

Projectresults “Shortage of skilled workers”

Introduction

Despite both ongoing unemployment and the financial crisis, the problematic shortage of skilled workers has grown even on the level of skilled workers in the production sector. Where, until recently, the primary effects were in the technical and engineering sectors, a shortage of skilled workers is now increasing on the level of skilled work. As such, the shortage of skilled workers has already reached serious proportions in some regions of Europe. At present, it is not yet possible to speak of a comprehensive deficit in Europe, although certain industries are already suffering considerably from a shortage of skilled workers.

In the light of this and in collaboration with companies in the production sector (metal and electronics industry), products/instruments from the field of qualification and human resources development are being developed in the European LEONARDO DA VINCI project, “Shortage of Skilled Workers”, in order to reduce the lack of skilled workers in Europe. Furthermore, consideration is being given to the question of what companies and politics can contribute today and in the future to reduce the shortage of skilled workers.

Objective

The pilot project, “Shortage of Skilled Workers”, is dedicated to the difficulty experienced by many – primarily small and medium sized – companies in producing and implementing their own qualification and human resources development concepts for skilled workers in order to avoid a shortage of skilled workers. The project involves ten partners from universities, research establishments, companies, vocational colleges and organisations from six European countries (Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Slovenia, the United Kingdom).

The aim of the project is to develop long-term and sustainable human resources management instruments. In all of the European countries participating in the project, there is a need for the early identification of the necessary qualification requirements and for the design of suitable instruments to avoid a shortage of skilled workers on the level of skilled work. Together with companies, the development of instruments is being carried out in consideration of country and sector specific features. As such, companies will receive support both with independently determining their future demand and with their human resources development.



Approach / Method

In order to determine the skilled worker situation on the level of skilled work in the production sector, career studies using sector analyses and case studies have been conducted in all of the participating European countries. Here, sector analysis has served to develop the employment and technology structures, economic development, qualification models and initiatives in a sector to counter the shortage of skilled workers. The skilled worker situation (innovation events, changes in work tasks, recruitment strategies and measures to reduce the shortage of skilled workers) in businesses was analysed on the basis of case studies. These results form the basis for the development and testing of human resources development instruments in collaboration with the participating companies.



Effects

The problematic shortage of skilled workers can be summarised in five points.

1. Qualitative problem (the quality of school leavers is often inadequate),
2. Quantitative problem (the number of applicants from training positions is in sharp decline due to demographic change),
3. Recruitment difficulty (traditional recruitment paths are frequently unsuccessful),
4. Staff retention (long-term staff loyalty to the company is required),
5. Management of new talent (initiatives to inspire new talent for technical careers need to start earlier in childhood).



Here, the causes of the individual problems must be differentiated in terms of the respective backgrounds: causes such as demographic change, competition with large companies, or regional position are very difficult to change; but causes such as the systematic identification of requirements, management of new talent, or image of a company can be reduced by means of appropriate concepts and approaches. The empirical findings clearly show that innovative and forward-looking companies are already active in these latter areas.



In all of the participating countries, networking activities have been started to bring together factors such as companies, chambers, occupational images, social partners and vocational colleges to reduce the shortage of skilled workers on the level of skilled work in the production sector. The expansion of these activities should also continue after the end of the project and some of them should be converted into concrete networks.



Description of the Product / Results

Target audience: company representatives, industry experts, social partners, scientists.

Product 1: “Analysis Report on the Skilled Worker Situation in Europe”

Language: DE/EN

The report describes the current situation of the shortage of skilled workers and its possible causes. In conclusion, initiatives and concepts are represented as possible measures to reduce the shortage of skilled workers.



Product 2: “Good Practice Report”

Language: DE/EN/SI/I/NL

The report provides assistance for companies in the production sector with business initiatives to reduce the shortage of skilled workers. Practised business and regional strategies from Europe are described.

Product 3: “Instruments for the Early Identification of Qualification Requirements on a Business Level”

Language: DE/EN/SI/I/NL

Overall, three different instruments have been developed for the early prediction of qualification and skilled worker requirements:

- Instrument for quantitative demand analysis for skilled workers (how many skilled workers will be required in future?);
- Specific development plan for the current and future skilled worker situation in consideration of concrete work tasks (example of mechatronics);
- Company-based problem areas for a shortage of skilled workers (evaluation of problem areas/causes, derivation of measures).



Product 4: “Manual for Human Resources Instruments Avoiding the Shortage of Skilled Workers”

Language: DE/EN/SI/I/NL

The handbook outlines current instruments for determining current and future qualification requirements and for knowledge transfer, which could make a contribution to reducing the shortage of skilled workers.



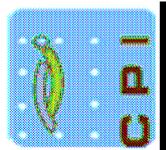
Product 5: “Company Wiki”

Language: DE/EN/SI/I/NL

Key points have been developed on the application and use of a company wiki to secure and pass on specialist and experience-based knowledge. Elaborations include initial examples and possible categories for their use.

Available from:

www.sos-skilled-workers.eu



Abstract

Despite persistently high levels of unemployment in many European member states, many enterprises are facing a shortage of skilled workers at different skill levels. This is especially true for the manufacturing sector. The shortage of workers is partly due to a discrepancy between labour market skill demands and the qualifications of workers. The situation is aggravated by demographic change. It is predicted that the shortage of skilled workers will effect the competitiveness of enterprises in the medium and long term. The 'Shortage of Skilled Workers' project aims to assist enterprises (especially Small and Medium sized Enterprises) in developing and implementing Personnel Development Programmes in order to overcome shortage of skilled workers. Besides personnel development programmes, which include career planning and training, the project aims to support enterprises in transferring knowledge and experience. With the aid of these instruments and tools it will be possible for enterprises to identify potential skills shortages in time and to take action to avoid future problems.

The products of the project with all developed and piloted instruments (set for early identification of skills shortages for enterprises, the company-wiki or the good-practice report) are available in German, English, Dutch, Italian and Slovenian and can be download via the website www.sos-skilled-workers.eu. The good-practice report takes up the set of problems of the shortage of skilled workers and describes different operational practiced strategies. These examples were identified by means of occupation-scientific methods in six European countries and are to conduce as good practice solutions.

