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# SME-TraiNet

## Report on Workshop II – WP 2.2

Chamber of Skilled Crafts Hamburg  
18-August-2010

Hamburg Chamber of Skilled Crafts  
Wiebke Reyels  
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Hamburg, 05/11/2010

## I. Background

The first national workshop of SME-TraiNet at the Chamber of Skilled Crafts in Hamburg was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2009. The group of experts participating in that workshop figured out, that in Germany and especially in the region of Hamburg exist enough support structures for young SMEs. It was found out, that young entrepreneurs more face a problem to establish a good management system in their companies, and that they need to be trained in economic issues and management of personnel. Young entrepreneurs in the craft sector usually lead very small or micro businesses. Their plans for leadership do not include “management issues”, they do as if management competences are part of a character and not really competences to be trained. All experts stated that young craftsmen face a hard situation of time resources and few work-life-balance. Those are reasons why training offers are often refused or shift in later times. A big flow of “over-“ information would do the rest. Young entrepreneurs don’t have time to choose the right offer fitting to the individual situation of the company. Mobile services or inhouse offers had been seen as one possible way to react on it. After the first national workshop the project decided to collect from all experts the current offers to support young SMEs. A “Guide of Good Practices for young SMEs” was developed to give an overview of good practices and support structures and to prove the “experts opinions” about the variety of different offers. Most of the offers were collected in the area of Hamburg. It is only to give an example. Results about the support structure in Hamburg can be easily compared to other regions in Germany.

The second national workshop organised by the Chamber of Skilled Crafts in Hamburg followed a two step approach.

Approach I: After collecting all offers of the experts which were directed to young entrepreneurs in the sector of crafts, we decided to present this guide of good practices first to young SMEs. Therefore we developed a concept for one workshop, including the suggestions in our survey with young entrepreneurs to combine technical issues with theoretical issues. A discussion round and working group was linked to a seminar of marketing issues – “Web-Check”. This combination of issues gave us a high guarantee that young entrepreneurs of SMEs would participate in the workshop. The discussion round was prepared with the speaker of the Craftmens Juniors – Handwerksjunioren. The marketing seminar on how to use a website and how to develop a good communication with clients was taken as opening to the group. Afterwards we were discussing issues such as: regulars for leadership on the example of communication with clients, management issues, management of personnel. Participants were invited to discuss their own role in the company, their need of support on management issues and structures for this training or counselling offers. The good practice guide was handed over to the young entrepreneurs. The workshop with the first workgroup took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2010.

Approach II: The same experts as in the first national workshop and those experts who helped collecting the good practices, were invited to the second national workshop with experts (also including SMEs as multipliers). It is a group of strategic people in the field of vocational training and consultancies and political stakeholders.

In this workshop we overtook results from the first workshop, that young SMEs need support in management issues and we followed a result of the survey with young craftsmen, that they need support in financial issues. Both specific needs were discussed for the sector crafts and the needs of young craftsmen. The first workgroup analysed coaching methods to cope with the high dynamic and needed “changes” of management tools in SMEs. There is a need to establish “change management” tools and to establish tools for development in the company taking into account the potential of the whole personnel. Not only the executive management can develop future perspectives and solve problems, some tasks and issues can be shifted to the personnel. This is a question of leadership manners. In this workgroup a focus was on a director of a medium-sized company in the sector of mechanical engineering. The group of experts tried to compare those results with the sector of crafts and especially micro companies in craft sector.

The second workgroup analysed financial support structures for micro companies in the craft sector. There was a focus more on the way of communication about financial support programmes for young SMEs. The experts agreed, that the support structures are well developed, but the information flow and the direct communication with young craftsmen as clients is insufficient or unsatisfying. This workshop with the two workgroups was held the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2010.

So this workshop report includes results from three workgroups: first the workgroup of young craftsmen / SMEs discussing training needs for management tools, second experts discussing coaching strategies on management tools including tools of “change management” and third a working group discussing the need for better information / communicating about financial support programmes and identifying strategies to cope with it in the future.

All the three workgroups planned in two workshops were focused on solutions for the craft sector.

## **II. Workshop Agenda**

The second national workshop was divided into two approaches (as explained earlier).

The **first approach** was followed to focus young craftsmen and discuss communication instruments with clients and the need of management tools to strengthen the marketing strategies

in young SMEs. It was developed as a seminar combining a marketing training with a discussion round on services for young craftsmen.

The situation of young craftsmen was discussed under three different points of view:

- some who overtook a running business within the family,
- some who overtook the company from an older craftsman without any family relations and
- some who set up their own business.

The situation about responsibilities and decision making was identified as very different. There was a need to support the implementation of management tools or a support to have exchange with other young craftsmen about their role and their way of coping with new challenges in management.

The workshop / seminar took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2010 from 6pm to 8pm. The invitation was published in magazines and via the website of the Chamber of Skilled Crafts in Hamburg. 350 young craftsmen, members in the Chamber of Skilled Crafts, were addressed by E-Mail and got an event note. Other information was given to the press/media.

## **II. a) Agenda of the workshop with young SMEs / Web-Check + discussion round**

**Opening speech and moderation:** Andreas Rönnau (Chamber of Skilled Crafts Hamburg, representative of the Department for SME Politics)

**Training “Web-Check” – how to develop a company website:** Richard Albrecht (trainer)

Examples of websites for discussion:

Manfred Kaufmann: [www.amanduskaufmann.de](http://www.amanduskaufmann.de)

Carsten Rohde: [www.rohde-hamburg.de](http://www.rohde-hamburg.de)

Uwe Hering: [www.weis-kg.de](http://www.weis-kg.de)

### **Discussion round “Services and support structures for young SMEs”:**

Wiebke Reyels (SME-TraiNet) and Jens Meer (Representative, Board of Young Craftsmen)

- Presentation of “Good Practice Guide on support offers for young SMEs”
- Communication / marketing as one issue of management strategies
- How to manage micro companies – needs and offers
- Modern leadership in micro companies

The **second approach** was with experts and SMEs on coaching offers for young craftsmen and on the information about financial programmes. This workshop took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2010 from 3pm to 6pm. It was addressed to all participants of the first national workshop including SMEs or young entrepreneurs as multipliers. The invitations were sent by E-Mail and event notes were

set up by faxes. Before summer holidays, the workshop was announced via newsletter of the project in June 2010.

This workshop included two workgroups: one on coaching strategies implementing strategies of growth (findings in the sector of mechanical engineering in comparison to the craft sector) and financial support in the craft sector. Because of only little participation of experts, we decided to keep the whole group together and discuss both thematic subjects one after the other.

## **II. b) the agenda of the second workshop with experts (including SMEs) was:**

**Opening speech:** Heinrich A. Rabeling, managing director of the vocational training centre ELBCAMPUS / Hamburg Chamber of Skilled Crafts

**Results of the SME-TraiNet project:** Wiebke Reyels, project manager SME-TraiNet, HWK-Hamburg

- What support structures for young SME could we define? Presentation of the good-practice guide
- What support structures were defined among the European partners?

### **Workgroup I:**

**Strategic thinking about growth – development of coaching strategies in the sector of mechanical engineering in comparison to the craft sector**

Presenter: Dr. Michael Steinhöfel, RKW Deutschland

### **Discussion round I:**

- How much „coaching is needed for young SME in the craft sector?
- Do we need new instruments / methods for counselling and training?
- How do we cope with this needs?

### **Workgroup II:**

**Financial support in the craft sector in times of global crisis**

Presenter: Cord Wiegels, Bürgerschaftsgemeinschaft Hamburg

### **Discussion round II:**

- How much financial support is needed for micro enterprises in the craft sector?
- What strategies are needed to develop support structures?

### **Closing plenary session**

## **III. List of participants and working groups**

Where as in the **first approach** we addressed the workgroup mainly to entrepreneurs, the **second approach** was addressed to experts from other institutions (including SMEs).

### **III a) List of participants following the seminar “Web-Check” with discussion round on services for young SMEs / entrepreneurs**

<b>Institution / company</b>	<b>Family name</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Position</b>
Frank Schlegel e. K.	Adrian-Schlegel	Claudia	Entrepreneur / SME
Promatik GmbH	Finke	Jule	Entrepreneur / SME
KFE Klinik Facility-Management	Jäckel	Sandra	Entrepreneur / SME
noon individual hair	Jurrat	Tina M.	Entrepreneur / SME
Lehnert Malerei GmbH	Kemna	Mario	Entrepreneur / SME
Plöger Sensor GmbH	Kruse	Tanja	Entrepreneur / SME
AVITEL GmbH Hamburg	Lemke	Rolf	Entrepreneur / SME
Meinecke Friseurbetriebs GmbH	Lütjens	Martina	Entrepreneur / SME
Handwerkskammer Hamburg	Möller	Frank	Counsellor SME
Handwerkskammer Hamburg	Schmitt	Andrea	Counsellor SME
W. SIEGO Sicherheitstechnik	Siego	Ralph	Entrepreneur / SME
Dipl.-Ing. Olaf Störer	Störer	Olaf	Entrepreneur / SME
Amandus Kaufmann GmbH	Kaufmann	Manfred	Entrepreneur / SME
Objekt und Wohnraum e.K.	Rohde	Carsten	Entrepreneur / SME
WEIS IT-Systeme GmbH & Co. KG	Hering	Uwe	Entrepreneur / SME
Siteway Webdesign	Albrecht	Richard	Trainer Webdesign / keynote peaker
Fahrrad Pagels	Meer	Jens	Representative HWK-Juniors / keynote speaker
Handwerkskammer Hamburg	Rönnau	Andreas	Representative of SME-politics
Handwerkskammer Hamburg	Reyels	Wiebke	Project manager SME-TraiNet

### III b) List of participants in the second workshop with experts (including SMEs)

Institution	Name	Vorname	Position
Handwerkskammer Hamburg / ELBCAMPUS	Rabeling	Heinrich A.	Executive manager
Handwerkskammer Hamburg	Reyels	Wiebke	Project manager SME-TraiNet
Handwerkskammer Hamburg	Kuttenkeuler	Andreas	Project manager InnovationsAgentur
Handwerkskammer Hamburg	Gaster	Frank	Director department consultancy services SMEs
Handwerkskammer Hamburg	Schell	Anita	Counsellor, inhouse consultancy (HWK mobil)
Handwerkskammer Hamburg	Wöste	Stephanie	Project manager InnoWerkstatt
Handwerkskammer Hamburg / ELBCAMPUS	Keller	Elke	Director department "Administrative Training Services"
Handwerkskammer Hamburg	Schlick	Jana	Project manager Beratungsteam Elbinsel-Handwerk
RKW Deutschland GmbH	Dr. Steinhöfel	Michael	Project manager "lernend wachsen, wachsen lernen"
Mittelstandsförderinstitut	Oesterer	Martina	Project manager
Bürgerschaftsgemeinschaft in Hamburg GmbH	Wiegels	Cord	Counsellor for SMEs
Handwerkskammer Hamburg	Lüthje	Lars	Counsellor SMEs (HWK mobil)
Altmann Reifen- und Autoservice GmbH	Altmann	Andreas	SME / entrepreneur
Willi Curdt & Co. GmbH	Curdt	Eike	SME / entrepreneur

Unfortunately the participation of experts in the second workshop was very little. Especially stakeholders refused to participate in "workgroups". Stakeholders of public institutions or political decision makers had problems to define their role in a "workgroup". They are used to be asked as keynote speaker. The participation in a workgroup was very unusual and confusing to them. Another reason was the date of the workshop. It was short time after summer holidays. Even though the announcement was placed in the newsletters before summer break, many experts were still in holidays. On the other hand we got a high interest by internal experts of the field, SME counsellors ect.. Actually the department of consultancy services for SMEs in the Chamber of Skilled Crafts will

put up a new programme / project focussing on the same clients – SMEs in the period after business start up. Therefore some counsellors and the head of of this department in the Chamber of Skilled Crafts used the workshop to get feedback and ideas from other experts and representatives of SMEs. This fact actually brought a new dynamic into the discussion in the workshop. There was a direct interest to develop strategies.

#### **IV. Selected sectors and justification for selecting those sectors**

The selected sector was the craft sector as one sector which has to be differentiated to the tertiary or service sector or the branches of commerce. The first national workshop and the survey with young craftsmen showed, that marketing strategies and management tools are those topics identified as most needed in trainings. Craftsmen usually run micro companies. Only few of them learn management tools by extra seminars. Seminars to become “Master” in it’s guild include courses of management, business administration and management of personnel. Those courses train general or basic skills. Already the word “management” gives young craftsmen an image to talk about “big companies or enterprises”. What does it mean to develop a management plan for five years? How do you implement strategies to cope with “growth” or to cope with “risks”? These are issues, which aren’t discussed often. To be an entrepreneur or to become a manager of a SME, most would say, these are types of a character, but nothing to be trained. The sector of crafts needs management tools for micro companies. Financial support services are seen as good enough, although SMEs and young entrepreneurs stated in the survey, they need more financial support. Craftsmen aren’t informed enough about financial support structures. Information systems as in commercial branches don’t work out with craftsmen.

National reports such as the IAB-Kurzbericht 8/2010 (Unternehmensgründungen in Krisenzeiten – Internationaler Vergleich / page no. 6ff) referring to the GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor) underline our findings. In Germany there is a good structure of financial support programmes and public counselling offers, but SMEs don’t use this structure. They are more likely to ask family relatives or friends for help than going and participating in public programmes. In the crafts sector the need to change information services and to offer mobile services – addressing more direct to the SMEs is crucial. Micro companies cannot be compared with medium-sized companies. Craftsmen usually run micro companies. Therefore they ask for very individual services structures. Financial support programmes are more likely to be offered to medium-sized companies. The most of craftsmen only think in very little steps and with low investments. Debates about growth and risks seem to be out of their field of action. Loans and bank investments are big issues. How craftsmen can be informed in a better way, how they can select out of many offers and programmes, these are special needs in the sector of crafts.

## V. Identified current and emerging needs in the selected sectors

Summarizing the three workgroups with entrepreneurs of SMEs and experts, we can describe three different kinds of needs for young craftsmen.

- a) Young entrepreneurs in the craft sector running their businesses for three to six years, have only very few time resources. Help and support mostly is organised within family or private structures. There is only few exchange with other young entrepreneurs. In the same guild, there is a high level of concurrence. Exchange of ideas only take place in very few times.  
**The need is:** putting up new forms of seminars taking into account the need to learn technical issues, but also to get time and space for exchange. Forums of discussion for young craftsmen from differnt guilds were discussed, too.
  
- b) Experts offering public counsultancy or coaching services started to put up “inhouse” or “mobile services”. Trust and reliability have to be brought up in first place. Craftsmen need to train their skills to cope with a very dynamic time after business start up. The craft sector needs solutions for micro companies, usually these solutions follow a very individual plan of action, taylor made for the young entrepreneur. To overtake leadership, to employ more personnel, to apply for bigger jobs or to accept more demands of clients at same time, these are decisions to be taken. Entrepreneurs have to learn, how to shift some tasks, duties or exercises to their personnel, if they have some. In micro companies, such as most companies in the craft sector are, often decisions are made by one person. The specific need of “young” craftsmen is to cope with the dynamics after business start up – therefore issues such us “coping with changes”, “coping with growth and risks”, how much personnel is needed, which potentials does my employees bring with them – these issues have to be implemented within the coaching offers. **The need is:** Coaching instruments for young craftsmen have to combine following issues: upgrade the level of financial and administration competences, risk and growth diagnosis, dynamic aspect and change management, influences on changing processes, keeping personnel, leadership / management abilities. Craftsmen have to be convinced that also directors of small or micro companies need a good management to cope with risks in the market. Until now there is only few motivation to participate in trainings with coaching.
  
- c) Beside the aspect of coaching to develop management tools in a company, direct financial support was stated the most important need among young craftsmen. Although experts state that there are enough instruments and offers to give financial support to young craftsmen. The workshop with experts should analyse this difference between the answers

of young entrepreneurs and experts. The Good-Practice-Guide showed quite a good range and variety of offers. Experts found out, that the lack of competences in economics or financial administration might be one reason why especially young craftsmen have a feeling to need better financial support. Young craftsmen are more likely to have high qualities in their guild than in economics and administration. Leadership and running it's own business need both, a good knowledge in the technical field (guild and crafts) but also in administrative issues. **The needs is:** establishing a good flow of information. Service providers have to take into account, that reliability is crucial and an individual coach or mentor should be installed at first place to every single entrepreneur. Someone who helps to pick up the right support programme.

## **VI. Solutions and strategies**

In the line with the three needs we can summarise some ideas about solutions and strategies.

- a) Within usual programmes (such as ESF programmes or others) it is hard to place seminars and courses which can combine technical issues and socialising issues. Costs for catering are hardly to be financed. But still there is a need to establish training forms with discussions forums. The workshop with experts brought up the item "intellectual or mental wellness". Seminars have to work out a concept to establish "mental wellness" – the seminar allows socialising aspects. These forums could be well seen as "lobbying forums". The seminar participants get to know each other, can learn from each other and can discuss problems and challenges. To avoid concurrence situations, the forums should be addressed to several guilds. Another approach could be to organise regional exhibitions or fairs, only for young entrepreneurs in crafts. EU or national fundings for business programmes should include these aspects. Therefore we need to discuss the effect of social exchange more often.
- b) There are many instruments for coaching and "change management". These have to be checked, to find out about strategies for micro companies. RKW Deutschland already runs a good programme for medium-sized companies (Wachsen lernen – lernend wachsen). This could be useful to be adapted to small and micro companies in the craft sector. The Chambers should train their personnel, especially the counsellors, in instruments / tools of "change management" strategies. Offers of mentoring and coaching have to be brought up, which are able to coach dynamic processes. This would be important especially to young entrepreneurs. They need to be addressed directly. Offers and services should be provided as "inhouse offers". Trainers, counsellors and mentors have to go into the company,

analysing the individual situation, bringing up factors to be upgraded and guiding the company through the process. Finances have to be found to offer these coaching services. EU programmes or national programmes are needed. Maybe these services can include an amount of costs for the entrepreneur. Inhouse seminars have to be paid to be attractive.

- c) Craftsmen seek to get too much information and loose control about which information and which support programme is useful for them. Therefore we need to get more “one-stop-systems” in the regions. One desk services, which provides first information for the young entrepreneur. Young entrepreneurs were seen as one special group of clients. The one-stop-system should give all information useful for young SMEs in the region. Therefore “Good-Practice-Guides” or brochures with all information on programmes – especially for young SMEs have been seen as useful. This is a service which has to be financed in the region. Different service providers and regional government should have a common interest to bring up this information desk. A website could be another service of this one desk system. Finances have to be cleared up.

Unfortunately we were not able to discuss strategies on political level. There were no representatives of political or public bodies in our workshops. Therefore we plan to have small discussion rounds with them. These discussion rounds would point on our findings in the workshops, would broaden our discussion and maybe strengthen the strategies to cope with the needs.

## **VII. Evaluation of the workshops**

Both workshops were evaluated.

### **VII a) Evaluation of the SME workshop “Web-Check and discussion round”:**

Six young entrepreneurs answered the evaluation form. Five of them stated that they were highly satisfied with the workshop (best score = four points out of four) and one stated he was satisfied (3 points out of four). Three would like to get further training on management and marketing tools (including organisational aspects, cooperations, operating and administrative control). One would like to get further information material. One would like to get more training in IT-Systems and computers. One would like to get trained on personal issues (self-development) and how to motivate employees.

## **VII b) Evaluation of the second workshop with experts (including young SMEs):**

Six evaluation forms had been filled out. All six experts stated to be satisfied about the information and the invitation to the workshop. All six experts stated their expectations were fulfilled.

As most interesting subjects of the workshop, the participants answered:

- the keynote of Mr. Steinhöfel referring about new methods for coaching (four answers out of six),
- the information about financial support structures was scored high as well,
- the reflection of ones own work and services,
- discussion about approaches from other European countries.

The most important finding or awareness participants got out of the workshop was:

- How to work more on actual needs and requests,
- From the point of view of an entrepreneur – you have to express more your self-interests.
- Networking with participants in the workshop,
- to approach SMEs and entrepreneurs more actively,
- seminars for young SMEs have to provide socialising aspects – work/learning and socialising,
- to ask entrepreneurs to be multipliers for good examples,
- support structures and services are enough, but the access to services has to be reconsidered – professional and technical support for young SMEs has to be combined with seminar structure to get exchange with others,
- support services with the character of events or lively networks have to be brought up.

Suggestions for future thematic focus was:

- to put up networks of young SMEs
- bringing up a comprehensive and widespread of good practice guide with all programmes of support for young SMEs – goal is an overview of services and support programmes

All six experts stated in their feedback sheets, that they were satisfied with the time scale in the workshop.

## Appendix: Impressions and pictures from the second workshop with experts



Heinrich A. Rabeling



Dr. Michael Steinhöfel



Wiebke Reyels



From left to right: Stephanie Wöste, Martina Oesterer, Curd Wiegels, Anita Schell



From left to right: Anita Schell, Jana Schlick



Workgroup scene