know who they are wishing to employ?

What skills and experience do their potential employees possess?

What are they actually capable of delivering for the business?

With ever increasing competition between business, can companies maintain high standards of workmanship and guarantee quality to customers in such an environment?

The challenge for businesses and employers is immense.

**DO WE REALLY HAVE TO
WAIT UNTIL THE WALL
COLLAPSES BEFORE WE
REALISE THAT THE MASON
WAS NOT PROPERLY
QUALIFIED?**

RECOGNITION ENSURES QUALITY RECRUITMENT

Since its inception, the European Union has been putting in place measures to tackle precisely these challenges in an effort to increase transparency across borders, and to allow for movement and mobility of the workforce. Ultimately, to make it easier for companies to do business across the entire continent.

The international recognition of qualifications seems to be already successful – at least at third level education. To the average employer, a foreign job candidate carrying a bachelor degree is often comparable to a local candidate no matter what part of Europe he is located in. If employers wish to dig a little deeper, then the credit allocation within that degree can be scrutinized. It's all relatively straight forward.

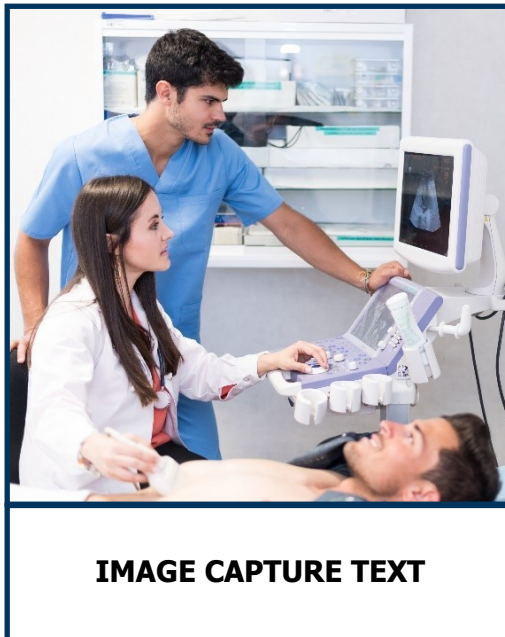
However, at the level of vocational training and apprenticeship, for most employers, the lines tend to become a little bit more blurred. At the vocational level, the only real qualification many employers can rely on is the practical proof of a job well done. But do we really have to wait until the wall collapses in the customers garden, before we realise that the mason was not properly qualified?

At this level too, transparency has become ever more extensive across borders. The

establishment of National Qualification Framework now is ensuring that worker qualifications are based on the demonstrated knowledge and competence of the individual, rather than the assigned content of a learning program.

These frameworks set the context for comparing qualifications across different countries and allow for recognition of an individual's skills and competence with use of the so-called European Qualification framework. The complex process of achieving transparency in this area is ongoing and is delivering results for both employees and business, ensuring that companies can make sound decisions about the workers and staff they intend to employ.

Author: Heike Bähre, Fachhochschule des Mittelstandes (FHM), Germany



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*Ramon Mangion,
Deputy Director-Apprenticeship & WBL
Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology , 2020*

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A WBL MENTOR ?

***Think about your own knowledge, skills and personal qualities.
Do you think you have what it takes to be an effective apprenticeship mentor ?***



Many organisations face particular situations, whereby they would like to contribute to skills development in the labour market by offering work-based learning opportunities. On the other hand, this requires that they provide suitable mentors that can guide apprentices accordingly.

Hence the question is straightforward really 'What does it take to be a mentor'? Nonetheless, prospective mentors also pose a similar question, but having a self-orientation 'Am I ready to be a mentor? do I have the right , knowledge, skills, and attitudes ?

The process of mentoring is about providing mentees with effective transfer of knowledge, skills and experience which they

can use to build their confidence. A mentor has a crucial role in providing encouragement, support and guidance. A good starting point, to better understand a good profile of a mentor would be to think about any of your positive experiences as a mentee.

What made these successful? For sure, you will think about the importance of a mentor having good communication skills. Such are essential for the mentor to provide the necessary knowledge, skills and the sharing of experiences. You will also think of several other skills, such as time management, problem- solving, conflict management, relationship building and more. Ultimately it is worthwhile to note that a mentor may be fulfilling multiple roles or 'profiles'.

In certain instances, the mentor is the teacher, and thus providing the necessary knowledge and skills through suitable pedagogical methods. In other cases, the mentor is acting as a motivator to give the required push for the apprentice to reach set goals. Although the mentor may not have training in counselling, this is another role which the mentor may be fulfilling. Ultimately the apprentice is also a human being with own

**AM I READY
TO BE A MENTOR?**

**DO I HAVE THE RIGHT
KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND
ATTITUDES?**

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A WBL MENTOR ?

problems, difficulties and issues that require guidance. Lastly, it is essential to recognise that the mentor is also acting as a role model. The mentor's actions need to inspire the mentee in various areas such as work ethics, training, efficiency, attitudes and much more.

Nonetheless, this is a continuously evolving process of self-discovery. One should not be discouraged to develop own skills and build experience in such areas and such a process should not be a one-time event. As the saying goes, 'Rome was not built in a day'.

There is no perfect formula or ready-made solution for one to fit into the ideal profile of a mentor.

However, one can try and do whatever possible to improve accordingly.



**APPRENTICES CONTRIBUTE TO
REAL PROJECTS ALMOST FROM
DAY ONE.**

*Author: Ramon Mangion,
MCAST, Malta*



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**“ALL GENUINE
EDUCATION
COMES ABOUT
THROUGH
EXPERIENCE;
[BUT] NOT ALL
EXPERIENCES
ARE GENUINELY
OR EQUALLY
EDUCATIVE.”**

*Jon Dewey,
Psychologist, 1939*

PEDAGOGICAL OPTIONS FOR WBL IN COMPANIES

A key challenge for improving the quality of work-based learning is to find practical methods of translating experience into learning.



Within the workplace there many ways to increase the extent to which work is learning-rich. Many of these techniques are by now well understood from the theory of and research on work-based learning, such as encouraging people to reflect on their experience; guidance by other workers and by experts; using mentors; demonstration and practice; simulation; task rotation and task variety; project work; providing workers with problems to be solved (PBL – Problem Based Learning methodology); peer review and support, observations and shadowing. Some of these techniques can fairly readily be integrated with the normal cycle of work and production within the company.

Crucial to many is the role of workplace su-

pervisors, and their realization that developing the knowledge, skills and expertise of workers / apprentices is part of their normal job. However, where this is not part of the workplace culture, developing work-based learning can prove difficult.

Many of the methods that can promote and improve the quality of work-based learning can be initiated by enterprises themselves, but this is often harder for small and medium-sized enterprises. In these cases the assistance of external organizations can be very valuable. Such assistance can take the form of coaching and training for in-firm supervisors, and the development of simple competency lists and learning guides. In the dual systems in German-speaking countries, for example, employers' chambers provide practical assistance to companies to help them develop training plans for apprentices.

In the Netherlands, regional centers of expertise are responsible for coaching the in-company mentors who train apprentices. In Norway, local training offices, funded by the pooling of government training subsidies to small and medium-sized enterprises, play a similar role.

DO WE REALLY HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE WALL COLLAPSES BEFORE WE REALISE THAT THE MASON WAS NOT PROPERLY QUALIFIED?

RECOGNITION ENSURES QUALITY RECRUITMENT

With appropriate working conditions and industrial agreements, many of these roles are able to be performed by teachers in vocational schools and colleges, particularly when they are responsible for visiting and supervising students who are on work placements. The main supervising teacher's responsibilities include firstly, modeling quality teaching and learning practice, including a knowledge of

- a) the subject content to be taught and how students learn;
- b) effective planning, programming and student assessment; and
- c) effective interpersonal and communication skills.

Secondly, developing a comprehensive understanding of the provider's specific professional experience requirements in order to guide the planning of learning opportunities appropriate to the developmental level of the apprentices.

The opportunity to learn at work is highly dependent on the day-to-day scheduling of normal work tasks and the cycle of production over the day, week and year. Where the nature of an enterprise's products and services limits the opportunities to develop knowledge and skills that are part of a formal training curriculum, cooperative arrangements between enterprises, or be-

tween enterprises and other learning venues, can be put in place to ensure that broad-based learning takes place.

The regional centers in the Netherlands and in Norway referred to above are an example of such mechanisms, allowing apprentices

whose employer cannot provide particular forms of experience to spend time in other firms to compensate. The inter-firm training centers that are commonly found as part of the German dual system are another example, although in these cases training in workshops or similar venues is often used as a substitute for work-based learning.



APPRENTICES CONTRIBUTE TO REAL PROJECTS ALMOST FROM DAY ONE.

*Author: Marta Palacio,
FFE, Basque Country, Spain*



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Author, Job Position, Year

CORE TASKS OF WBL MENTORS

Good mentors must know the basics of pedagogics and psychology to know how to communicate with the students either verbally or nonverbally.



To be a mentor you firstly need to have students to mentor. If you have problems to persuade them to do the WBL in your company, you must think of ways to promote the company. One of the options is to promote the company in the school. In one of those kinds of events in Slovenia, one of the participants presenting was Sij Acroni, a Steel & Steel Product Company. They are dealing with heavy industry, so the jobs in this company are labelled as heavy and dirty. Consequently, it is difficult for them to get new workers and WBL-students, so they must think of interesting presentations to get attention. Their presentation was very different than the others.

The presenter was their mentor. He was introduced as the most popular mentor in the company. He came dressed in working clothes and brought a lot of equipment along. He told the students how well the owners care for the employees and to prove that he told them that the workers are wearing clothes made by the same material as the F1 drivers.

He then went even further and proved the resistance and good quality of the suit by trying to cut it with a knife, burn it, and pouring liquid nitrogen on it. He talked about his job with such a passion that everyone in the classroom listened to him. To get the attention of a few teenagers is difficult but to get the attention of all of them attending it is almost impossible. He managed to do exactly that.

Usually, Sij Acroni is lucky to get one WBL student per promotion. This time they got so many applications that they had to reject some of the students. The students knew that they would not get just a "cool" mentor but also passionate and motivated one, with whom they will be able to identify with.

The motivation and passion are very good

A CORE TASK OF WBL MENTORS IS ALSO THE FAMILIARITY WITH THE LEGISLATION WHICH COVERS THE WBL AREA.

CORE TASKS OF WBL MENTORS

foundations for a good start and getting attention but are not the only tasks of WBL mentors. Good mentors must know the basics of pedagogics and psychology to know how to communicate with the students either verbally or nonverbally. They must be very good listeners and know how properly react in conflict situations. They must be aware that they are mentoring young adults who are thinking, functioning and reacting differently than adults. They need to be able to identify with the students. It is also important for them to know the basics of teaching techniques. They need to know how to understandably, coherently and succinctly explain, how to put words into practice and how to ask questions and give feedback.

A core task of WBL mentors is also the familiarity with the legislation which covers the WBL area. Since the students are mostly minors that means that they have special rights and responsibilities which mentors should know about, respect and follow.

The mentors should also take care of students' documentation which will be part of their portfolio. They should check it regularly and if necessary, tell the students to rewrite or complete the documentation. They must have in mind that these documents will help

students in the future as a reflection of their work when they will be applying for jobs. They will be able to prove what competencies they acquired during the WBL.

The mentors are a very important persons for students in the years of WBL in the company. They are the ones who will spend a lot of time with students, so it is very important to be a reliable and approachable person. And finally, they should always have in mind that they in the relationship with students can be both – role models and at the same time a father/mother figure.



*Author: Petra Sternad,
CCIS, Slovenia*



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**// DIVERSITY
MANAGEMENT
AS
COMPETENCE
AND
NECESSARY
VALUE."**

*Jorge Rodríguez,
Human Resources director
of FM Logistic Ibérica, 2016*

HUMANIZING COMPANIES

The motivations and professional interests do not depend on the age but of the profile, life-style and professional moment and the competences of each person.



For the first time in the modern age, we have five generations present in the workplace. From the Traditionalists born before 1945 all the way up until Gen Z, the generational diversity present in most companies can create a wide range of challenges.

Having a multigenerational workforce can, and should, be a distinct advantage for companies today; the wide range of ideas and knowledge from a broad group of people can actually serve the company well.

The Human Resource responsible challenge

The truth is that the workforce of the future will be composed of the Millennial and the Z generations, but to achieve this, there is a transition that is taking place today. The

**PROFESSIONS CHANGE BUT
COMPETENCIES REMAIN.
IT IS NOT ABOUT LEARN-
ING PROFESSIONS BUT
ABOUT LEARNING TO BE
PROFESSIONAL.**

oldest group and, therefore, with more experience, coexists with the newest younger workers. The good harmony between each other is a challenge for the Human Resources department of the companies, which sees how their policies and their organizational structures are changing, but also the way of working, allowing teleworking and flexibility to gain weight in the companies.

Thus, people managers must ensure that this coexistence is not only fluid, but enriching. All employee can contribute with knowledge and new points of view that have a positive and productive impact on organizations. Therefore, Human Resources managers should not differentiate between younger and senior generations, but between the most appropriate professionals for certain tasks / objectives, regardless of age. Because neither the youngest have a talent only for being, nor the older ones stop having it because of their age. Age is not a professional factor, it is a personal circumstance, and it is not necessary to value the years but the competences.

The study on the future employment of the World Economic Forum predicts that millions of jobs will be lost before 2020, since artificial intelligence, robotics, nanotechnology and other socio-economic factors replace the need for human workers.

In recent years, many jobs that require only mathematical skills have been automated (such as banking workers).

On the other side, roles that especially require social skills tend to be underpaid, since the number of potential workers is very large, for example, child care workers.

But workers who successfully combine mathematical and interpersonal skills in knowledge-based economies of the future will find many rewarding and lucrative opportunities.

In short, professions change but competencies remain. In a global, digital and changing world, it is no longer about learning professions but about learning to be professional.

Therefore, the transition to a more technological future in companies depends on a change in the culture of organizations, a competence that, to a large extent, must be led by the Human Resources department. "The business culture is going to turn to-

wards people instead of business. Companies will have to incorporate technology, but they will also have to increase the degree of humanity" (Jaume Gurt, Organization and People Development Director of Schibsted Spain, owner group of InfoJobs and Fotocasa portals).



**GENERATIONAL DIVERSITY
AS A COMPETITIVE FACTOR
OF A COMPANY.**

*Author: Marta Palacio,
FFE, Basque Country,
Spain*



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*Jorge Rodríguez,
Human Resources director
of FM Logistic Ibérica, 2016*

MOTIVATING THE NEW GENERATION EMPLOYEE

The motivations and professional interests do not depend on the age but of the profile, life-style and professional moment and the competences of each person.



The knowledge-based economy's workforce is comprised of five generations, each with distinct qualities that can be profoundly felt in the workplace. As may know well know, some staff (especially workers among the Y and Z generations) often aren't motivated by traditional compensation and benefit perks that more easily secured the loyalty of prior generations (baby boomers). Instead, they seek organizations that champion values they hold dear, including sustainable practices, flexible work, and employee development opportunities.

Employees of the future motivation is the key to creating long term successful companies. Here are some tips (no magic bullets!) that can help any manager to develop and

motivate the employees:

- 1) Engage them. Especially for the Y and Z generations employees, professional development goes hand in hand with engagement. They are not interested in merely punching the clock at the office or putting in their time until retirement. If they do not find their work meaningful, they will have no qualms about walking out of the door.
- 2) Play to their strengths. It's important to treat them as individuals, especially during the goal-setting and performance appraisal process. Ask each person in the company how he/she works best, what workplace benefits he/she values most, and what his/her broader career goals are. Build employee goals around these stated strengths, interests, and preferences.
- 3) Understand that everyone is motivated differently. Managers often apply the same motivational programs, ideas and processes across the board to the people that work for them. Managers need to understand that all people have different motivational profiles. By tapping into the individual needs of the employees you can maximize the effectiveness of their work.

GIVE ALL EMPLOYEES AN OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN A VARIETY OF PROJECT TEAMS, AND PROVIDE THEM LEADERSHIP ROLES WITHIN THESE GROUPS.

4) People don't always know what is motivating to them. It is important to understand that not everyone knows what really motivates them. Don't just ask employees but get to understand what drives them, find out each person's personality and use data to find out the underlying motivators for each employee.

5) Create an environment of collaboration. Teams in general can be a practical vehicle to increase collaboration and build relationships among the different generations in your workforce. Before jumping into the work at hand, allow at least one team meeting for members to get to know each other and the various work styles represented.

6) Provide mentorship opportunities. Offer an open program where employees can apply to be mentors or mentees based on the skills or abilities they can impart and the knowledge they wish to gain. Then match employees based on these needs. Mentoring relationships can be traditional (an older worker teaching a younger employee), reverse (a younger employee teaching an older one), or group (small pods of employees who want to learn various skills from each other).

7) Champion learning and career growth. Involve employees in their own learning and

development plan from their first day on the job. Ensure all employees are aware of the opportunities available to them to grow their careers within your organization.

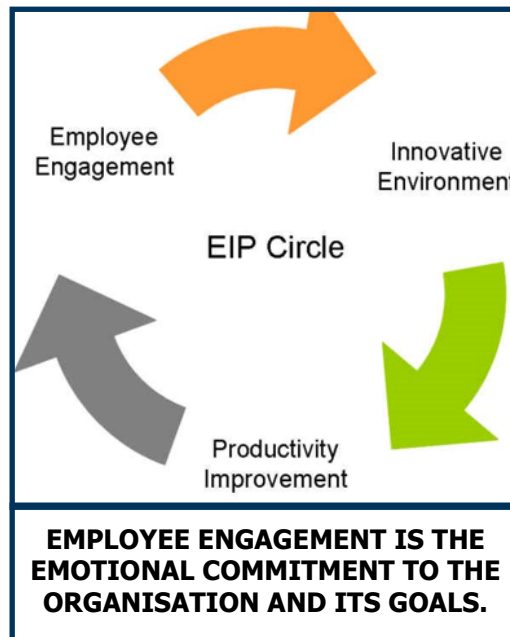
8) Take the time to focus on building relationships. Managers don't often see the benefit of casual conversation,

birthday celebrations, team sports leagues, team building events.... These types of things contribute to a more positive work environment and create opportunities for team members to bond.

9) Recognize sincerely and in a timely manner. People need more positive reinforcement that is

both sincere and timely. As a manager, you need to search for things that the employees are doing and recognize them right away.

*Author: Marta Palacio,
FFE, Basque Country, Spain*



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*Jorge Rodríguez,
Human Resources director
of FM Logistic Ibérica, 2016*

ARE YOU READY FOR GENERATION ALPHA?

A new generation will soon enter our workforce. These children grow up in a rapidly changing, digitalised world. They are the future, but are we prepared to identify the future talents?



Have you ever thought of what you can actively do to attract future apprentices and employees in 5-10 years time? Companies and vocational schools currently are dealing with the generations Y and Z - the ones that were born in the 80s and early 90s and the others who were born approximately in the mid-90s till early 2000s. We already live in fast changing times where it seems hard to predict what will be in five years time. Scholars and future experts are already trying to predict possible attributes of this new generation, even having given it a name: The generation Alpha.

The oldest representatives of this new generation are currently only ten years old - these are the ones born with smartphones,

Netflix and high-speed mobile internet. In order to attract generation alpha, three things seem to be key:

First we need to develop an understanding of possible key features of this generation Alpha. What will be their main values and expectations towards life and work? Generation Alpha is expected to be much more immersed in technology than previous generations. They might have a digital footprint before they are born and they will grow up surrounded by all sorts of AI-driven digital technologies such as smart devices, internet of things, autonomous vehicles and virtual and augmented reality applications. They will expect these technologies to provide an excellent and seamless user experience – applications and devices that just work.

This new generation will also learn differently than we did - in more visual and more interactive ways accessing new forms of learning and interaction that are often stated as 21st century skills or the 4 Cs. Mobile devices like iPads will definitely play a central role in learning and cooperation.

The Alphas will have more inclusive and sustainable attitudes and worldviews. They

**PUT A FUTURE-PROOF
TALENT MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM IN PLACE NOW TO
LIVE UP TO GENERATION
ALPHA'S FUTURE
EXPECTATIONS WHEN THE
TIME HAS COME.**

ARE YOU READY FOR GENERATION ALPHA?

grow up with a changed climate full of natural disasters and extremes facing the constant threat of ecological and social collapse. At the same time they see young people from generations Z demonstrating for radical changes and requesting clear and immediate action.

Secondly, we need to adjust our employer branding strategy taking into consideration what we found out in the first step. Employer Value propositions will change. This generation has different expectations towards life and work. Their inclusive and ecological thinking demands employers that live diversity and equity and have a strong corporate sustainability strategy and reputation in place. As heavy tech-users, they will also expect a seamless integration of easy-to-use (digital) technologies in their working and learning environments.

Finally it seems necessary now to put a future-proof talent management system (TMS) in place which enables the whole organisation to launch necessary changes regarding strategy, culture and HR-processes for being capable to live up to generation Alpha's future expectations when the time has come. In the near future, a modern TMS will allow your organisation to better attract and identify the "right Alphas" and at the same time

offer them a working and development environment that should trigger high performance and long-lasting professional ties.

*Author: Thomas Tröbinger,
WKO Steiermark, Austria*



**GENERATION ALPHA SEEMS TO
PREPARE FROM EARLY AGE ON.**



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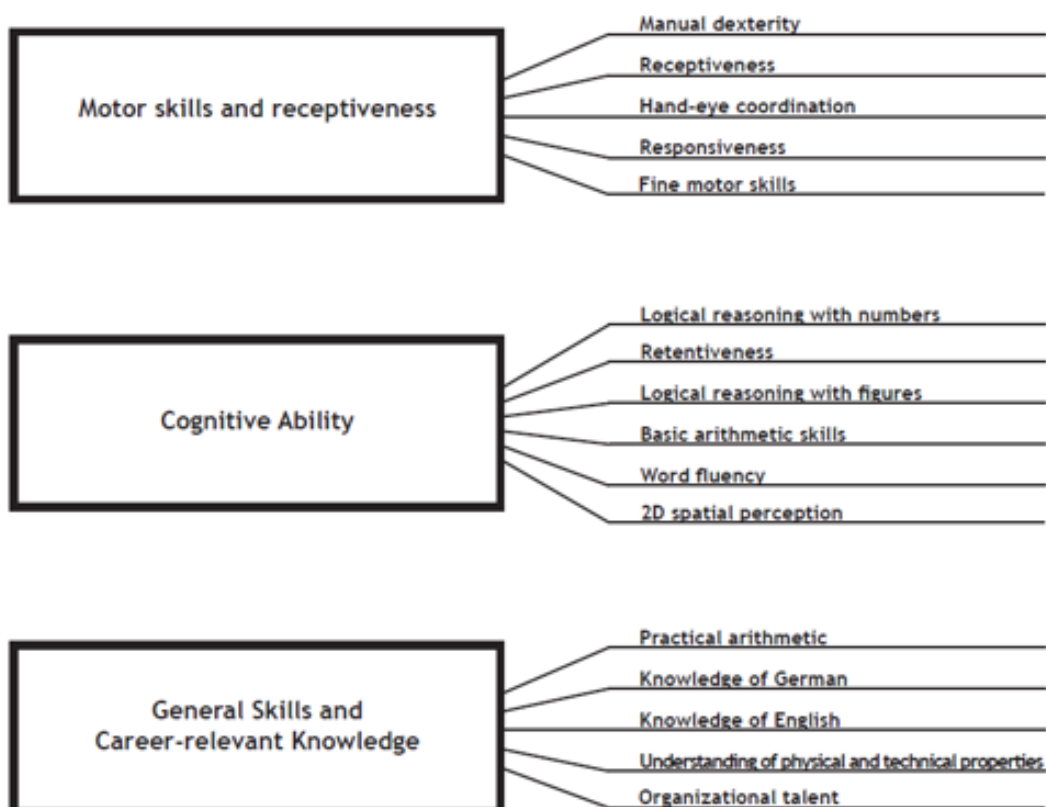
TALENT CENTER



The resulting information is collected and analysed:

- Personal interests
- Motor skills and receptiveness
- Cognitive abilities
- General skills and career-relevant knowledge

The results, a personalised **Talentreport**, make the professional orientation of the student easier. The profile not only lists potentials and strengths, but also recommends careers with various educational paths.]



**“WE WANT TO HELP
EQUIP THE NEXT
GENERATION TO
BECOME THE
LEADERS OF
TOMORROW
[...] BY JOINING OUR
FORCES, WE WILL BE
ABLE TO DO MORE
TO BUILD A
BETTER FUTURE
FOR FUTURE
GENERATIONS.”**

*Laurent Freixe,
Nestlé CEO for Zone Americas,
founder of the Nestlé Needs YOUTH Initiative, 2019*



GLOBAL YOUTH INITIATIVE BY NESTLÉ

The Global Youth Initiative: Nestlé needs YOU is the international initiative that brings together all Nestlé's efforts to support young people around the world . (Alliance for YOU)



According to International Labour Organisation, over 71 million young people around the world are unemployed and over 500 million are under-employed or in uncertain or precarious jobs, while 40 million young people join the workforce every year.

In many cases traditional education, if available, no longer prepares young people for the current and future world of work. The World Economic Forum estimates that over 60% of children entering primary school today will have jobs that do not exist today. They need the right skills and experience to help them in a rapidly changing economic landscape.

Companies have a huge opportunity to develop and draw from the largest pool of tal-

ent and human capital that has ever been available in human history. In this context, 20 International private companies have decided to join their forces in a Global Alliance for YOUTH to build a better future for younger generations.

The Global Alliance for YOUTH is a business-driven movement of like-minded organizations passionate about working together to help young people around the globe get the necessary skills to thrive in the world of work, today and tomorrow.

Nestlé founded the Alliance for YOUTH in Europe in 2014, by partnering with governments, foundations, youth organisations, academia and the private sector, with the purpose of helping prepare young people to enter the professional world. After its successful launch, the alliance was expanded to the Pacific Alliance countries in 2017 (Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru) and the Mercosur countries in December 2018 (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay). More than 200 companies are now members, and will offer 230,000 new work opportunities to young Europeans from 2017—2020.

NESTLÉ AIMS TO HELP 10 MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD TO HAVE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES UNTIL 2030.

In 2017, Nestlé announced a new global objective: to help ten million young people around the world to have access to employment and economic development opportunities from now until 2030. To achieve this goal, the initiative now has a more extensive focus : it no longer focuses only on employability but also supports new generations of farmers and young entrepreneurs throughout the supply chain.

Nestlé collaborates with its Alliance for YOUTH partners in innovative projects to promote youth learning and employability. In addition, Alliance for YOUTH also wants to prepare the next generation of entrepreneurs. Under the leadership of the EY company, Alliance for YOUTH is joining forces with Junior Achievement (JA) Europe, the largest provider of business education in Europe, to help young Europeans acquire business skills.

The ambition of this collaboration is to support 500 students in obtaining the "Entrepreneurial Skills Pass", an international qualification promoted by Junior Achievement. With the help of their professors and the volunteers of the companies that make up the Alliance for YOUTH, students learn how a company works, how they can generate ideas and the best way to develop mar-

ket actions and strategies.

Nestlé also confirms its commitment to young people by being one of the first companies to join the Global Initiative on Decent Employment for Young People, led by the International Labor Organization (ILO).



MEETING WITH STUDENTS

*Authors: Marta Palacio,
FFE, Basque Country,
Spain*

*Petra Sternad,
CCIS, Slovenia*



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