Intelligent furniture

REPORT II

Companies

9.12.2010

Intelligent Furniture/De-SME
Agreement 2196-LLP-1-2009-1-IT-LEONARDO-LMP

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

Intelligent Furniture

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

Dear european experts!

We are proud to invite you to participate in Intelligent Furniture Project financed by EU / LLP. The targets are:

1. Increase interior and furniture sector sme's competitiveness by creation of efficient strategies, processes and contents for life- long-learning.
2. Creation of innovative tools and forums for local and transnational networking.

This process will take place concurrently in Finland, Germany, Italy and Spain. In this way we can make the future training decisions for the enterprises.

This will help us to generate and share the best ideas for business growth, to select the optimal strategic actions and to find new opportunities. The companies participating will also receive the reports of this real time analysis.

This process is totally unanimous to get the straight and honest answers.

Please now press the PROCEED button and give your opinions.

PROCEED

Process started on May the 6th and ended on June the 18th
Supplemental round in October (ended in November)

40 respodents

		Industry	Commerce/services	Training organizations	Signals
Finland	9	4	4	1	39
Germany	10	6	2	2	40
Italy	10	2	7	1	42
Spain	11	11	-	-	46

Almost 170 ideas, opinions, claims about training issues from interior and furniture sector companies

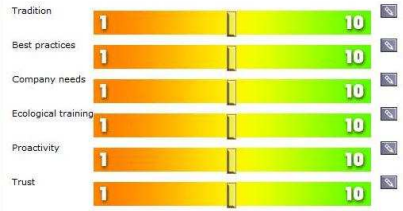
Questionary

1. **Please give your opinion:** What are the main things which will happen in your business / business environment during the next five years?

2. What is your opinion about business networking?

3. Place the theme you regard the **most important** in building the company **competitiveness** on the top of the stairs and the **least important** lowest - and the others in between.

4. Please use the"slider"-diagram below to rate six issues in describing your **expectations towards training organizations**.Touch the yellow balk in the slider, look at the whole idea on the right and make your valuation on scale 1 = Not important to 10 = Very important.



5. Think the actions to improve your company performance in **next five years**. Please rate each claim if you disagree or agree with it.

6. Finally, imagine the **year 2016**. You can read from the national main newspaper head title:
"Excellent results in our interior and furniture sector companies"
What has been the best training we have had?

7. Some hidden question you still want to answer now - or idea - or even your personal future dream?

Answers were first classified from the contents of following, three purely open questions:

Please give your opinion:

1. What are the main things which will happen in your business / business environment during the next five years?

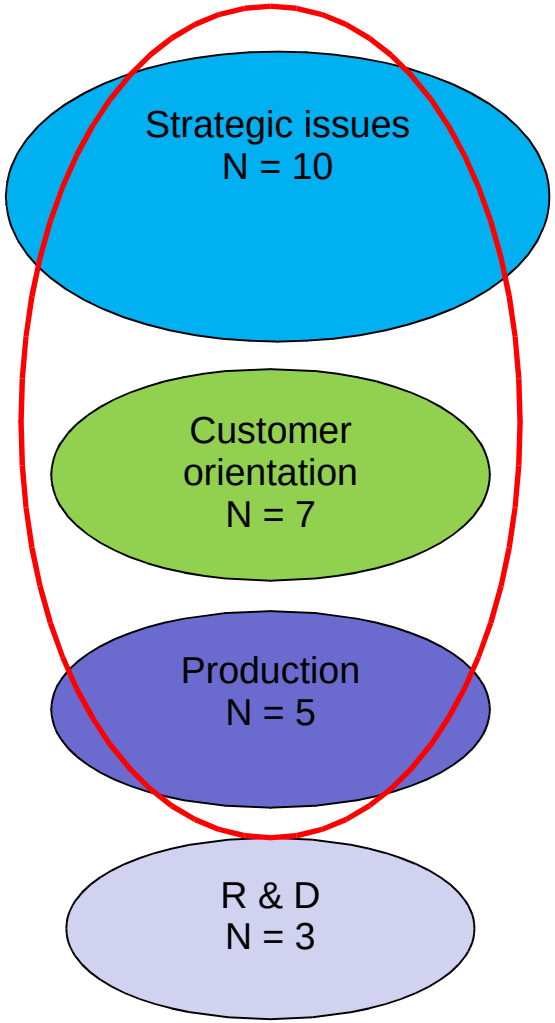
2. Finally, imagine the year 2016. You can read from the national main newspaper head title:
"Excellent results in our interior and furniture sector companies“
What has been the best training we have had?

3. Some hidden question you still want to answer now - or idea - or even your personal future dream?

Main themes came up from the answers to open questions:
Mainitse että eivät ole tärkeysjärjestyksessä

1. Marketing and selling
2. Sustainability
3. Production
4. Design thinking
5. Innovation
6. International issues
7. Business control
8. Service Design
9. Research and Development
10. Logistics
11. Education / enterprice collab
12. Strategic issues
13. Quality
14 Customer orientation
15. Other issues

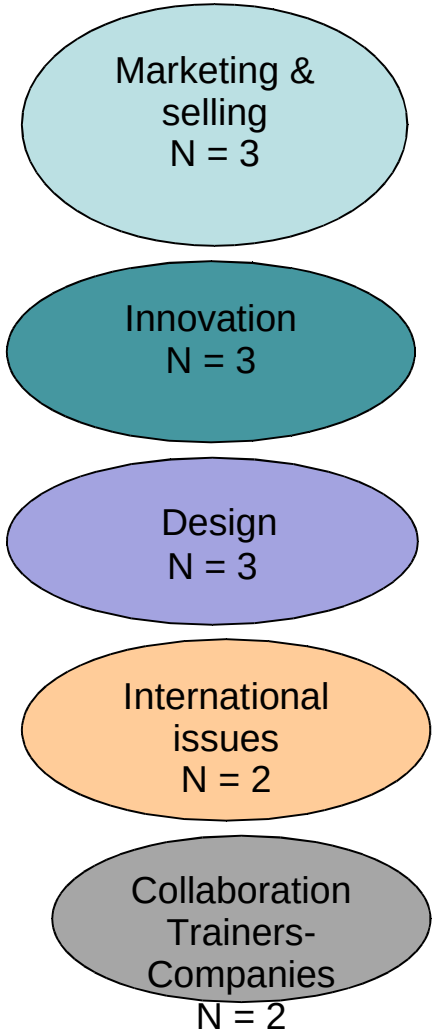
The main themes analyzed from the open question answers / Finland



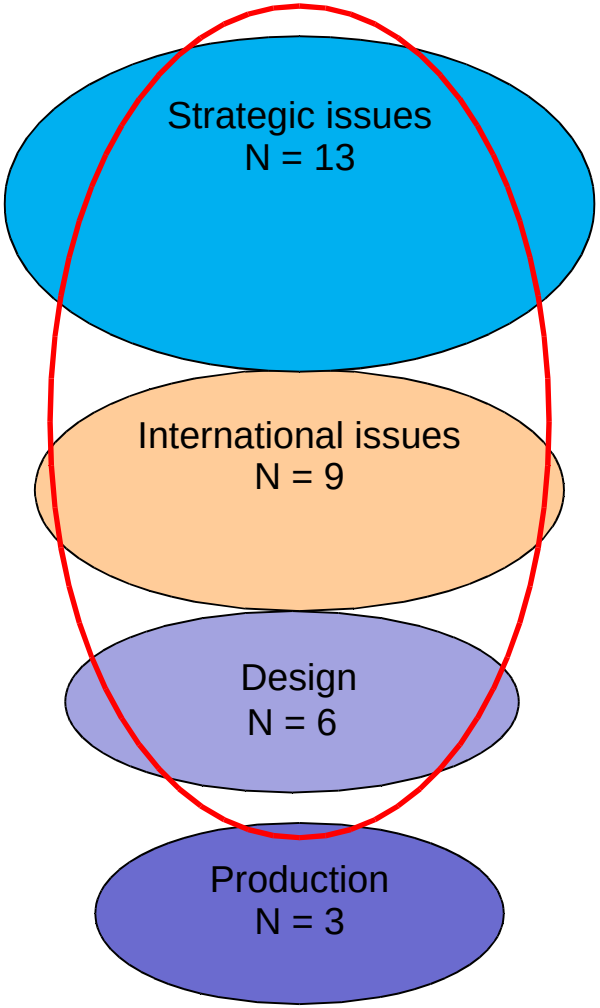
"To get excellent results means that you make right conclusions. Also you must have instruments to finance the development. You also must find the right customers...."

"In Europe the number of customers that value environment and sustainability, is growing. Localization will be an issue. We are well prepared to this change by developing our business model and production technology."

"The kind of training that gives an opportunity for SMEs and bigger companies and business partners to plan and execute joint business operation that benefit both."



The main themes analyzed from the open question answers / Germany

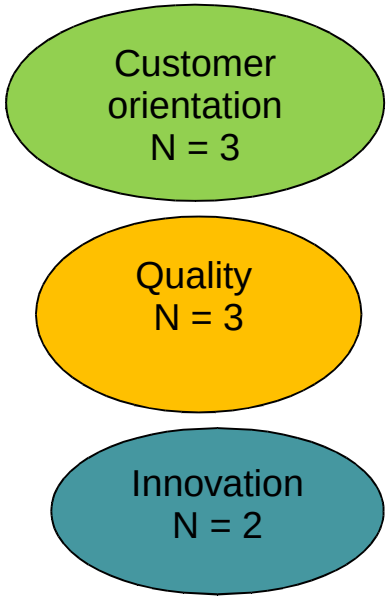


"I hope regional businesses will increase when global crisis will continue ... so i am confident to go on running my interior design and furniture company with new ideas and business possibilities."

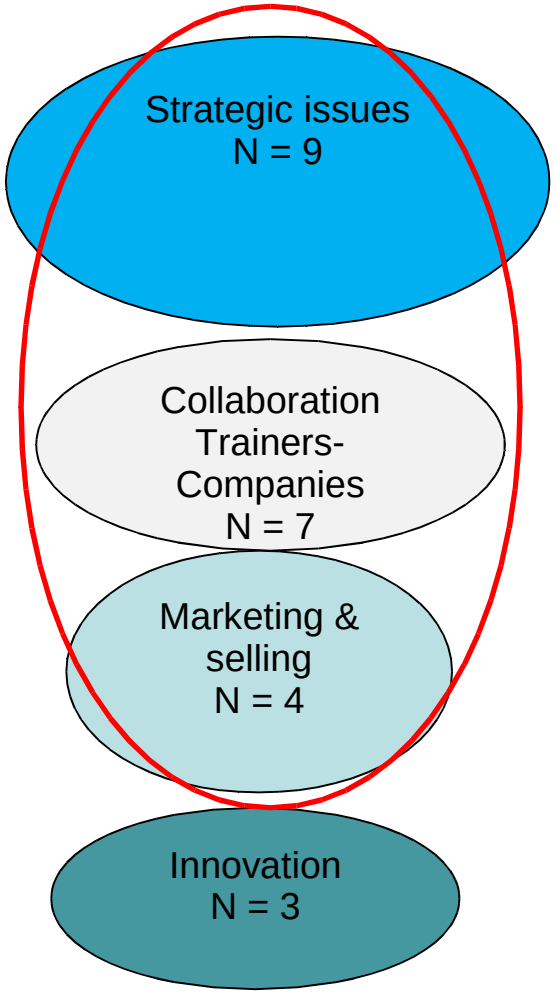
"A strategy should be developed in order to put the companies in a position to handle future projects on the international market."

"We should launch a forum to find new international partners and exchange knowledge with them."

"Especially the exchange of experience concerning design items by the use of internet based communication. Will be more and more important."



The main themes analyzed from the open question answers / Italy



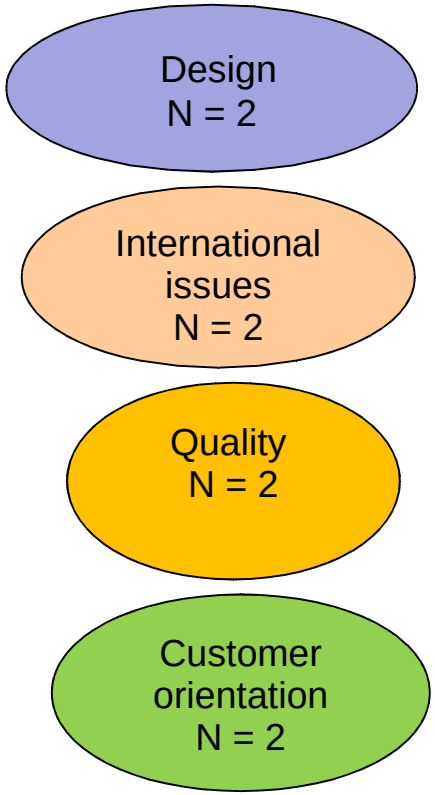
"Shops will became more specialized and with high quality goods."

"I believe in the collaboration with the Italian and foreign firms because is the only way to stay on the market."

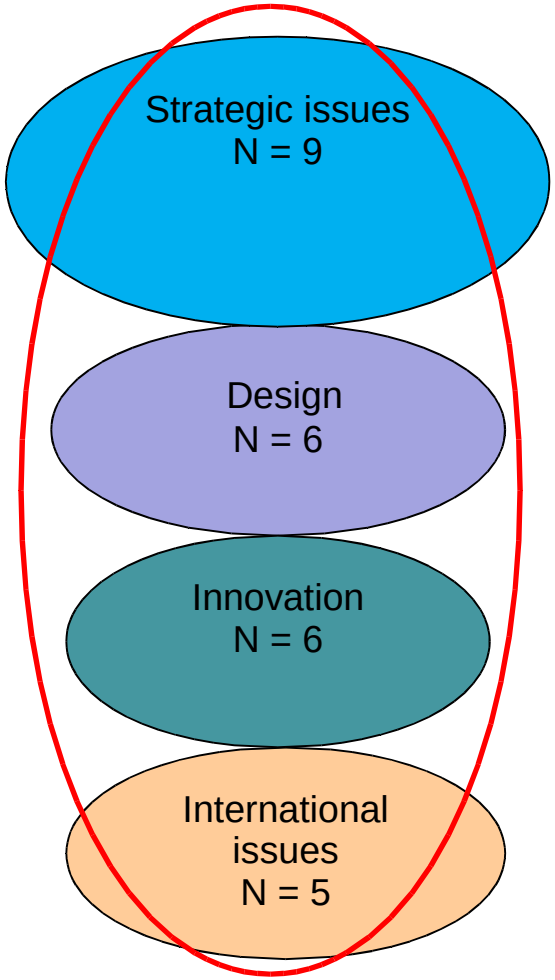
"I think i have to change my working way but now I don't know how."

"I think that I'll work in a shop smaller than now and that my work will be different. I think I'll work more as consultant and designer than as furniture shop."

"I dream a future in which we'll be able to work in a more professional way, less activity and more quality!"



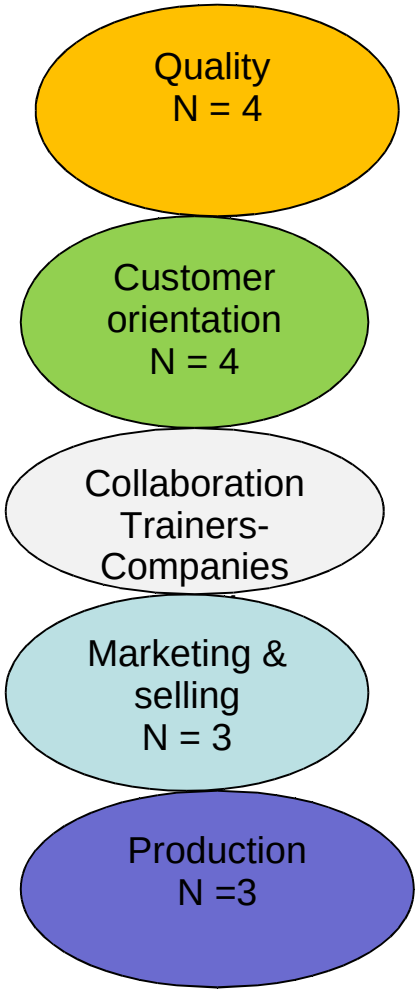
The main themes analyzed from the open question answers / Spain



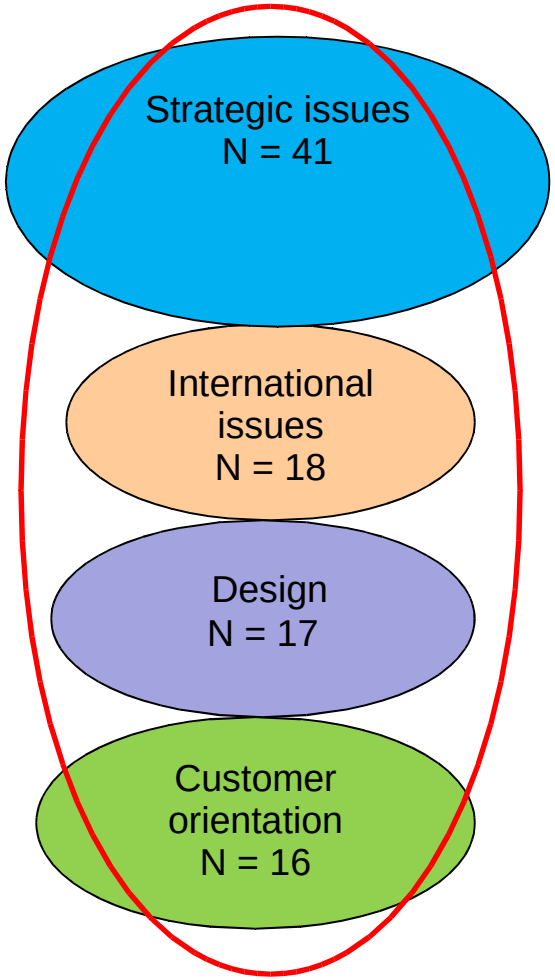
"It will reduce the number of companies among the different sectors, and the companies that continues will have an effort on design, quality, an so as in flexibility to adapt new products."

"More specialization. Survive in the market means to be really good in a small segment of the market. More implication of the customer in the company, developing products to cover their needs and offering to them more services. Much more communication to the consumer."

"All goes around competitiveness and it means training, languages, technical development, innovation, etc."



The main themes analyzed from the open question answers / Together



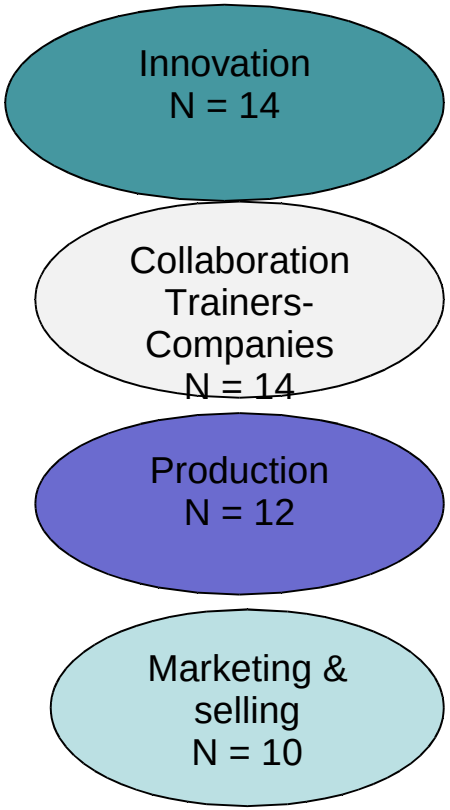
"New trends, new markets and new products, adapting our companies to the demands, the sector has to be trained to be innovative and to assume efficiently the utilization of new materials."

Issues less importance

Quality	**9**
Sustainability	**7**
R & D	**6**

Other themes

- **Business control**
- **Service Design**
- **Logistics**



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Summary

Strategic issues
N = 10

Customer orientation
N = 7

Production
N = 5

Strategic issues
N = 13

International issues
N = 9

Design
N = 6

Strategic issues
N = 9

Collaboration Trainers-Companies
N = 7

Marketing & selling
N = 4

Strategic issues
N = 9

Design
N = 6

Innovation
N = 6

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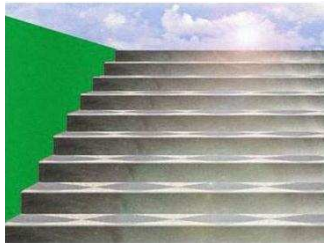
Structured questios/ The most important themes in building the company competitiveness



IMPORTANCE ALL TOGETHER

1. Innovation / Business oriented new ideas.

2. Marketing and selling /
Marketing and selling efforts nationally and internationally

3. Design thinking /
Design from product design to strategic thinking.

4. Research and development /
Product development, materials, heritage etc.

5. Service Design /
User-oriented methods to combine services and products.

6. Education / Enterprise collaboration
Collaboration between companies, regions, institutions, universities and research units.

7. Production/
Producting goods, developing production systems.

8. Business control /
Business administration, finance, accounts etc.

9. Sustainability /
Ecological, economical, cultural and sosiolocical issues.

10. Logistics / Transporting, packages, delivery, locations etc.

11. International issues / All kind of international acts.

ALL INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES

1. Innovation / Business oriented new ideas.

2. Research and development
Product development, materials, heritage etc.

3. Design thinking
Design from product design to strategic thinking.

4. Marketing and selling
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Business administration, finance, accounts etc.

11. Logistics / Transporting, packages, delivery, locations etc.

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AKATEMIA
SAVONIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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ACTIVE INSPIRE
All you need to know, you already know

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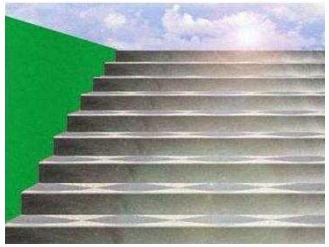
Structured questions/ The most important themes in building the company competitiveness



ALL INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES

1. Innovation / Business oriented new ideas.

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9. International issues
All kind of international acts.

10. Business control
Business administration, finance, accounts etc.

11. Logistics / Transporting, packages, delivery, locations etc.

ALL COMMERCE / SERVICE COMPANIES

1.Design thinking

2. Marketing and selling

3. Research and development

4. Innovation

5. Education / Enterprise collaboration

6. Service Design

7. Production

8. Business control

9. Logistics

10. Sustainability

11. International issues

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TOP FOUR IN EACH COUNTRIES
Industrial companies

Marketing and selling	Production	International issues	Innovation
Production	Design	Design	R & D
Innovation	Innovation	R & D	Marketing and selling
Design	R & D	Business control	Design

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BOTTOM FOUR IN EACH COUNTRY
Industrial companies

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Expectations towards innovative training

Please use the"slider"-diagram below to rate six issues in describing your expectations towards training organizations.
Touch the yellow balk in the slider, look at the whole idea on the right and make your valuation on scale 1 = Not important to 10 = Very important.

The most important first (companies)

1. Company needs / The training organizations have to develop new ways to hear and understand the needs of the enterprises

2. Best practices / To know more about the best practices in other companies

3. Proactivity / Training organizations have to be a proactive partner with the companies; sniffing future trends and weak signals

4. Trust / The companies can trust the training organizations

5. Ecological training / Develop ecological training for designers and the companies

6. Tradition/ Training new design based on tradition.

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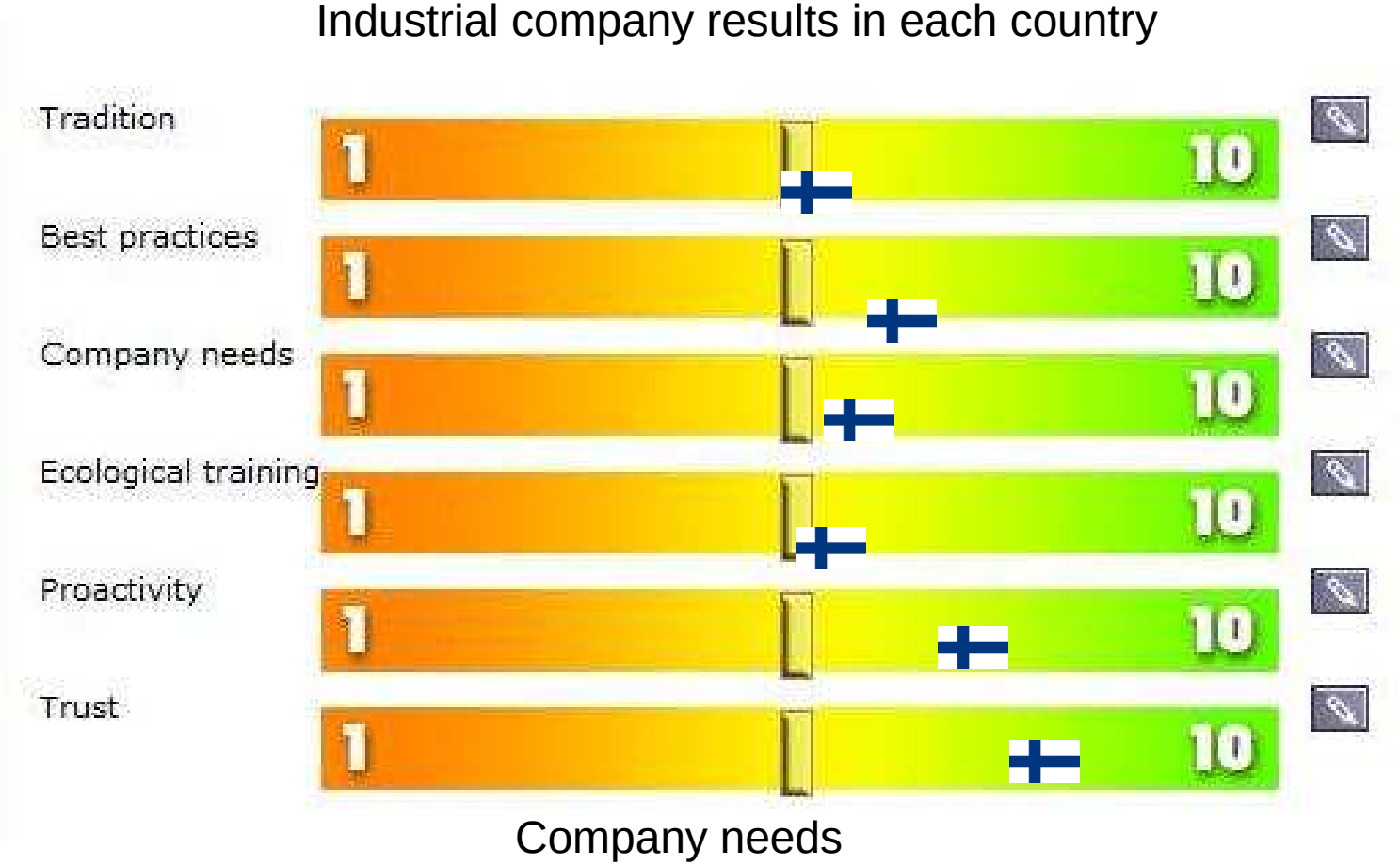
Industrial company results in each country



Company needs

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Industrial company results in each country

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Industrial company results in each country

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Industrial company results in each country

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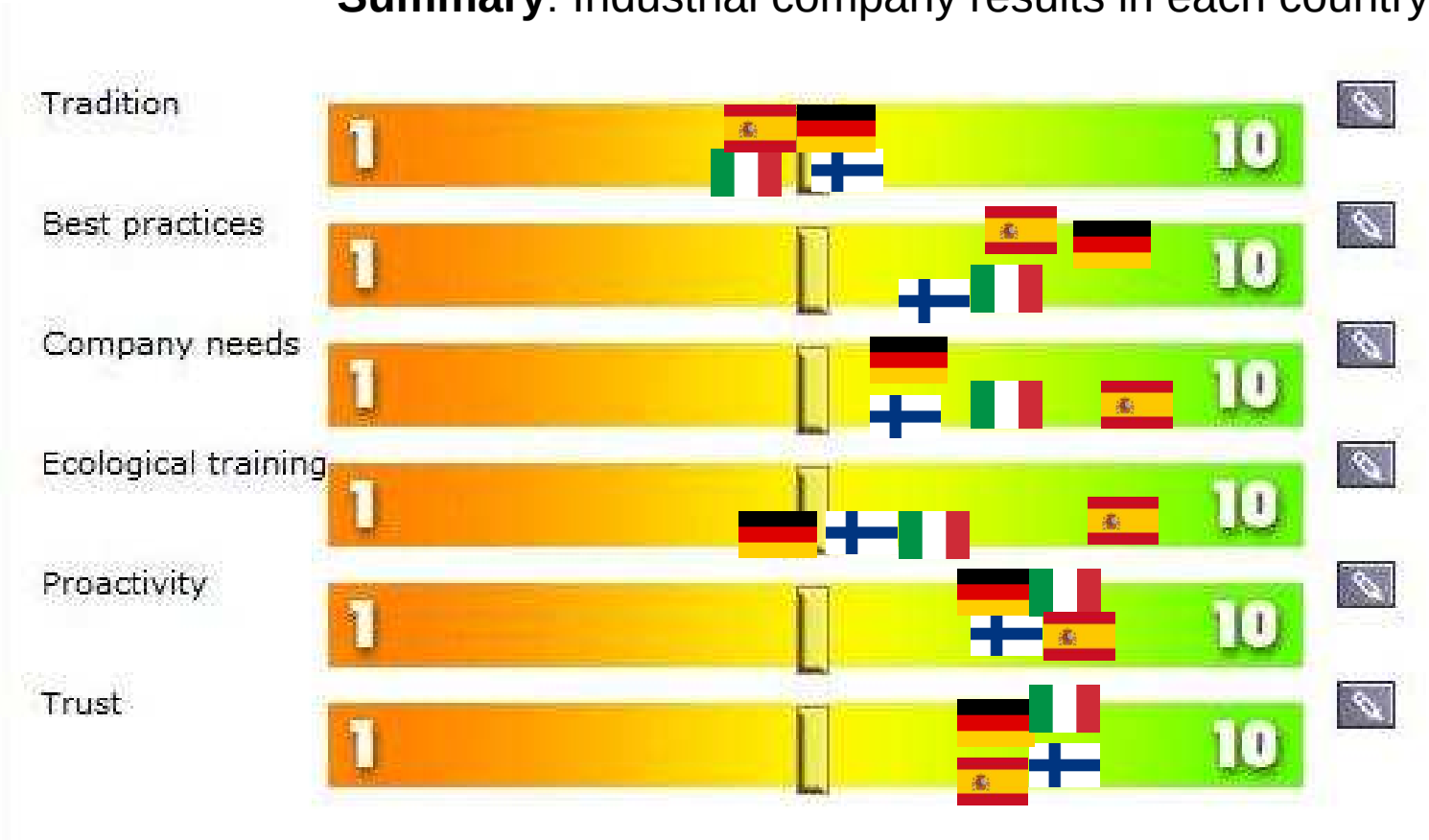
Summary: Industrial company results in each country



Company needs

The training organizations have to develop new ways to hear and understand the needs of the enterprises.	6,92	7,68	7,02	8,27
Best practices / To know more about the best practices in other companies.	6,97	8,05	7,57	7,63
Proactivity / Training organizations have to be a proactive partner with the companies; sniffing future trends and weak signals.	7,44	7,23	7,62	7,67
Trust / The companies can trust the training organizations	7,46	7,32	7,71	7,39
Ecological training / Develop ecological training for designers and the companies.	6,60	5,88	7,21	8,15
Tradition Training new design based on tradition.	6,38	6,16	5,31	5,93

Next five years?

Think the actions to improve your company performance in next five years. Please rate each claim if you disagree or agree with it.

The most agreed statements:

1. Innovation / To get rid of imitating others and create our own
1. Networking / To network more with companies on own and other sectors
1. Training / To be better aware and up dated about possibilities to develop the company
1. Internationalization / To find more ways for international business actions
1. Own advantage / Thinking not only and exclusively on the own advantage. Economical sectors are like a boat: if it goes down, everyone will get wet.
1. Ecological thinking / Find competitiveness from ecological thinking

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Industrial company results in each country

Next five years

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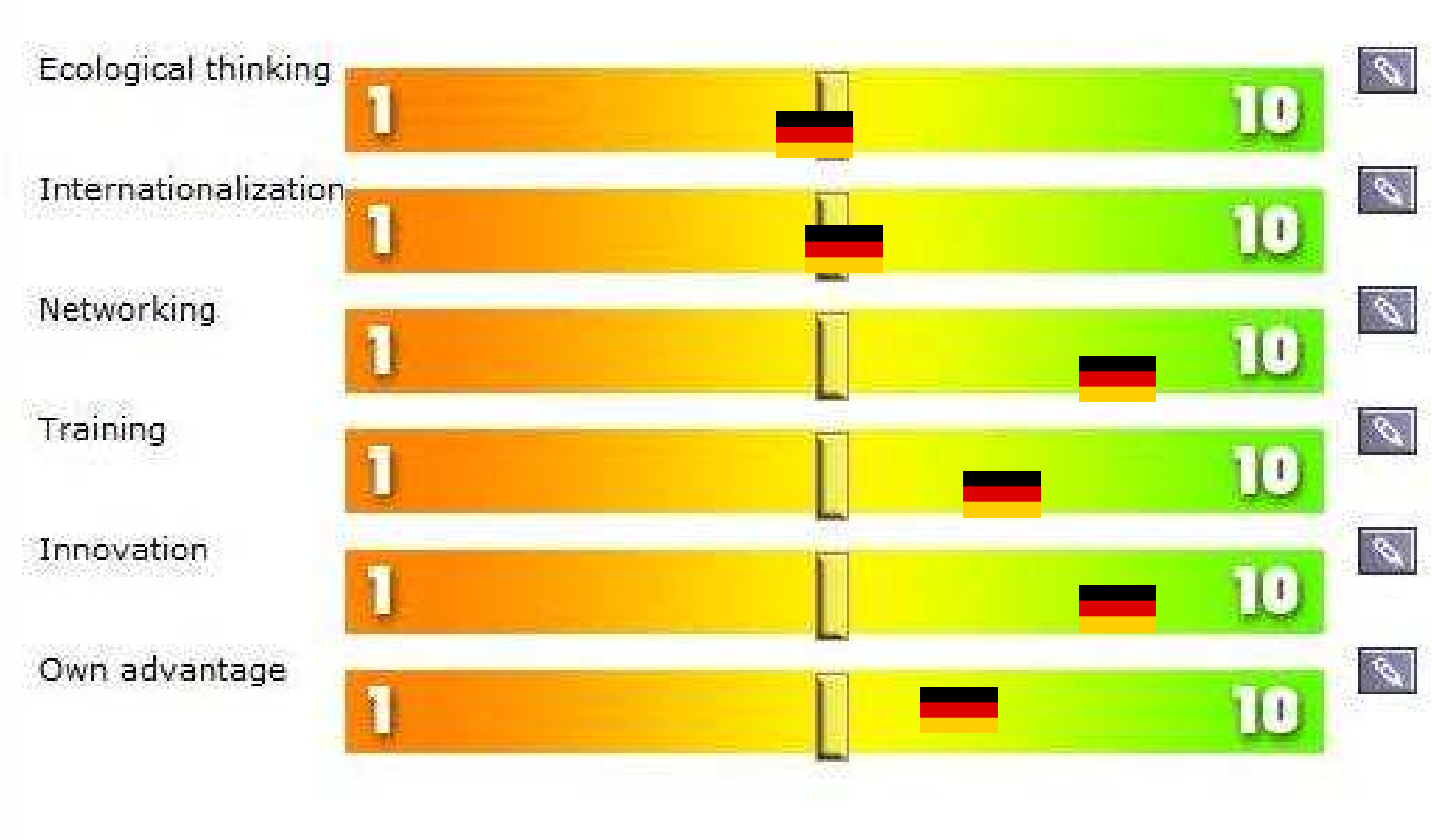
Industrial company results in each country



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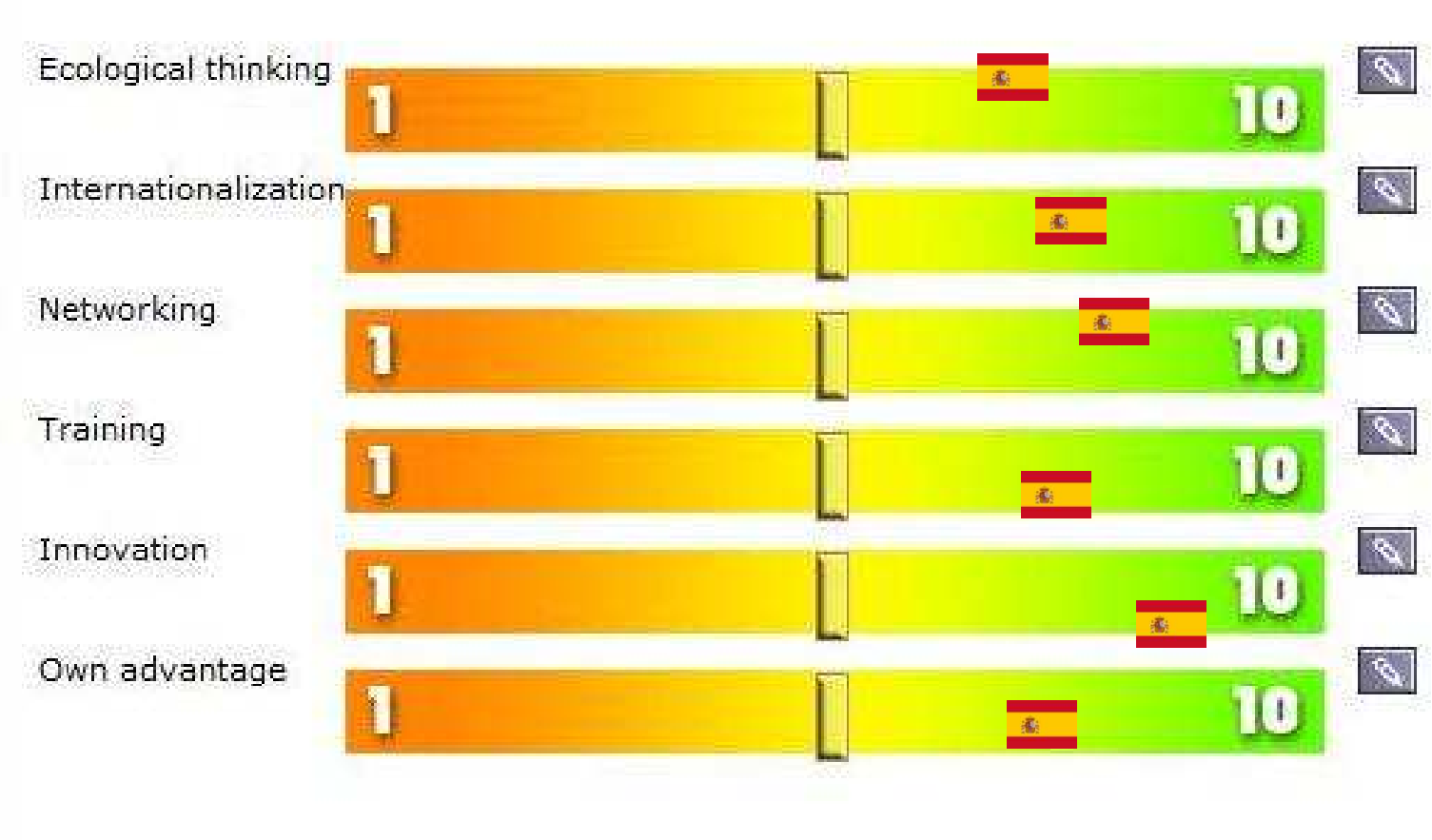
Industrial company results in each country



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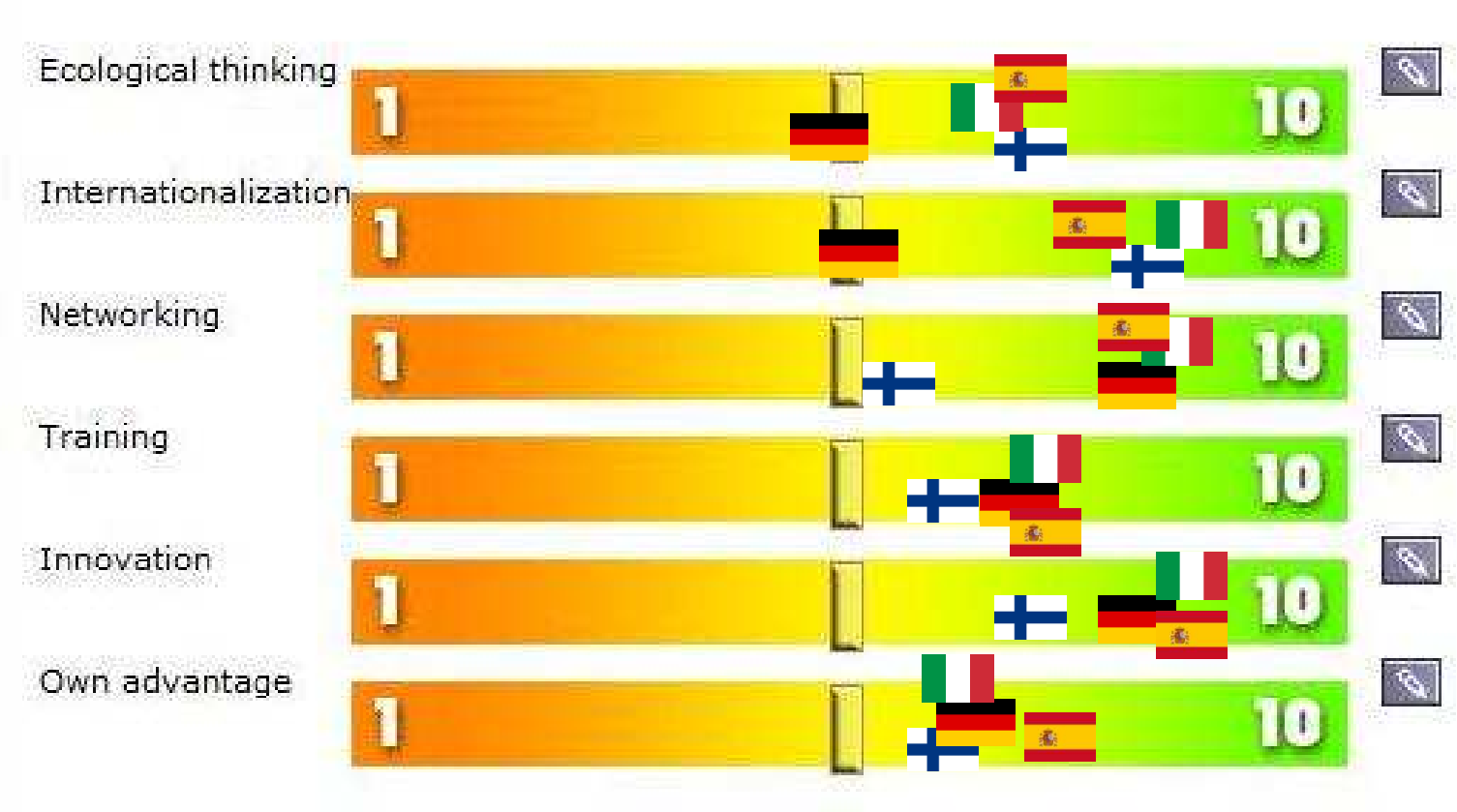
Summary: Industrial company results in each country



Next five years

Innovation / To get rid of imitating others and create our own	7,31	8,10	8,86	8,99
Networking / To network more with companies on own and other sectors	6,19	8,13	8,51	8,01
Training / To be better aware and up dated about possibilities to develop the company	6,89	7,43	7,89	7,86
Internationalization / To find more ways for international business actions	8,16	5,71	8,83	7,97
Own advantage / Thinking not only and e xclusively on the own advantage. Economical sectors are like a boat: if it goes down, everyone will get wet.	6,31	6,71	6,63	7,41
Ecological thinking / Find competitiveness from ecological thinking	7,67	5,43	7,02	7,47

Networking

33557
Networking is good solution for small companies. Networking may rice the prices and competition a will suffer. If networking rise effiency and its competitive, then its okey.

33567
Networking between companies that represents different technologies will increase. Networking among companies that are competing similar custromers is difficult.

33575
Networking is generally great, but in every day work we think not have time enough to do it very well. In fact my job is better when i can relay on others thought and competences.

33579
Networking is of vital importance, the role of "unofficial, not strictly business oriented networking will get creater importance

33610
most of our business partners are german companies, international cooperation is preferable but is not part of our every days business yet.

33642
The consumer is the centre of the company and any area of the bussines should begin with this supose

"Excellent results in our interior and furniture sector companies“

The main head line 2016 Examples

33554
We have been able to launch unique and innovative new home furniture collection distributed by world`s leading high-end interior design store chain.

33584
We have a lot of attractive and professional young marketing people who can manage international markets. Co-operations with engineers and designers.

33588
Annual exchange meetings in the participating regions. Trainee exchanges. Development of international guidelines concerning furniture production and design.

33627
We have put the requirements of the end customer in the centre, have grasped it and given satisfaction.

33648
The training has to be global in order to allow the student to work in any company of the world, a training where the languages, the knowledge of management, marketing and so on that allows the internationalization of our companies and our employees

33704
We think that the best trainging is in the following subjects: - innovate the tradition in the production - new instruments in marketing sector - network with other firms - new design in the product

Pearls

33569
Recycling is not the answer in future because it means more trash production. Side products of harmful production is not the answer. Using materials that are from well kept environment are the answer of the future production.

33577
I'd like to have a practical design workshop on regional level, but with the possibility to have joined also some participants of the international partner firms.

33586
In the next five years we´ll have bigger problems with the lack of trainees for our company. Especially employees with design skills and/or international work experience will get more important for us.

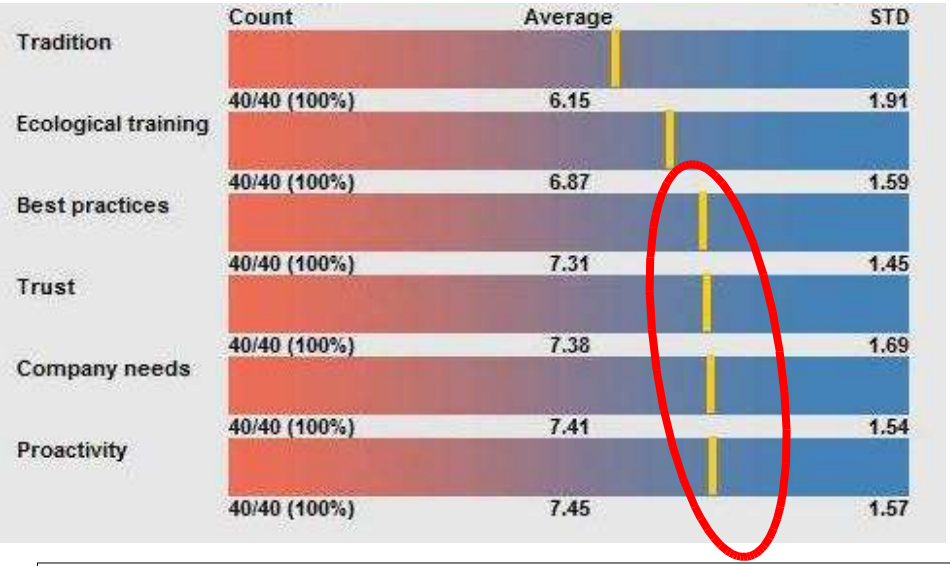
33641
More specialization. Survive in the market means to be really good in a small segment of the market. More implication of the customer in the company, developing products to cover their needs and offering to them more services. Much more comunication to the consumer.

33702
We are working to increase our turnover in the Countries where our firm isn't present yet.

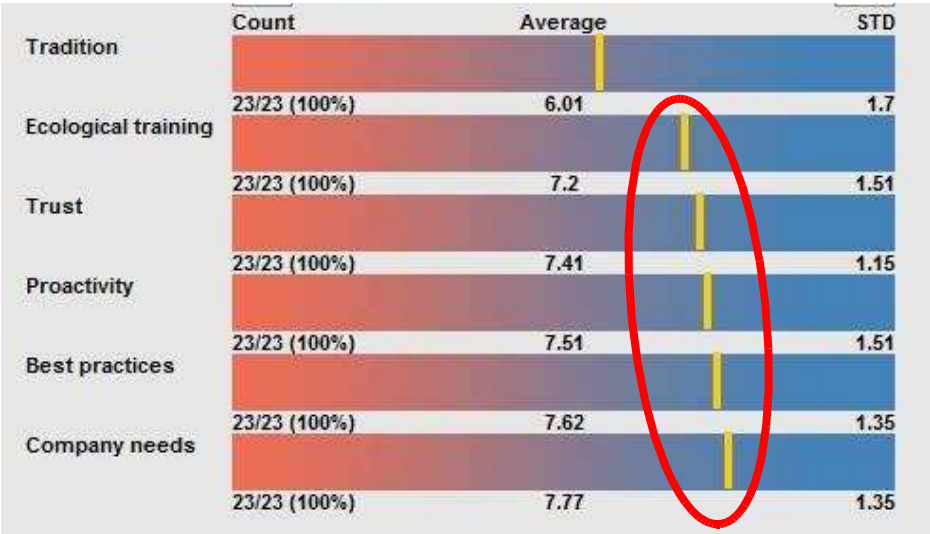
EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS TRAINING

“Please use the"slider"-diagram below to rate six issues in describing your expectations towards training organizations. Touch the yellow balk in the slider, look at the whole idea on the right and make your valuation on scale 1 = Not important to 10 = Very important.”

All together



All industrial companies



The most important first (companies)

1. Company needs / The training organizations have to develop new ways to hear and understand the needs of the enterprises.
2. Best practices / To know more about the best practices in other companies.
3. Proactivity / Training organizations have to be a proactive partner with the companies; sniffing future trends and weak signals.
4. Trust / The companies can trust the training organizations.
5. Tradition/
6. Ecological training

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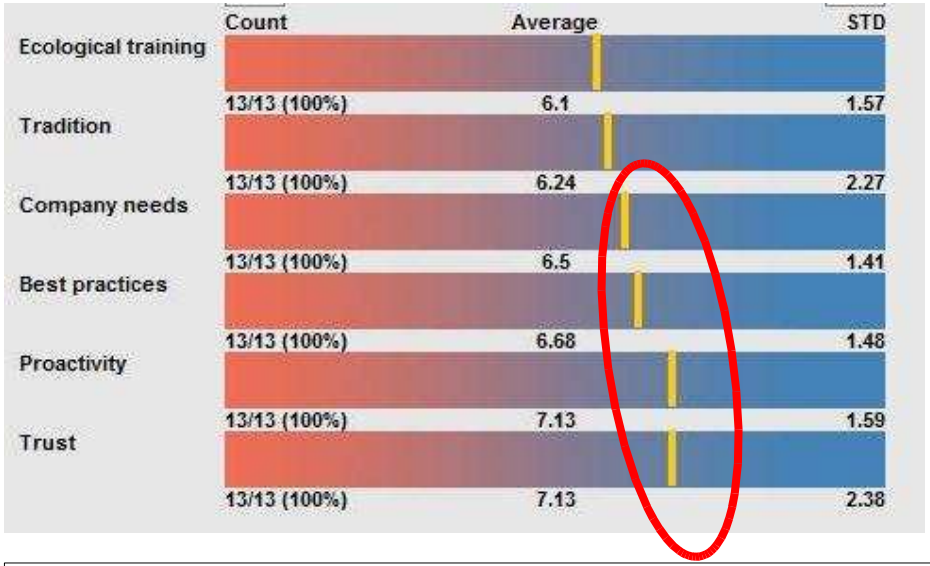
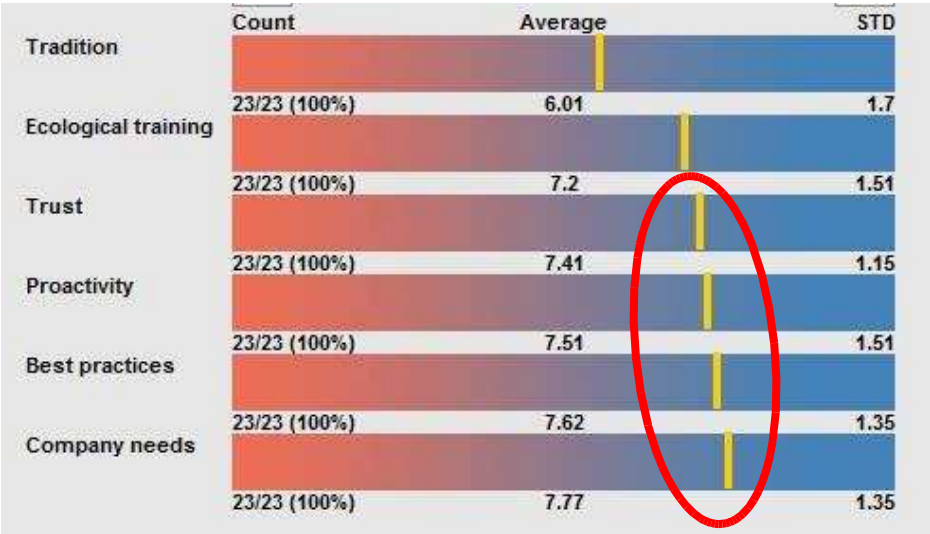
Please use the"slider"-diagram below to rate six issues in describing your expectations towards training organizations.

Comparision Service/Commercial - Industrial

All service and commercial companies



All industrial companies



The most important first (industrial companies)

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4. Trust / The companies can trust the training organizations.
5. Tradition
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Next five years?

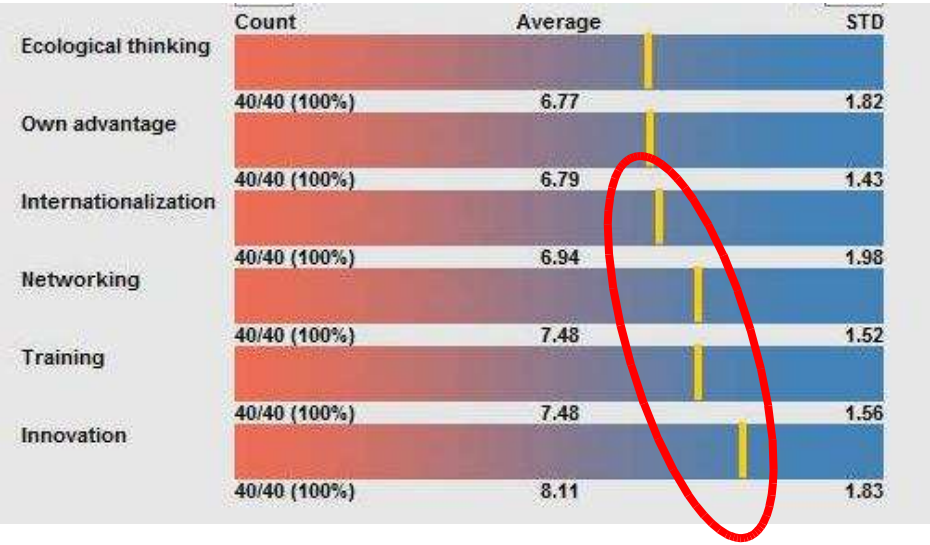
Think the actions to improve your company performance in next five years. Please rate each claim if you disagree or agree with it.

The most disagreed statements:

Ecological thinking
Find competitiveness from ecological thinking

Own advantage
Thinking not only and exclusively on the own advantage. Economical sectors are like a boat: if it goes down, everyone will get wet.

All together



All industrial companies

The most agreed statements:

1. Innovation / To get rid of imitating others and create our own
2. Networking / To network more with companies on own and other sectors
3. Training / To be better aware and up dated about possibilities to develop the company
4. Internationalization / To find more ways for international business actions

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ACTIVE INSPIRE
All you need to know, you already know

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

The most disagreed statements:

Ecological thinking
Find competitiveness from ecological thinking

Own advantage
Thinking not only and exclusively on the own advantage. Economical sectors are like a boat: if it goes down, everyone will get wet.

All service and commercial companies

All industrial companies

The most agreed statements:

1. Innovation / To get rid of imitating others and create our own
2. Networking / To network more with companies on own and other sectors
3. Training / To be better aware and up dated about possibilities to develop the company
4. Internationalization / To find more ways for international business actions

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Comments

·Differences in assesment how to emphasise the signifigance/ importance of asked opinions/things (German, Finland vs. Italy, Spain)

·Country-spesific differences in signifigance matters or points

·Still the most important issue in all countries were srtategic questions

·Open questions were easy to class/gategorise

·The activity to answer to the inquiry was changing – WHY?

·Answers were emphasized in different ways in partner countries (training, services, industrial) – DID WE REACHED THE REAL TARGET GROUP?

Conclusions

· The most important issues in each country were strongly different

· In the answers were not big differences between productive and service companies

· Will the training packages answer to the needs of enterprises – is there needs for changes?

· How to exploit the results for hence?

· Net toot for this kind of inquiries and for this project is good method and well justifiable

Conclusions

Italy:
A lot of talking of collaboration between training and companies – but not concrete proposals
We can read whishes to improve performance, but no clear idea how to do it.
Some interest in international collaboration, but not solutions.
Quite strong trust in collaboration with other companies

Germany:
Networkin locally in concrete way, some interest for international collaboration but more ”virtual” level.
Some worries of economic situation and how to improve the company (finance, employees)
Interest for a international training

Finland:
Some very deeply strategic issues
Interest fot international collaboration and ideas for regognizing customer needs in new ways
Use of new technologies in building competitiveness

Spain:
This satisfies with the quality of the company performance ; means to improve design, innovation and listening the customers
Not any comments of networking or company collaboration

Generally:
The companies in every country had a lot strategic issues to discuss
Interests to the transnational training - seems to be good opportunity

Conclusions

· Each company has the strategy of its own what ever it is
· Companies are targeting from the longer side of wiew and doesn´t emphasize signal issues
· Otherwise companies and colleagues are taking about same things
· Colleagues made the point:
  - how to succeed in the future;
  - proactive/capability to understand strengths and weak signals;
  - pilot cases/understand the needs of companies;
  - spread pilot cases and best practises

<u>Things not so important in enterprises:</u>
- logistics
- sustainability (the term is unclear – understand too narrowly?)

<u>Important for training organization/colleagues:</u>
- design thinking and sustainable development for the future competitiveness

Conclusions / Next five years

Companies top three:

1. Innovation
2. Networking
3. Training

1. Innovation is the most appreciated issue generally in top three in every country
2. Networking; top three three countries, exept Finland. Internationalization is in top three in countries, exept Germany.
3. Training is quite equal in each country (3/4)

Others:

4. Economical advantage = Quite similar in each country
5. Ecological thinking is not so highly respected exept in Finland (2nd important)

It seems that Finland and Germany are most “carefull” and
Italy and Spain were most “courageous”