

E(CO)-QUALIFY

Qualification
Standards for Organic Retailers



A European Project for Vocational Training in the Organic Food Retail Trade

Standards - Certification - E-Learning



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

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Introduction

Over the last 25 years organic food production and trade has become established in the German food industry.

Although roughly 150,000 people work in this segment of the market, the corresponding trade has grown slowly and only around 3 % of the overall turnover in food products is accounted for by certified organic products.

In the other 15 EU countries the trade in organic food has also developed and grown slowly, though steadily.

New EU countries have also, since the end of the 20th century, taken advantage of organic agriculture and organic products as one opportunity within the framework of the structural changes in agriculture.

In 2004 an increase in organic food trade in double digits was achieved in all countries participating in the E(co)-Qualify project - Belgium, Germany, Latvia, Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

This growth is accompanied by more intensive need for qualifications.

The existing qualifications of specialised organic shops owners, organic supermarkets managers or ordinary employees must be measurable, and must be appreciated by the consumers, who should be able to assess them in practice.

Fourteen partner organisations from eight European countries met in the Leonardo da Vinci project called E(co)-Qualify described below, in order to work together to improve the quality of national professional education.

Harmonised European Qualifications Standards were developed, and a corresponding certification system should subsequently be developed in the follow-up project.

An E-Learning educational system was developed, as the first component of the project, with the aim of making the corresponding topics easily accessible directly at the workplace, thus initiating the integration of qualification processes.

This E-Learning system, with its first 8 teaching units, is available in 3 languages - German, Polish and Czech.

To ensure that this development achieves the corresponding social and market/economic relevance, a supreme European body was established in 2003 for the retail trade in organic foodstuffs.

O-R-A, Organic Retailers Association

One of the goals of ORA is professional education on a European level.

In this publication you can find out about the project partners and their relationship to professional education. You can study the Qualification standards and think about whether the vision of a single certification strategy presented here can be socially anchored in the given system, and whether this is feasible in the near future.

An E-Learning system, which was developed within the project, is described as an example of further education in close relation to the workplace. The teaching unit "Product Range Development", which was given the best assessment by those taking part in the trial phase, is shown as an example.

We hope that our work, which should be seen as a contribution to professional education for small and medium-sized companies active in the area of trade in Europe, will increase the qualifications of owners and employees working in the organic food retail trade.

Prof. Dr. Helmut Labrenz
Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaften

Hamburg, October 2005

European partners with common motivation

Their contribution to national vocational training

This chapter describes organisations participating in the project, their motivation and their position in the structure of national options for vocational training in the organic sector of food trade.

The partners include schools, universities, training centres, professional associations and enterprises.

AL naturkost HandelsgesmbH

As the leading regional wholesaler AL naturkost supplies 600 organic stores in Austria and neighbouring EU countries with a complete range of 6,000 certified organic products including fresh produce.

BNN Einzelhandel e.V.

Bundesverband Naturkost Naturwaren Einzelhandel/Deutschland (The Federal Organic Food Retail Association/Germany) is an association representing the economic and ideological interests of specialised organic retail stores. It promotes the competitiveness of its members by means of qualitative standards, product range guidelines, an organic logo, education and lobbying.

Die Raupe V.o.G.

Die Raupe is engaged in adult education in the German-speaking parts of Belgium. As an association aiming to shape ecological awareness, Raupe V.o.G. in Eupen runs an information and consultation centre for low-energy building and sustainable development, and a store for regional and ecological products.

Ekotrend

Ekotrend is the National Association of Slovak organic farmers, processors and traders.

The European University Viadrina

The European University Viadrina is a cross-border education and research centre. The university in the Polish-German border region is characterised by a wide range of internationally oriented study programmes with a large proportion of foreign students (mainly from Poland).

PRO-BIO Svaz ekologických zemědělců

PRO-BIO is the association of Czech organic farmers, processors and traders. PRO-BIO Association was founded in 1990 and has since been partner in several EU funded projects.

Pro Natura

Pro Natura is a Polish natural and organic products wholesaler, closely co-operating with retailers and producers. Pro Natura has been organising consultation and education for natural food stores for a number of years.

VNOe - Austrian Organic Retailers Association

VNOe association was founded in 1998. It aims to promote the organic marketing concept developed by the association and to shape the specialised retail trade in organic food in Austria. Its principal activities include promotion and lobbying, organic information management, professional education, qualitative management and product development.

Hamburg University of Applied Sciences

The University exploratory focus deals with consumer understanding concerning food and nutrition covering socio-economical, health and sensory aspects. Additionally several test laboratories (food chemistry, food development, sensory technology) are available.

Kazdanga Agricultural College

The Kazdanga Agricultural College has been engaged in agricultural education since 1925. Since the beginning of the 1990s it has also offered consultation and professional education in organic agriculture and trade, including work within the framework of EU PHARE projects.

Ökomarkt Verbraucher- und Agrarberatung E.V.

Ökomarkt is a consumer and consultation organisation for ecological development and lifestyle. Since 1986 it has been providing consumers with education and information on organic agriculture and food.

Ökoszerviz Kft.

Hungarian organic food retailer and wholesaler, founded in 1990, with more than 1,000 products sold in organic food stores and over the internet. Ökoszerviz also operates Europe-wide organic food trade.

1

The benefit of qualification standards for organic food retail trade in Europe

A standard describes a required or ideal state. It should be used by all who are involved. Every employee knows the standards used in their company and is able to apply them. There are several levels of standards. Firstly - generally valid standards with which a specialist's work must comply, eg. hygienic standards for work with cheese, or knowledge in the field of organic agriculture. Secondly - internal standards of a shop, eg. number of types of cheese offered and number of types of cheese with a limited price. Qualification standards presented here define what qualification, from the point of its content, is required for a person to fulfil their tasks professionally.

Generally valid standards are formed externally. Regarding their content they are binding. Eg. hygienic standards for cheese are not a matter of interpretation, but a fixed directive. The quality of organic retail can only be increased by consistent adherence to such standards.

Individual standards of shops are defined by the shop management. They provide a certain space for negotiation, yet always in regard to complying with the generally valid standards. In the EU countries, there is quite wide diversity in educational and training provision and certification in the field of organic retail. Qualifications or certificates attained through such provision, are not mutually comparable and thus mostly lack any indicative value. Therefore qualifications of job applicants must be verified or training must be

provided, which is demanding in terms of finance and time. Unified qualification standards build a basis for comparable or generally valid systems of evaluation and certification. They contribute to bringing together vocational education in the organic market. It is possible to increase and evaluate the professional level of employees in organic foodshops.

Qualification standards presented here have been formulated within the European LEONARDO DA VINCI project by 14 partner bodies from eight European countries. The participating organisations are active in various areas of organic trade. Therefore it was possible to create the qualification standards in close relation to practice and to direct them clearly and internationally towards conditions on the European job-market.

Qualification standards for the operational and managerial levels (company management) have been developed.

Basic competencies have been formulated, as well as necessary skills and knowledge on areas of products, enterprises and market.

The presented standards provide a basis for clear systems of evaluation and certification. They contribute to bringing together various national educational provisions in the framework of vocational education.

2

Structure and content of qualification standards for European organic food retail trade

Qualification standards describe employee-competencies required at present in organic retail, both in everyday operative activities and at the level of management. There are specific basic competencies that customers expect to find in every worker.

Competent handling of goods is no less necessary than knowledge of work methods in the company. Sales behaviour orientated towards customers must be learned as such behaviour plays a vital role in a company's success on the market.

Presented organization of qualification standards is based on the fact that knowledge and skills of the operational level of trade are obligatory for owners and managers in

organic retail. As a superstructure of these, competencies vital for managing a company are described here, too. To organise an enterprise, control mechanisms systemizing all internal methods are necessary. Knowledge of assessing market conditions is vital for an enterprise to be able to continuously adapt to ever-changing requirements of the market. Qualification standards are always connected to development of the market. Adaptations to market changes should be planned and implemented regularly.

Table 1: Qualification standards at the operational level

Basic knowledge	Product		Business		Market	
	basic qualifications	additional qualifications	organization	accounting	communication	marketing tools
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. organic agriculture 2. fair trade 3. hygiene 4. care for goods 5. goods storage 6. communicative competence 7. computing equipment - knowledge 8. environmental protection 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. fruit and vegetables 2. bread and bakery products 3. cheese 4. milk, dairy products, and eggs 5. soya products 6. cereals and cereal products 7. dry fruit 8. muesli 9. seeds for sprouting and sprouts 10. oil, fat and nuts 11. honey 12. spreadable and spicing products 13. beverages 14. stimulants (sweets, coffee, tea, and cocoa) 15. baby food 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. meat and meat products 2. natural products and natural cosmetic products 3. frozen products 4. semi-finished products 5. delicatessen 6. herbs and curatives 7. fish 8. etheric oils 9. nutritional supplements 10. detergents and washing agents 11. snacks 12. household utensils and cereal grinders 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. labelling and declaration 2. goods management 3. working procedures in a business 4. protection of work safety 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. accounting 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. displaying goods and layout of selling space 2. advisory communication 3. sale communication 4. claim management 5. nutrition science 6. nutrition-related diseases 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. retail structure 2. price policy 3. range of goods

Table 2: Qualification standards at the management level

Basic knowledge	Business		Marketing	
	organization	accounting (oriented on management)	market survey	marketing tools
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. business philosophy 2. knowledge of electronic media 3. communicative competence 4. management of time utilization 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. goods management and record keeping 2. goods purchasing 3. work organization 4. quality management 5. personnel management 6. management of solving problems 7. controlling I 8. labour law 9. protection of work safety 10. legislative basics of retail 11. ecological management 12. project management 13. organization of training in the business 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. accounting 2. investments and financing 3. controlling II 4. management of resources 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. market survey oriented on customers 2. market survey oriented on competitors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. advertising 2. promotion/Public Relations work

Motives for qualification standards

Various educational measures and certificates have been employed in many countries of the European Union in the area of professional training focused on specialized trade with organic foodorganic foods.

In the majority of cases the qualifications or certificates attained on the basis of these educational measures are not sufficient as they are mutually incomparable. Therefore human resources management has to either check the content of the qualification of an applicant, or to perform several training sessions, which is costly and time-consuming.

Uniform qualification standards form a basis for purposeful evaluation and certification systems. They contribute to mutual convergence of various national educational measures and certification systems. With their assistance it is possible to improve and assess the attained professional level of employees in special organic organic food shops.

In the framework of the E(co)-Qualify Project, qualification standards for the operational level and for the management of a business have been developed. During this process both general prerequisites and necessary qualifications have been formulated for the product, business, and market areas

Qualification standards

Qualification standards are the means for building a European certification system in organic retail. By using them it is possible to improve specialised organic food shops' employees' organic food expertise and to assess it within a comparable system. Additionally, the standards contribute to a mutual convergence of various national educational measures and certification systems. Their existence enhances national opportunities for employment; in an ideal case, this can also apply to the whole European Union.

Qualification standards are divided into different areas indicated in the Appendix (tables). Objectives and relevance of individual standards are formulated there; by this, a complex and transparent system has been established.

2.1. Qualification standards at the operational level

In retail companies we differentiate between two levels of performance: the operational level and the level of management. The operational level includes all specifically performed activities. At this level, qualification standards should enable to implement decisions and measures concerning everyday operational procedures in specialized organic food shops. In many cases, for example in the area of marketing, the standards contain basic knowledge, which has to be acquired by employees as well as by owners and managers of shops.

Basic knowledge

This includes references to all qualification standards, which are the basis of work in organic food trade. They serve as background for correct and customer-oriented handling of products, enable use of computing and computers, and constitute a part of business philosophy.

1. Organic agriculture

The basics of the organic farming are known and can be explained. Organic products can be treated and offered in accordance with their unique features.

The differences between organic and conventional agriculture can be shown. The consequences of conventional agriculture such as water pollution or endangering of some species can be described. The positive consequences of organic farming can be explained. National associations of producers and important international organic agriculture organisations are known. Their evolution will be monitored to be able to provide the information on qualitative standards sold under a certain name at any time.

International and national control regulations for organic food are well known and can be realized on an everyday basis for final inspection of fresh goods and with respect to labelling.

Restricted use of additional substances and ban on artificial

fortification by adding vitamins and minerals (except for baby food) in the production process of organic foods are known. The contribution of allowed additional substances and their health safety can be explained. Health hazards arising from banned additional substances can be described.

The production of plant foodstuffs can be described in terms of production, processing, transportation, and packaging. This also includes knowledge of: usage of organic fertilizers or no usage of mineral fertilizers; the importance and observance of seeding procedures; and organic methods of weed control and plant protection.

The knowledge in this area enables the explanation of critical points in the offer as well as qualitative and price differences. The production of animal foodstuffs can be described. This also includes the knowledge of natural breeding and balance between the production of feed stuffs and fertilizers.

The knowledge in this area enables the justification of price differences.

2. Fair trade

The background of the "fair trade" concept is known and can be explained. The relation between current, conventional economic structures and social or ecological poverty at global and regional levels can be shown and critically assessed.

3. Hygiene

Legal provisions of European regulation regarding foodstuffs are known and can be followed. The knowledge in this area enables responsible handling of goods and equipment and complies with minimum legal requirements in the area of hygiene.

4. Care for goods

The basics of care for goods are known and can be explained and applied. The effects of water, air, light, temperature, and pests on goods can be described. The goods offered in shops can be thus treated in accordance with their unique features.

The knowledge in this area enables decision-making in the area of care for goods, and if there are problems, environmentally friendly measures can be adopted.

5. Goods storage

The basics of goods storage are known and can be explained and applied. The effects of water, air, light, temperature, and pests on goods can be described. The goods can be stored in accordance with their unique features.

The knowledge in this area enables decision-making regarding the storage of goods and complying with the legal provisions; if there are problems, environmentally friendly measures can be adopted.

6. Communication skills

The basics of communication are known. They can be applied in everyday contact with customers, colleagues, suppliers, and superiors. Communication competence is the prerequisite of teamwork, consultancy and sales communication.

7. Computing technology - knowledge

Operating computers and the use of common software systems are familiar.

It is possible to attend an e-learning training course Ecoqualify, and other qualification measures in the area of work with computing technology.

8. Environmental protection

The causes of endangerment of water, soil, air, and other natural resources can be named and explained.

The measures for the protection of resources, energy saving, and prevention of waste are known and can be assessed and used.

In this context, for example the system of returnable packages with a deposit is familiar and used. The environmental benefits from returnable bottles can be explained.

The knowledge in this area enables both responsible handling of natural resources and economically purposeful conduct.

Product

Basic qualifications

The knowledge and competence in the sphere of goods refer to individual product groups offered in organic food shops.

1. Fruit and vegetables

Individual types of the "fruit and vegetables" product group as well as their unique features are known. The production, transport, and packaging of this group can be described. Their nutritional and environmental benefits as well as their culinary use can be described.

2. Bread and bakery products

Individual types of bread and bakery products as well as respective raw materials are known; their production can be described. Their nutritional and environmental benefits can be explained.

3. Cheese

The basics of cheese production are known and can be described. Usual types of cheese with respective unique features are known. Organic cheese can be treated and offered in accordance with its unique features.

The division of cheeses according to the law can be indicated and described:

- type of milk
- method of curdling (bacteria of lactic fermentation or rennet)
- degree of maturity
- fat contents (content of fat in dry matter = fat in dry matter)
- groups of cheeses (water content = whey)

Cheese specialities, such as goat and sheep cheese, cheese in souce, or cheese made of raw milk are known. In this respect, known topics also include the cow milk allergy, and alternative solutions can be offered, such as sheep, goat, or mare milk, or soya milk or rice drink. Labelling regulations arising from the regulations on cheeses and related to both packed and non-packed cheeses are known. This also includes for example the "best before date", list of ingredients, or price and type of milk. This knowledge can be utilized upon the final inspection of fresh goods and upon the labelling in the shop.

The basics of the care for cheese and its storage are known and can be described and applied. They include for example: treatment of moulds; suitable cutting techniques; care for equipment and tools; and keeping the list of losses.

The knowledge in this area enables the adoption of health-, environment-, and economy-related decisions regarding the care for cheese and its storage.

The hygienic requirements for cheese handling are known and observed in everyday practice. This makes a good overall impression of the shop and builds up customers' confidence.

General principles of attractive presentation are known and effectively used. This includes for example the placement of labels, decorative and colourful arrangement of goods, cleanliness, range of goods (basic range, and extra or additional range, creation of a cheese counter plan [graphical layout of individual types of cheese in the counter]).

Attractive presentation of the cheese counter leads to a positive shopping experience for customers.

The basics of advisory communication are known and effectively used. This includes for example (inter alia) sensory knowledge so that the shop assistant is able to describe the taste of the cheese.

4. Milk, dairy products and eggs

Individual types of milk and dairy products can be classified. Their production, processing, transport, packing, and shelf life can be described. Eggs can be classified and marked in relation to their shelf life and special hygiene requirements.

Nutritional and environmental benefits of this group of products can be explained.

5. Soya products

Individual soya products can be distinguished and their processing, production and packaging can be described. Special requirements for the raw material can be explained.

Nutritional and environmental benefits of this group of products can be explained. Possibilities for culinary use and use for example of soya flour or ready-to-eat tofu can be described.

6. Cereals and cereal products

Individual types of cereals can be distinguished and their processing, production and packaging can be described. Individual cereal products, such as for example superior flours, semolina, cereal flakes and bran are known and their production and possibilities of use can be described.

Nutritional and environmental benefits of this group of products can be explained.

7. Dry fruit

Individual types of dry fruit and their original fruit species can be named and their production methods and processing can be described. Information regarding shelf life and pest infestation and pest control are known and can be explained.

Culinary use can be described.

8. Muesli

The ingredients of muesli and granule products can be distinguished and requirements for raw materials can be indicated. The processing of raw materials and providing guarantee for the goods mixed and packaged in the shop can be explained.

9. Seeds for sprouting and sprouts

Individual species and the unique features of this group of products are known and their production and packaging can be described. Their nutritional and environmental benefits as well as their culinary use can be described. Advice as to germination and respective equipment can be given.

10. Oil, fat and nuts

Individual types/species and the unique features of this group of products are known and their production, transport and packaging can be described.

Their nutritional and environmental benefits and their culinary use can be described.

11. Honey

The range of honeys offered in specialized organic food shops can be classified and the qualitative criteria for this product can be listed. Technical and legal requirements for ecological bee breeding and the honey yields and processing can be explained.

The nutritional and environmental benefits can be described.

12. Spreadable and spicing products

Individual spreadable and spicing products can be distinguished. Their ingredients are known. This product group can be described in terms of production and packaging.

Their nutritional and ecological benefits as well as the importance of spreads as an alternative solution to smoked-meat products can be explained.

The production of spicing products, the issues concerning their processing and preservation, and their culinary use can be described.

13. Beverages

Individual beverages are known and their unique features can be described. Water, juices and nectars as well as wine and beer can be classified. Their origin or production, quality of raw materials, list of additives, preservation and packaging can be described.

Their nutritional and ecological benefits can be described; the same applies to the role of alcohol and consequences of its abuse.

14. Stimulants (sweets, coffee, tea, and cocoa)

Individual stimulants can be classified. The most important countries and growing areas producing coffee, tea, and cocoa can be listed. The production can be described. Individual teas and their types can be classified. The most important producing countries and growing areas can be listed. The production can be described.

The issues concerning these products in the world market can be explained. The content of their substances and nutritional features as well as their kitchen processing and effects on human organisms can be described.

15. Baby food

The range of baby and child food in special organic food shops can be classified. The requirements for raw materials, preparation and ingredients are known.

The issues regarding the use and processing can be answered; some practical tips can be given.

Additional qualifications

Additional qualifications regarding specific products in the following product groups can be useful or even necessary in view of the range of products sold in specialized organic food shops.

1. Meat and smoked-meat products

This qualification standard is attained by means of special education recognized by the state (butcher or meat product shop assistant).

Specialized organic food shops that sell packed or frozen meat have to comply with the regulations concerning the sale of meat.

2. Natural products and natural cosmetic products

Natural products and natural cosmetic products rank among the complex groups of a special range of products. Their production, composition, and unique features concerning their use are known and can be explained. The qualification standard is attained by means of specialized education.

3. Frozen products

Various types of frozen products are known and their production, packaging and storage can be described. The food-related and technical handling of frozen products is known and used.

Unique features and potential importance of this group of products are known and can be explained.

4. Semi-finished products

Various types of semi-finished products are known and their production, packaging, storage and shelf life can be described. The food-related and technical handling of semi-finished products is known and used.

Unique features and potential importance of this group of products for specialized organic food shops are known and can be explained.

5. Delicatessen

The most important delicatessen products and their additives are known and their production and shelf life can be described. The food-related and technical handling of delicatessen products is known and used.

Unique features and potential importance of this group of products for specialized organic food shops can be explained.

6. Herbs and medicaments

The range and forms of freely sold natural medicaments as well as related legal provisions are known and can be explained. The herbs and medicaments can be described in terms of their growing, harvesting, and processing.

The use and properties of these products can be explained.

The qualification standard is attained by means of a special license for the sale of freely sold medicaments, which has to be acquired from an appropriate authority.

7. Fish

Fish form a complex area of a special range. If a specialized organic food shop offers fish, the existing directives concerning organic fish production must be known. Additionally, individual species of fish can be classified and their processing and culinary use can be described.

8. Etheric oils

The production and origin of etheric oils are known and can be described. Non-medical areas of use and hazards related thereto can be described.

9. Nutritional supplements

Special features of production, processing, and use are known and can be described.

10. Detergents and washing agents

A selection of ecological detergents and washing powders/products can be listed. The composition and effects of individual products are known and can be described. Additional environmental benefits of these products can be explained.

11. Snacks

The meaning of snacks in special organic food shops can be explained. The requirements for raw materials used, their processing and preparation can be described.

12. Household utensils and cereal grinders

The construction, operation, and use of cereal grinders can be described. Common household utensils sold in special organic food shops can be described.

Business

A 'business' is an organized economic unit in which factual goods and services are produced and sold. Planned procurement, improvement, administration, and selling of goods or services are called 'business management'. In essence, the business and economic performance is determined by three basic principles:

- **Economic principle** - is focused on an advantageous ratio between costs (means) and revenues (results)
- **Humane principle** - puts a human being into the centre of interest; it is focused for example on work organisation corresponding to the needs and potential of the human being
- **Ecological principle** - has regard for environmental aspects of performance and makes effort to prevent or mitigate harm to the environment

The qualification standards in this area enable these three principles to be purposefully incorporated in everyday working processes of specialized organic food shops.

Organization

Business organisation can be defined as follows: "Everything that takes place in a business follows a certain order or certain rules. First of all this order has to be planned and then implemented with the assistance of organisational measures." Basic knowledge in the area of business organisation leads to the situation when the set rules govern the business processes.

1. Labelling and declaration

International and national legal provisions regarding labelling and declaration are known and can be implemented.

2. Goods management

Goods and data flow can be described. Objectives and tasks of goods management can be explained. The organisation of goods purchasing along with the planning of the purchasing and its organisation is understood and can be explained. Special features of purchasing goods for specialized organic food shops are known and can be considered in everyday business activities.

The course of receipt of goods is known and can be carried out. The goods can be taken over, checked and recorded. Handling delivery notes is known and used.

The warehouse organisation as well as all legal storage regulations can be described. This knowledge can be integrated into everyday working procedures.

The system of stock level control is familiar and can be implemented. Stock levels can be controlled in terms of quantity and/or quality. The stock level control can be documented.

3. Working procedures in a business

Working procedures in a business are known and can be described, documented, and applied as regards every department or every area.

Clearing of sales can be carried out. The cash system is known and used on an everyday basis. The procedures of cash registration are understood and can be explained in a discussion with customers. Cash vouchers and receipts can be issued. The cash balance in a cash register can be counted. The goods can be properly packed according to their respective characteristic features. Daily clearance can be carried out separately.

Working tools in special organic food shops can be operated. This includes the operation of scales, cereal grinders, cutters, and graters.

4. Protection and industrial safety

Legal provisions concerning protection and industrial safety are known and can be applied. The measures to prevent accidents in the shops can be implemented separately.

Accounting

Basic knowledge in the area of accounting is acquired. This knowledge enables the performance of preparatory work, such as stocktaking and statistics. The use of the calculation factor specific for individual groups of goods is known and used.

Market

The term "marketing" means market-oriented conduct of the business. Marketing serves for the satisfaction of the needs of all those who are involved in the process of exchange. In view of the business objectives marketing is primarily focused on the needs of the customers. "Customers won't buy what a company offers to them; the company has to offer what the customers require." This statement shows that the basis of the marketing is the customer-oriented market situation. From a long-term point of view, the objective of marketing is to reach profit. To achieve this objective, certain marketing tools are used, such as:

- **Product policy** - is concerned with material and functional quality of the product.
- **Contracting policy** - is about the financial payoff for the performance offered.
- **Distribution policy** - is concerned with sales ways of products.
- **Communication policy** - is about the achieving of the targets by way of passing on information that should coordinate the way of behaviour, attitudes, etc.

The qualification standards in this area should enable the monitoring of the market, perceiving changes, and using suitable marketing strategies to achieve positive economic business results.

Communication

Communication can be described as follows: "Communication has the following features: sharing information, meanings, and contents to regulate views, attitudes, expectations, and ways of behaviour in accordance with specific expectations." The basic knowledge in this area refers to the measures for optimising and supporting sale. These measures are primarily oriented on customers with the objective of convincing them about company performance.

1. Displaying goods and layout of selling space

The principles of the attractive displaying of goods and layout of the selling space and a shop window are known and can be implemented. The knowledge in this area enables the optimum use of the selling space and shelves for goods. It supports the looks and creates a positive shopping atmosphere.

2. Advisory communication

Techniques of advisory communication are known and can be used. The advisory communication can be held in everyday work.

3. Sale communication

Techniques of sales communication are known and can be used in everyday work.

Expertise in this area encourages customers' confidence, positively influences an overall impression of the shop and should increase turnover.

The following six phases of the overall selling process can be indicated:

- Preparation
- Contact
- Communication
- Argumentation
- Closing
- Subsequent purchasing

Sales communication processes relating to three of these phases can be described.

Communication. Sales conversation should begin immediately after the contact is made. The importance of this phase is known

and can be described. This also includes the knowledge that in the first two to six minutes it is generally decided whether the customer confides in the seller or not. During communication customers are assessed according to the existing psychological system of experience and evaluation. Apart from other things, the following is assessed: clothing, gestures, facial and verbal expression of the opposite person. The requirement imposed on the employee is that he/she should make an overall good personal impression.

Argumentation. Techniques of good argumentation can be used. The arguments may be presented at the factual level, at the level of the relationship and at the selling level. At the factual level, the contents relevant for decision-making can be presented (factual arguments). At the relationship level, factual arguments can be substantiated by making a positive relationship. At the selling level, strategies, tactics, and methods of communication oriented towards the achievement of the target can be used.

Closing. Techniques of the termination phase are known and used. The consumer's purchasing decision should be positively influenced by the arguments that inspire confidence and are relevant for the decision.

The course of the communication is at an optimum level and leads to a successful termination.

4. Claim management

The current management of claims is known and can be applied in everyday work.

Transparent claim management and its performance lead to the customer's satisfaction even in problematic situations.

5. Nutrition science

Basic principles of the general nutritional sciences are known and can be used during the advisory communication.

6. Nutrition-related diseases

The most frequent nutrition-related diseases are known and their main features can be described. The relation between the disease and nutrition can be described. Suitable products can be chosen from suggested the organic food assortment. A positive effect of these products on a sick body can be described.

Customers with nutrition-related diseases are concerned about their disease and corresponding nourishment. Specialized and competent advice in this respect can reinforce customer's confidence in the specialized organic food shop.

Marketing tools

1. Retail structure

The retail structure can be shown and described. The position of the organic food shop can be described and analysed. Important conjunctions can be explained. Development trends in the market can be observed. Information needed for it can be independently acquired and assessed.

2. Price policy

Mechanisms of price policy are known.

This knowledge enables convincing price argumentation (explanation of the relationship between the price and performance) during communication with the customer.

3. Range of goods

The entire range of goods of a specialized organic food shop is known. The structure of the range (basic range, extra range, or additional range) can be planned and realized.

The knowledge in this area enables an optimum use of selling area or goods shelves. They contribute to overall looks and create a positive shopping atmosphere.

2.2. Qualification standards at the management level

Besides the operational level, there is also a level of management in retail, the essential part of which is subject to the company management. Company management tasks include the setting of objectives, planning, organisation, decision-making, control, reporting, and representation of the business. Qualification standards at this level should enable these tasks to be responsibly and effectively fulfilled. The knowledge needed for this exceeds mere basic knowledge.

Basic qualification in the area of knowledge of goods, economic and organisational basics of enterprises as well as the basic knowledge of marketing at the operational level are assumed in a company involved in special trade with organic food.

Basic knowledge

This includes the qualification standards which represent elementary prerequisites for business management.

1. Business philosophy

The business philosophy can be prepared and formulated. The mission, values, ways of conduct and work of the business can be set. The presentation towards the public can be optimised, and for employees, the creation of a feeling of belonging can be supported.

2. Knowledge of electronic media

The use of computers, the Internet, and common user systems is known. Specific business systems for goods record keeping, accounting, and personal management can be used.

3. Communicative competence

The basics of communication are known.

The communicative competence is the prerequisite for staff management and managing deals with partners, suppliers, and producers.

4. Management of time utilization

The existing working hours can be effectively used.

Business

Organization

1. Goods management and record keeping

A closed system of goods management can be introduced. In this relation the introduction of the scanner system can be carried out. The system of goods record keeping serves for recording, saving, and evaluating the flow of goods in specialized organic food shops.

2. Goods purchasing

The purchasing and ordering can be organised and controlled. These steps also include the performance of the following tasks: identifying needs; finding suppliers; concluding contracts; and supervising the supplies.

3. Work organization

Business work procedures and structures can be organized, optimised, and controlled. The performance (effectiveness) of the specialized organic food shops and the quality of a working day for employees (humanity) can be improved.

4. Quality management

The systems of quality assurance of various kinds are known and can be installed for the business. This includes standardized quality

(quality of product, quality of contacts, internal quality of processes) the customers, employees, suppliers, and producers can refer to.

5. Human resource management

The area of personnel can be planned, managed, and controlled. This also includes some objectives, such as staff administration, staff rights, staff development, staff management, remuneration to the staff, and staff supervision.

6. Problems solving management

Techniques of problem solving and decision-making are known and used. This also includes some partial objectives, such as the techniques for setting objectives, setting ideas, setting priorities, assessment, and adoption of resolutions.

7. Controlling I

Controlling systems of different types are known and can be suitably applied in one's own business. This includes general corporate controlling, personal controlling, range of goods controlling, blanket controlling, and the controlling of goods' record keeping.

8. Labour law

The basics of labour law are known and used in practice. Different laws are covered by the term 'labour rights'. This for example includes corporate law, all laws regarding labour protection, tariff-related and legal knowledge (if there are tariff contracts), preparation of employment contracts, and rights and obligations in industrial relations.

9. Protection and industrial safety

Legal provisions for protection and industrial safety (health and accident protection) are known and implemented. All necessary organisational and construction measures to prevent accidents or other harm to health are taken.

10. Legislative basics of retail

Legislative basics of retail are known. They include, inter alia: tax law, trade law, civil law, law related to indebtedness, warranty, and general commercial conditions.

11. Ecological management

The complex ecological management for specialized organic food shops can be defined and used in practice. Responsible treatment of the environment is applied in practice. Laws and regulations of the ecological law relevant for the specialized organic food trade are known and implemented. This also includes, inter alia, the regulation on minimizing packaging waste and waste law.

12. Project management

The project management can be used for solving problems occurring during the efforts to reach corporate targets. Suitable projects can be planned, formed, and managed. The project management is an established balance between time, cost, and qualitative objectives with existing resources. In this relation, the magical triangle of project management is known.

13. Organization of training in the business

Legal and organisational prerequisites for the business to be able to provide training for its employees are known.

Accounting (oriented on management)

1. Accounting

All quantifiable processes in the company can be systematically recorded, controlled, and assessed.

The knowledge in this area enables economical behaviour and forms a basis for all business planning and decision-making in specialized organic food shops.

Clearing of costs and activities related to the business can be performed. The economy of operation of the specialized organic food shop can be thus controlled, a company result can be set (accounting of profit and loss), and prices can be calculated.

Company accounting can be implemented according to general accounting rules. The annual financial statements required by law can

be produced. It means that all trade cases are recorded, and the records are arranged according to a certain time and factual order. The balance can be made and assessed. The following can be put against each other as of a certain day:

- Form of assets and sources of assets
- Use of resources and origin of resources
- Investments and financing

This clearly shows the structure of assets and capital. Legal provisions regarding the balance financial statements are known and can be implemented. In this respect, Commercial Code is known.

2. Investments and financing

Investment and financial planning can be carried out and controlled.

The need of capital can be set. Investments can be made.

Investment and financial planning ensures that vital liquidity, certainty and returns of the specialized organic food shop are maintained.

3. Controlling II

Business and economic evaluation can be made and used as a basis of a control system.

4. Management of resources

The management of resources can be defined and described. Handling four main resources: capital, product, employee, and customer can be planned and implemented.

Marketing

Market survey

The market survey represents systematic data procurement, their processing and interpreting. Its objective is to acquire information on objective (quantitative) and subjective (qualitative) market indicators and on the market development. This information serves as a basis for decision-making and using marketing tools.

1. Market survey oriented on customers

Individual studies and analyses are known and can be implemented. This includes, as sub targets, monitoring of customers, customer analysis, analysis of customer satisfaction, and qualitative analysis.

2. Market survey oriented on competitors

Methods of analysis of competitors are known and can be implemented.

Marketing tools

Marketing tools are the activities influencing the sales market; they serve to support the fulfilment of business objectives.

1. Advertising

Advertising measures can be assessed, planned, and carried out. The process of planning and carrying out advertisements is known and can be implemented for one's own business.

Legal templates concerning advertisements (principles of correct competition, ban on misleading advertisements and advertising based on comparisons) are known and taken into consideration in all advertising measures taken. The principles of veracity, clarity, effectiveness (to inform, to motivate), and economy (costs lower than revenues) can be used for orientation.

Different types of advertising are known and types relevant for specialized organic food shops can be described and assessed.

Decisions can be made with regard to the following:

- Advertising objectives; they can be economic (for example for maintaining the turnover) and non-economic (for example for changing the attitudes of potential customers);
- Duration of the advertisement and its frequency (occasionally, restricted in time, or regularly-repeatedly);
- Advertising budget; its size has to be set and funds divided for individual advertising objects;
- Advertising object; what product should be the subject of the advertisement;

- Advertising entities; it is necessary to set target groups;
- Advertising mission; it is necessary to set the content and form of the mission; in this relation it may be necessary to find the so-called Unique Selling Proposition - USP;
- Advertising means (for example leaflets, advertisements, posters) can be chosen and assessed;
- Advertising channels; they can be specified and appropriate contacts can be made (for example with newspapers, cinemas, or radio stations).

Advertising measures can be carried out in-house or by means of an advertising agency.

2. Education and promotion

Tools and ways of promotion are known and can be used or initiated. The objective is to establish positive image and build customer confidence. The means and tools of promotion include company magazines for certain target groups, open contests and exhibitions, and other.

3

Introduction of qualification standards for organic food detail in Europe

3.1. Strategy - steps towards European certification

Step 1:

Establishing a European umbrella organisation of organic retailers

To enable application of qualification standards elaborated in this project at a European level, ORA (Organic Retailers Association) was founded at the beginning of the project. Nowadays, ORA is understood as a European association of all national associations of the organic retail market. It is a member of the IFOAM international umbrella organisation for the organic agriculture movement, in which ORA, through a special professional group, represents specific aspects of organic retail trade.

ORA's aim is to work on the organic food market towards security for the customer in buying goods. We want to guarantee such security by, among other measures, certifying tradespeople and retail sites- all those which offer 100 per cent certified organic food.

Qualification standards, continuously adapted to market requirements, are a basis for a certification strategy aimed at qualifying tradespeople.

Step 2:

Formulating European qualification standards for organic retail trade

Step 3:

Implementing a certification strategy

During the period of this project a strategy for certification of vocational qualifications in European special organic food trade has been developed. However, no steps have yet been taken towards implementing this system.

The certification system for specialist qualification in European organic retail trade is envisaged as being:

- voluntary
- related to individuals
- a system practised in throughout Europe
- based on "Qualification standards for European organic retail trade" elaborated by experts in the European special organic food trade.
- A self-control-system in a developing network of European special organic food trade.

The certification system for specialist qualification in European organic retail trade should:

- support and create the identity of European special organic food trade
- support organic food trade
- increase competency and credibility of a retail outlet
- define the profile of European special organic food trade
- Increase the level of qualification in a retail outlet
- contribute to the actual existence of special organic food trade
- increase employees' chances on the whole European job market

National training providers

- Co-operate with national associations
- Create offers according to "Qualification standards for European special organic retail trade"
- Carry out examinations in accordance with European and national examination rules
- Issue certificates.

National associations of European special organic retail trade

- Create national examination rules
- Issue certificates

Organic Retailers Association - ORA - is a representative of European special organic retail trade.

ORA creates and formulates qualification standards for European special organic retail trade.

- On the basis of these, it creates a modular system.
- Sets examination rules.
- Grants certification licences to national organisations.

The modular system is based on a systematic structure of qualification standards.

There will be seven different certificates, attainable independently of each other or sequentially.

Four of these certificates will relate to the operational level:

1. Basic competencies in organic retail
2. Knowledge of goods
3. Company organization
4. Advice and sales.

The managerial level will consist of three certificates:

1. Basic competencies in company management
2. Company organization
3. Marketing

E(CO)-QUALIFY

Qualification
Standards for Organic Retailers



Das Transnationale Team hat sich drei mal im Jahr
jeweils bei einer anderen Partnerorganisation getroffen.
Juli 2005 in Lettland



Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg
Hamburg University of Applied Sciences



ORA

Organic Retailers Association



Website der Organic Retailers Association: <http://o-r-a.org>



Startseite Auswahl der Lnderseiten: <http://ecoqualify.o-r-a.org>



Deutsche Startseite: <http://ecoqualify.o-r-a.org/de-start/index.php4>



<http://ecoqualify.o-r-a.org/de/phpapps/news/index.php>

Zur Registrierung wenden Sie sich bitte an den nationalen Anbieter .



E(CO)-QUALIFY

Qualification
Standards for Organic Retailers

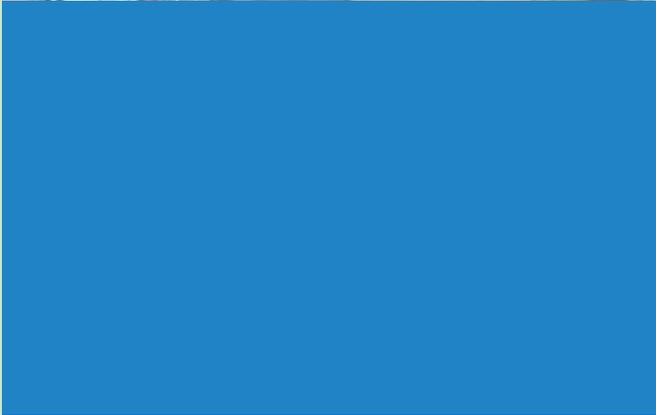


Der Verkauf ökologischer, regionaler Produkte in Ungarn



Bioläden in Polen





3.2. Activities of the Organic Retailer Association based in Vienna

"ORA" - "Organic Retailer Association" was established in 2004 in Vienna. The act expressed the required mutual obligation for partner organisations. Vienna with its geographical position - central Europe - was chosen for the seat of the organisation so as to openly express a wish for European co-operation among newly joined members in the East and West, North and South. The organic farming movement, which deals with production and trade of organic food, has, since its beginning, been developed and organised as international. Its aim is to develop and structuralise the production and processing of organic food and its trade. Thus protection of the environment is accompanied by maximum possible security for customers buying organic food. ORA's aim is to further develop quality and security of trade. For ORA as an international professional association of organic trade, this aim includes "gradual development of a system of standards related to product range, services, presentation, purchase, qualifications, education and social aspects".

ORA's main objective is to ensure that consumers are supplied with organic food from certified specialist shops giving professional advice and a full range of 100% organic food, and also to use professional knowledge to support national associations in implementing their activities.

Other areas of ORA activity are:

- Representing the interests of specialist organic retail trade at an international level,
- Creating and organising a network of advisors for all relevant areas and topics of specialist trade and for all levels of its development,
- Showing the importance of direct sales and of specialist organic retail trade alongside common retail food trade; this is connected to informational activity in countries lacking a well developed organic food market,
- Initiating the establishment of, or supporting existing national associations of specialist trade.

3.3. The e-learning method as a opportunity to implement European qualification standards in organic food retail trade

The e-learning method uses modern information and communication technology and helps to fulfil the dream of - eg. in small enterprises - increasing qualification of employees and owners on an international scale. Establishing e-learning in small companies as an integral part of required qualification culture is not easy, despite there being numerous rational factors in its favour. For both owner and employee it is necessary to gain information via internet, such educational courses are financially acceptable, as their timing can be very effective and individual, saving travel costs and substitution. New knowledge can be immediately applied in everyday activities in the workplace, which is a great contribution to continuous development of the company. The effect of new information on work in the company can be immediately verified. To break resistance to this new media, it is vital to observe the following points:

- First, there must be technical introduction to work with a PC
- A tutor must assist and be active regularly.
- Learning units must be clearly planned
- Learning goals must be clearly formulated, so the users can verify their meaning and practical use.
- The number of participants should be specific, so as to create a training group with its own motivation.
- Actual learning results must be possible to verify individually, both in theory and in practice.

Modular construction of an e-learning system

The expression 'module' has been borrowed from technical language, where it means a changeable, complex part of a device or machine, and represents a closed functioning unit (within a whole system) (Duden). In other words: every system consists of many modules or building blocks, all either contributing to, or being vitally necessary in the function of the whole system. (Sellin 1994, p.2). In professional pedagogy a module is understood to be an organisational principle, "with the help of which a long term educational course, curriculum or programme is divided into clearly stated parts, i.e. learning units (Sellin 1994, p.2). The above mentioned organisational principle is explained in Sellin's contribution to

discussion: A module is not only considered a self-closed learning unit, but also a part or at least a partial step to complex qualification or competence for complete and socially or market- recognised education. A module as a learning unit or clearly outlined partial qualification can be individually linked to other modules, with the aim of gaining a qualification that is recognized by the company or by the state. Therefore abilities, knowledge, skills and practical experience should be verifiable via competence tests, possibly followed by a certificate (Sellin 1994, p.3). Although, according to Sellin, modularisation of vocational education cannot substitute systematic and complex primary education, it still represents a vital part in systemisation of vocational education within the EU (Sellin, 1994, p.23)

The main features of modules:

- Modules originate from a certain and clearly defined learning goal. The learning goal is linked to certain content and method.
- Modules are a part of a system or concept, closed in itself. Such a concept can be, but not necessarily, part of a longer educational course
- Learning results of a module can be tested independently of subsequent or parallelly-running modules. Certification of a certain partial qualification can be included.
- Modules are not bound in time or place. This enables flexible use and provision. Both specific requirements of participants and capabilities of the organisation can be considered. (Sellin 1994, p.3 u.)

All these merits show modularisation, i.e. division of learning units into modules, as purposeful for qualification provision in the field of organic food. These provisions are, in the framework of E(CO)-Qualify, supported, offered - mainly by information and communication strategies (IKT), and usually carried out by the owners as well as employees, besides their work. For such self-organised learning, it is vital to divide the volume into well-arranged, structured learning units and to use them flexibly and independently of time and place. (Sellin 1994, p.10)

However, division of learning units into modules is only efficient if the aims clearly and explicitly issue from qualification standards in

special organic retail trade. It must be possible to adjoin these standards to a superior structure of qualification in vocational education. This means that they must be anchored in certification systems at regional, national and EU levels. The national professional associations, as organisations, will be responsible for implementation of this.

Learning goals of the e-learning system for European organic retail trade

Definition of "learning goal" term

All teaching should aim towards a concrete goal, which is sensible. Such a particular goal must be specifically identified and in general language rules it is marked as a learning or training goal (Frey et al. 1975, p.66). Description of a learning goal is focused on the transformation of learning goals into changes in learners' behaviour. Changes in behaviour caused by the educational process can be checked by tests etc. This means that, "the concrete thing to be achieved, created in the learning process, must be set in what the learners have learned during the process. The acquired learning should then be visible in what they can do afterwards. In a study book entitled Fachdidaktik Wirtschaftswissenschaft (Professional Didactics of the Science of Economy) by Sesnik it says that the terms learning goal (=training goal) and teaching goal are often used as synonyms. However, learning goals usually are not individually set goals of a learner, but rather teaching goals included in a teaching concept and following certain directives of an educational institution (eg. at school) They consider qualifications needed and required by industry/economy, society, state and science. Thus, learning goals are mostly set from the outside and precisely spoken they are teaching goals.

Motivation

To be successful in learning, everyone learning anything needs motivation. It means that they have to consider teaching goals to be their own learning ones. Sesnik describes motivation as individual, determining reasons for one's actions (aimed at a concrete goal, open goal or aimless). It starts with activating motives in a given situation and impulses included in the situation. Therefore conditions in which teaching is carried out must also be regarded (Sesnik 1994, p.138 and 139).

System structure

<i>I want updated information.</i>	<i>I want to study, practise, learn or update my professional knowledge and extend my basic competencies</i>	<i>I want to communicate with my colleagues and learn from the solutions of the best of them</i>	<i>I need assistance.</i>
Information centre	Educational centre	Communication centre	Help centre
What is new in the learning system	Basic theoretical study texts	National fora for employees	FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions
News from the project	Tasks for daily routine of the shop	National fora for owners	Important technical information
Updated business topics	Exercise on a topic Picture and film material Possibilities of tests	International forum for all participants in English Communication forum for tutors amongst themselves Possibilities of tests	

Evaluation of learning goals

Evaluation means checking of results of learning and thus becomes an important part of the process of education or qualification. Concrete learning goals then serve as a tool of evaluation. If a learning goal is achieved, then a part of a qualification standard is achieved as well. This result is proven by a suitable check, usually at the end of a learning unit in the form of a test. This provides evidence of attained qualification with a clear indicative value.

A test is an essential part of the intended certification system in organic food trade.

Summary: Learning goals are concrete goals (measurable results) to be achieved by various learning methods.

Literature used in this chapter:

Frey, et al.

Curriculum Handbuch BD 1, 1975

Sellin, Burkart: Berufsbildung in Europa: Auf dem Wege ihrer Modularisierung? Diskussionsbeitrag 1. Nachdruck, Thessaloniki: CEDEFOP - European Centre for Support of Vocational Training, 1996

Sesnik, Studienbuch Fachdidaktik Wirtschaftswissenschaften, 1994

The main learning goals for the system:

- Understanding a PC and new means of information and communication as tools for daily business activities
- Managing these tools and using them in everyday work
- Understanding an enterprise as a continuously changing organisation and adapting one's own behaviour to this
- Gaining personally necessary professional knowledge deeply and widely at the right time
- Having quick access to up-to-date processed information relevant to trade
- Perceiving and accepting life-long learning as a precondition of economic and personal development.

Operationalisation of learning goals

Operationalisation of learning goals should be achieved through the structure of the e-learning system and structure of individual and thematically ordered learning units (see table below)

Tasks for tutors

Management of the system is carried out by national tutors:

- Identifying currently-required qualification contents (educational needs)
- Support of learning in the workplace and within working time.
- Presenting and initiating communication
- Management of information centres
- Support, initiation and presentation of exchange of opinions "best practice" = bench marking = learning from solutions of the best ones.
- Managing communication between participants and tutors (telephone, seminars, visits).
- Finding out, commenting, systemizing and keeping evidence of learning results of participants.
- Motivating, supporting self-organization of participants.
- Initiating and implementing accompanying forms of e-learning (take care of successful results)
- Thematisation and reduction of barriers in PC work, assistance in finding solutions in difficulties with PC work.
- Providing professional assistance.

Methodology of learning units

- Short theoretical texts
 - References to detailed information at the end of texts
- Work with detailed information is accompanied by assesment of concrete tasks - this can be carried out in the workplace and results can initiate immediate changes in the company.

Small learning units (20 mins maximum),

- so that participants can fill their slack periods during worktime by improving their own qualification
- so that learning can be integrated into everyday working methods,
- so as to keep the level of motivation, a feeling of success follows each short learning period,
- for the possibility of individual control of learning goals at the end of each learning unit.

Subtle goals of individual learning units

At the level of learning goals, pure knowledge should not be distinguished from social and operative competencies, as all knowledge should be reflected in a competent behaviour.

Plan of learning course for the managerial level

Topics	Content
Introduction to the meaning and philosophy of qualitative management for retail trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Based on analysis of potential, development potential of a particular enterprise can be drawn up. ● Analysis of strong and weak points carried out in a team sharpens awareness of everyday functioning of the company and its impact on customers ● Chances and risks of the company's development can be recognised and integrated into the business strategy.
Development of range of products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual product range policy can be developed strategically. ● Individual criteria are developed towards economically efficient and customer-orientated selection of suppliers. ● Necessity of stable and cooperative supplier relations is formulated as a goal of business philosophy. ● The best ordering system can be chosen for the company and its owners. ● Rules for marking are known in all product areas and can be implemented and explained.
Data for everyday, economic decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Company-economic evaluation (CEE) can be read and interpreted for one's own company. ● Company indicators found in the branch are known and used by the company management ● Stock difference can be found. Its reasons can be found and recognised. ● A unified price-system of the company can be implemented. ● Price-calculation can be used strategically. ● Internal control can be realised. ● Both current and strategic control of the company is ongoing.
Elements of the company's orientation towards customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The look of the retail outlet can be seen from the customer's viewpoint. Ideas for improvement can be implemented. ● The shop-window is considered as the most important promotional element. It can be adapted to the look of the whole shop. ● Provisions of advertising and public relations can be planned with economical efficiency.
Tools of work organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Descriptions of tasks are considered as purposeful and used as a means of personnell control. ● The company's own information management can be organized with minimum mistakes. ● Documentation of work methods can be set up.

Topics	Content
Materials for staff development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Criteria of staff selection can be strategically developed. ● Staff can be trained systematically, quickly and with economical efficiency. ● Personell tasks can be described and documented.
Strategic elements of orientation towards customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An understanding of marketing as a whole concept is developed. ● Tools of market analysis and customer analysis are known and can be individually used in the company.
Motivation, leading and controlling the staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tools of staff control are known and provide a possibility to create one's own style of control. ● Work instructions can be oral or written. ● Discussion with staff about finding common goals is possible. ● Criticism, praise and reprimand are structural and motivational elements in controlling behaviour itself. ● Staff meetings can be organised and lead.
Tools of work organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work methods can be structured, planned and delegated. ● Rythmic nature of work methods can be anchored in daily routine of the company. ● Job descriptions can be created and documented. ● A continuously expanding company manual can be created.

Plan of learning course for the operational level of specialist retail

Topics	Content
Introduction to the meaning and philosophy of qualitative management for retail trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Based on analysis of potential, development potential of the company can be drawn up. ● Analysis of strong and weak points carried out in a team sharpens awareness of everyday functioning of the company and its impact on customers ● Chances and risks of the company's development can be recognised and integrated into the business strategy
Principles of sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organic food and agriculture can be defined and basic principles of organic produce can be described. ● Production of plant and animal products can be described. ● Knowledge of inspection provisions and directives of associations of producers. ● Knowledge of the EU Decree on Organic Farming and its content. ● Ability to carry out final inspection of foodstuffs in retail trade. ● Knowledge of basic principles of fresh product handling.
Materials for everyday economic decisions and price negotiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An inventory discrepancy can be found. Its reasons can be traced and recognised. Remedial provisions can be discussed and implemented. ● Principle of price-setting is understood. Calculation factors are known. ● Prices can be negotiated. ● Additional value of organic foodstuffs can be described.
Sales principles - main groups (bread, cheese, dairy products, grain products, juices)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most important traditional methods of producing and processing organic products can be described and explained.
Orientation towards customers. Professional approach to customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Customers can be identified and their specific requirements fulfilled. ● Necessity for balanced and predictable communication with customers is accepted. ● Knowledge of sales and advisory technique, in structure and practice, can be demonstrated.
Tools of work organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Practical skills can be verified and optimized.
Principles of sales - fresh products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goods can be presented. ● Goods can be handled correctly. ● Goods can be professionally communicated to the customer. ● Hygienic provisions are known and can be implemented.

Topics	Content
Company elements of orientation towards customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forms of active sales are known and can be carried out. ● Returned goods and refunds can be dealt with independently. ● Events can be planned and carried out independently.
Team work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social competencies necessary for communication with colleagues, employer and customers, have been practised and they determine everyday routines. ● People are aware of conflicts and discuss them. There is independent effort to solve a conflict.
Elements of individual work-organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work methods can be structured and carried out according to instructions ● Rhythmic nature of work methods can be understood and carried out. ● Job descriptions can be independently created and documented. ● A continuously expanding company manual can be created.

3.4. "Developing the product range" learning unit (example)

Introduction

This module is intended to help you analyse your product range - to take a break from your everyday rush and have a systematic look at the products you offer. In connection with this, it also considers the topic of the correct selection of suppliers.

Many decisions are taken intuitively, without any checks being performed to see if they are successful. Thanks to the following working aids, you can form an overview of the structure of your product range and your suppliers, in order for you to be able to judge just how practical and effective your choices are.

You will again find a number of theoretical texts on the given topic. You will also find a number of methodical sheets, which will help you gain a systematic view of your own business.

You will also find some exercises and assignments. Please send your completed assignments and exercises to your tutor at the end of July.

The questionnaire for customers relates to the group of goods fruit and vegetables. If you do not sell these goods, please consider it as an example, and try to draw up a similar questionnaire on a group of goods that interests you.

The plan of groups of goods is designed for systematic arrangement of individual groups of goods in the cash system. We are including it here in the study plan to provide you with an overview of the composition of product range over and above the product sheets of various wholesalers.

I. Planning product range

The composition of your product range

If you wish to consciously shape your product range, you must first be clear about its structure. Some fundamental concepts are explained below for this purpose.

Presentation range	
This part of the product range is often referred to as the fixed or standard range . It includes all types of goods, which are always in stock all-year-round. This differentiates the presentation range from the variable parts of the product range (seasonal range, discount range).	
The basic range	Peripheral range
The basic range includes all types of goods that represent the principal orientation of the store and its principal competence, and that account for the large part of its turnover. Example: organic foods.	The peripheral range is comprised of goods for which there is rarely demand, from both the basic and supplementary range. These goods do not play an essential role within the overall range. Examples: large packages, special washing powders, special magazines.
Supplementary range	The entire supplementary range is often referred to as peripheral. These are generally other groups of goods, e.g. household articles, of which only a small selection is offered.
The supplementary range supplements the basic range with further groups of goods, generally not foodstuffs. Examples: cosmetics, books or clothing. If the supplementary range has been extensively developed, it may take the form of a separate department .	
Seasonal range	Sale range
The seasonal range is made up of all types of goods that are offered only at a particular time of year. Examples: certain types of fruit, Christmas confectionary, regional seasonal specialities.	Made up of goods offered for a limited period of time only as part of a sales campaign. Example: baby weeks with supplementary child-care goods.

The width of the product range	The depth of the product range
<p>A wide product range is one that takes in many different groups and types of goods. A wide product range of organic foods, for example, takes in all groups of goods that are generally stocked by a food store, so that customers can buy everything they need in one go (a complete range). Certain types of supplementary goods, such as natural cosmetics for example, are also expected here.</p>	<p>A deep product range is one where many various types of goods are offered within the individual groups of goods. Customers can then choose from, for example, a wide selection of fruit yoghurts, pasta, several types or brands of olive oil, wine or cheeses.</p>
<p>A wide product range can also be deep. An example of this are well-run organic supermarkets with several thousand types of goods. A large and wide range of goods, whose basic range is, however, extremely shallow (i.e. provides little choice), is typical for discount stores. Small and medium-sized special organic food stores are often characterised by the depth of the range of products in which the store specialises. This means that they offer a large number of specialities in certain groups of goods, while other groups of goods contain only the commonest types.</p> <p>These terms can also be used for individual groups of goods, wine for example: a wide range of wine includes ordinary products from all the important winegrowing countries. A narrow range, in contrast, would be a selection of many German wines, supplemented by a number of French and Italian products. A deep range of wines offers not just two or three French, Italian or Spanish wines, but a selection of the most important varieties and winegrowing areas in the given countries.</p>	

2. Product range policy and care

This chapter is concerned with the aspects important to the creation of the individual range offered by a store.

Supply-based range	Demand-based range
<p>A supply-based range is oriented according to the available supply of goods or the goods offered by the supplier/suppliers. When the market in organic products began to develop, certain goods and groups of goods were not available at the necessary organic quality or were not available in sufficient quantities, as a result of which the range of organic foods in the stores was restricted to the organic goods available. Today practically all products exist at an organic quality. Nevertheless the range offered by the retail trade may tend to be a supply-based range.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The manager of a retail store adapting the product range to the goods supplied by a particular wholesaler. ● The manager of a retail store offering fruit and vegetables comprised exclusively of domestic seasonal goods. <p>In both cases the store manager has decided to restrict the product range to the goods supplied by selected suppliers (wholesalers, domestic organic farmers).</p> <p>A supply-based range is also typical of the traditional situation in special stores in the past, which is now fast disappearing.</p>	<p>A demand-based range is oriented primarily to the needs and wishes of customers.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The manager of an organic food store introduces a special range to the store if customers make frequent inquiries about it, e.g. pet food or frozen foods. In such cases it is sometimes necessary to reassess the supplier structure. ● The manager of a retail store drops (groups of) goods, if demand for them is too small. <p>Considerable sensitivity is required to adapt product range to demand from customers. It is important to distinguish between a short-term increase or decrease in demand and cases in which there really are particular strengths and weaknesses in the range stocked. Regular analysis of the data from the cash system can be a great aid to decision-making.</p> <p>A product range oriented towards customers may also mean the store manager stocking certain types of goods that are not in great demand, if these goods attract special customers. Example: a particular customer comes to the store to buy a certain type of vinegar that cannot be found anywhere else, but also buys a great many other goods at the same time.</p>
<p>Special stores with a complete range of organic foods must find a middle way between supply-based and demand-based product ranges. This means there always being almonds on the shelves, even if they are not in frequent demand. A special service consists of always offering customers the kind of goods they do not often need. Adapting to demand lies in the fine internal differentiation of the product range.</p>	
<p>To provide support for local products we recommend showing a preference for domestic organic farmers and regional seasonal products.</p>	
<p>Supply and demand in a particular location are also influenced by competing stores in the area, for which reason you should continuously monitor the situation in the retail trade in the surrounding area. Example: certain (groups of) goods are so cheap in the chemist's next door that it is not worthwhile stocking them.</p>	

Caring for the product range

While product range policy means fundamental decisions relating to the range of goods stocked, caring for the product range involves detailed monitoring. Decisions concerning the introduction or dropping of individual types of goods must be taken on the basis of economic considerations and an awareness of "serving the customer". The principal criterion for this is customer demand (see **demand-based range**).

When goods are dropped, we talk of **refining product range**. When goods are introduced into the product range we talk of **expanding or updating the product range**. Sometimes the two processes must go hand in hand. If a certain type of goods is not selling, it may be due to a problem with its quality. In such case the given goods must be replaced by an alternative product from another supplier.

New products come first from the supply side. The retailer must test to see if there is demand for such goods in his store, or if a new product should replace an older one.

Discount strategy

With a discount strategy the product range is comprised in such a way that customers are attracted by low prices on a continual basis. The thrifty way the store is fitted out also makes it clear to customers that they can do their shopping cheaply there. The choice of goods on offer is dependent on how advantageous the price they can be obtained for is. This business policy is suitable primarily for large chains with a rapid turnover of goods.

Trading up

Trading up is a business policy oriented towards the awareness of quality among demanding customers, and which aims to continually improve the range offered. Expensive brand goods, superior products and selected specialities are included in the product range. A certain depth of product range is necessary for this. A store pursuing such a policy must project this externally with fittings and furnishings of an appropriately high quality.

The question as to whether a certain group of customers prefers shopping in a discount store or special store does not depend fundamentally on how full their wallets are. Experience shows that there are often layers of well-off customers who like saving money on food, and prefer cheap goods for everyday use. Likewise there are also many customers who prefer high-quality goods, even though they are not making large sums of money. They simply like to give themselves a treat occasionally and prefer shopping in a higher class of establishment.

3. Strategy for procuring goods

If you know what you need in your product range, you must think about who comes into consideration as a supplier. Having considered all the individual aspects, you can then decide which partners are the right ones for you.

question	possible suppliers
<p>Which supplier best covers the structure of my product range?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● basic range / standard goods ● supplementary range <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - chemist's goods - - ● a regional range of fresh goods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bread and rolls - fruit and vegetables - dairy products 	
<p>From which suppliers can I order goods to a quantity corresponding to my needs?</p>	
<p>Which suppliers offer me the best purchase conditions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● minimal purchases ● average purchase prices ● price reductions for cash payment, for large volumes, etc. ● discounts ● payment conditions ● sale prices 	
<p>Which suppliers come into consideration regarding the timing of orders and deliveries?</p>	
<p>Which suppliers offer the best services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● capable of supplying goods ● reliable, punctual ● the settlement of complaints ● willingness to co-operate ● support for sales during sales campaigns ● an accommodating approach to the ordering of goods - various ways of submitting orders ● the greatest possible satisfaction of orders ● invoices corresponding to orders and goods delivered 	

Aids in choosing product range

your own records	trade information
systems of goods records	the trade press / the public media
Systems of goods records store all data about the amount of goods you order and sell. They provide you with information about the turnover speed of individual types of goods, on the basis of which you can determine which goods or packs are more in demand than others. Such a data system will, however, only work if the types of goods investigated have been continually available. If you have repeated gaps in your product range, you cannot know the quantity you would have sold if the goods in question had been on the shelves the whole time.	The trade press and public media provide information on subjects directly or indirectly affecting potential demand. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● culinary trends ● health trends ● lifestyle trends ● new scientific discoveries ● the results of consumer tests <p>In this respect it is essential to have a feeling for what will hold true over the long term, and what, on the contrary, will affect customer thinking only in the short term.</p>
employees	a visit to a trade fair
Your employees can provide you with information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● what is easy to sell ● what (groups of) goods are the best sellers ● what is there greatest demand for, based on reports in the media ● what are the prevailing purchase motives 	It will give you an in-depth picture of the range on offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● meeting a number of suppliers ● getting to know individual producers ● compare the quality of similar products ● an overview of new products and further product development ● deepening your own knowledge of goods ● monitoring overall market developments (trends) in the business
questionnaires for customers	market research
Feedback from customers is the most important measure of the success of your product range. So keep your ears pricked at all times, even when (particularly when) what you are hearing is criticism. Questionnaires at intervals of time can provide information on the wishes and level of satisfaction of your customers.	The large market research companies in the Czech Republic are unfortunately not, as yet, devoting their attention to organic foods. In Germany work is just beginning on research relating to sales of particular goods and groups of goods in the area of organic foods. A special business panel is presently being built for the German organic food trade, which is to provide participants with an overview of how well or badly individual products are selling. This should be a great help in view of the growing diversity of the range of products on offer.

5. Procedure for ordering goods

<p>The way in which you can submit orders depends to a large degree on your suppliers. Regardless of this it is, however, a good idea to use at least one goods records system, since it saves all data and can be an important tool for assessment. This does, however, necessitate you "feeding" the system regularly with information, i.e. that you keep it up-to-date. For example, new data sets must be created immediately for new types of goods (fruit and vegetables!) or suppliers. If the system works properly, it can make your everyday work easier in many respects.</p> <p>You should judge for yourself how much electronic equipment corresponds to your purposes (electronic cash till, barcode reader). You should consider the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● your supplier structure ● the size of deliveries from individual suppliers (the ratio between cost and effect) ● your personal relationship with computers ● your employee's attitude towards computers <p>If you are thinking of new solutions for your store, take advantage, first and foremost, of the opportunity of talking to your colleagues and obtain independent information about the systems offered.</p>
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Check up č. 1:

Check the structure of your product range against the following factors?

<p>Does your product range take account of local needs in the area in which your store is located?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The social structure and composition of shoppers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - people in the immediate vicinity - customers purchasing large quantities - families - single-person households - tourists -? ● The range offered by competitors? ● The range of catering facilities? ● Refreshments? ● Special factors? 	
<p>Is the width and depth of your basic range commensurate to the size of the store?</p>	
<p>Is the extent of your supplementary range commensurate to the size of the store?</p>	
<p>Does your product range take sufficient advantage of the space available in the store?</p>	
<p>Does your staff have the necessary professional skills to match the structure of your product range?</p>	
<p>Is the level of quality of your product range obvious from the outside? Do the following aspects match the quality of your product range?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the store's fittings - the store's staff - the store's location - the overall external appearance of the store? 	
<p>Have you made a conscious decision about the marketing concept you wish to apply?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discount - a trading-up strategy - select goods - organic food for all? 	
<p>How would you describe your product range policy?</p>	
<p>How do you make sure your product range policy is obvious from the outside?</p>	

Assignment

1. Draw a graph indicating which groups of goods are represented in a "deep" or "shallow" manner in your store. As a guide you can use your "Groups of goods plan" or the order catalogue of your principal supplier. Then consider whether this structure:

- a) properly represents your product range policy and
- b) reflects the needs of your customers.

2. Conduct a poll among your customers using the enclosed questionnaire. If necessary you can adapt the questionnaire to suit your own situation.

Check-up č. 2:

Investigate the possibilities open to you for caring for your product range

On what do you base decisions as to what to introduce into your product range and what to drop from it?	
How often do you investigate what needs to be introduced to or dropped from your product range?	
How are decisions on the product range reached within the store's working team?	
What possible forms of decision-making regarding product range have you not yet used in your store?	
What possible ways of caring for your product range do you wish to add or take greater advantage of in the future?	

Assignment

1. Draw up a plan of the aspects you wish to consider and the appropriate time intervals for contracting (refining) or expanding your product range
2. Engage your employees in the taking of decisions on product range: have your staff keep a list of "hits" and "flops" over a reasonable period of time. Data from the cash system, customer reactions and your staff's own experiences with products can all be used for this purpose.

Check-up č. 3:

On the basis of these two lists, decide what structure of suppliers is most suitable for you.

Investigate the structure of your suppliers

Principal supplier 1	
Principal supplier 2	
bread / rolls	
fruit / vegetables	
regional goods	
cosmetics / natural goods	
etc.	

Try to list your store's priority needs that should be satisfied by your suppliers.

1. <i>the ability to supply a complete range</i>	
2. <i>regional factors</i>	
3.	
4.	
5.	

The possibilities given in italics are examples or hints, which can be erased from the table.

Questionnaire for customers

How often do you go shopping? (e.g. for organic vegetables)			
times per week?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> other
How often do you go shopping? (e.g. for organic fruit)			
times per week?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> other
What kind of vegetables do you prefer?			
	<input type="checkbox"/> fresh	<input type="checkbox"/> frozen	<input type="checkbox"/> pickled
Does this store offer a wide enough selection?			
If not, then what is missing?			
Is the service in this store good?			
If not, then what can we change?			
What would you like to be informed about?			
I do not buy organic fruit, because:			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	the price is too high	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't trust the quality	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	it tastes no different	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have no choice	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't eat fruit	
I do not buy organic vegetables, because:			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	the price is too high	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't trust the quality	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	it tastes no different	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have no choice	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't eat vegetables	
Age:	Sex:	<input type="checkbox"/> male	<input type="checkbox"/> female
monthly income:	<input type="checkbox"/> below 10,000 CZK	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-15,000 CZK	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-20,000 CZK <input type="checkbox"/> higher

Product range composition - test

1. What is a basic product range comprised of?

- Goods the store offers all-year-round
 - The best-selling goods
 - Goods representing the store's principal focus
-

2. What is a supplementary range of goods?

- A range of goods for which there is rarely demand
 - A range of goods supplementing the basic range with further groups of goods
 - A range of goods only stocked on special occasions
-

3. What is a peripheral range of goods comprised of?

- Goods that are not offered all-year-round
 - Goods that need not necessarily be included in the core or basic range
-

4. What is often referred to as a presentation range?

- A group of goods offered all-year-round
 - A range of dry goods
 - The current state of goods in stock
-

5. What is characteristic of a wide range of goods?

- A large selection of various groups of goods
 - A large selection of particular groups of goods
-

6. What is characteristic of a deep range of goods?

- A large selection of various groups of goods
 - A large selection of particular groups of goods
-

7. What is a supply-based range oriented towards?

- Advantageous discount prices
 - A range of certain types of goods
 - The supply of goods available from suppliers
-

8. What is a demand-based range oriented towards?

- The wishes and consumer habits of customers
 - Mass taste
 - A diverse structure of suppliers
-

9. What does caring for the product range mean?

- Reacting to changes in demand and purchase behaviour on the part of customers
 - Ensuring constant stocking
 - Reacting to an altered supply of goods
-

10. What does product range policy mean?

- The introduction of new products
 - Dropping idle stock
 - A conscious decision to target a certain quality or direction regarding product range
-

4 Future development

ORA creates a transnational network so as to implement the qualification standards for vocational education in organic food trade within a certification system working at a European level. This will create a certification system which, in its development and continuous market-orientated adaptability, will be internationally and nationally implemented. At a national level, the certification system will be implemented by national partners, on the basis of their communication with the participants in vocational education. These will involve national professional associations, institutions for vocational education and other vocational training facilitators, as well as employees and employers in organic food shops.

Efficiency of the transnational network should be created and permanently stabilised through:

- international organisations of traders
- internet platform which will serve communication, international exchange of experience and accessibility of study materials
 - these will be created at a national level and will be usable internationally,
- regular work meetings of the partners
 - where the need for competence in the branch will be fundamentally influenced - in individual countries in which the unifying European certification system was brought into existence
 - where national examination rules and ways of vocational training will be compared with each other, so as to aim towards a common standard of qualification for people in organic retail.

Qualification and life-long training are the drive of market development and serve to ensure job positions.

On the developing and ever-changing market, a certification system based on internationally-defined qualification standards is efficient for vocational training as it makes competencies mutually comparable and measurable.

The European scale of certificates corresponds with international production and trade relationships on the organic market. Thus final users can move within the existing European market.

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