

## **Project „digiskill-retail“**

Development and Use of flexible and digital tools for increasing digital skills of vocational students and employees in retail trade.

### **Evaluation – interview**

## **"Digital skills in the retail industry"**

### **Germany**

Project duration: 01.09.2022 – 31.08.2024

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## Evaluation interview "Digital skills in the retail industry"

### INFORMATION AND DATA LITERACY

*Products and services of the training company (AO - training regulations, §4 paragraph 2 number 1*

Introduction: In order to advise customers according to their needs, prospective salespeople and retail clerks need in-depth knowledge of goods. This is one of the key qualifications in retail.

Knowledge of goods includes knowledge of:

- the production
- the product characteristics
- the advantages and benefits
- the application and use
- the care, storage and, if necessary, disposal of goods
- alternative offers and of course the price of the goods

1. **What role do digital information sources play in your institution in imparting commodity knowledge?**
2. **How do you develop skills for data analysis of your trainees?**
3. **How do you teach your students to find the information in order to better advise customers on relevant product information?**
4. **How do you instruct your students to find information about recycling/reuse/reduce of products?**

During working hours, the apprentices work in the market and do not have the opportunity to access digital sources to inform themselves about products. The knowledge in the store is mainly imparted in face-to-face conversations by colleagues or manufacturers who are on site at the time. On the basis of the products displayed in the market, the trainee is explained the nature of the products or is taught by touching, seeing and trying them. The interviewee justifies the frontal conversation with the fact that the trainer immediately gets a reaction from the apprentice and can assign whether the apprentice has understood the lesson. The interviewee also notes that the combination between working on the computer (digital) and working on the field is difficult to reconcile, as the apprentice's labour is needed on the field. There is also an eNet where product information can be looked up. However, access is only possible via the department management.

After working hours or in compulsory seminars, apprentices have very good opportunities to acquire product knowledge via a company learning platform. Each apprentice has personalised access. Tablets are also available. The learning platform offers diverse and up-to-date e-learning on a wide range of topics. Furthermore, the apprentices have the opportunity to expand their knowledge via an app. The interviewee says that trainees make little to very little use of the e-learning offer. Likewise, voluntary seminars on merchandise knowledge are not used by trainees because they prefer to have free time. According to the interviewee, the apprentices are well acquainted with the use of digital media. However, the lack of user interest on the part of the trainees was underlined.

The topic of sustainability has a high priority in the market. The apprentices are taught to handle fruit/vegetables carefully, as this is a very sensitive and perishable group of goods. The separation of waste in the area of fruit and vegetables, peel and foil is also a central topic.

## COMMUNICATION

*Presentation of goods and advertising measures (AO - training regulations, §4 paragraph 2 number 2)*

Introduction: Advertising is part of a company's communication policy. Customers need to know what services the trading company can offer them. Advertising is the communication with the customer to inform, maintain one's own image, create purchase incentives and build trust.

- 5. Which communication channels do you use in the company to prepare students to inform customers about advertising campaigns?**
- 6. What methods do you use to enable trainees to use these channels? (Teaching methods)**
- 7. How do you train your students to choose the right channel for communication with the customers?**

Knowledge transfer in the area of communication, especially customer advice and customer information, is not supported by digital communication channels in the market. Apprentices are therefore not given the opportunity to use or deploy digital communication channels in these areas and so they do not develop their skills and knowledge. The company implements its promotional activities in an analogue way. Promotions are printed on flyers or leaflets and distributed in the residential area. Posters are put up in the market. Apprentices are not involved in these promotions. Larger advertising campaigns are also implemented by the head office at another location.

## COLLABORATION

*Information and communication (AO - training regulations, §4 paragraph 4 number 3)*

Introduction: In order to exchange ideas with colleagues or customers, digital media are increasingly being used today in addition to personal conversations.

- 8. What digital technologies/media do you use to exchange information or for communication in the company?**
- 9. In the company what internal communication channels do you use with your trainees/students?**
- 10. What tools, platforms and other methods do you use to develop the co-creation and creativity/exchange of ideas of your trainees?**

No digital technologies are used for the exchange of information or internal communication. Until now, analogue communication channels have been used in the market. Information that concerns everyone is posted on the notice board. Or one exchanges information in a personal conversation and discusses important topics. The interviewee says that she has not yet found any suitable technologies and has not had the time to deal with this topic. Data protection and the sensible handling of personal data play a major role in this decision. Furthermore, she says that the acceptance within the employees/colleagues is not given.

The recording and maintenance of the apprentices' report book is organised digitally via the learning management system. Via the platform, the trainer has the possibility to exchange information with the apprentices and to give feedback on the report book. This is also practised in the market.

## **INFORMATION**

*Consulting of customers (AO – training regulations, §5 paragraph 3 sentence 1 number 2)*

Introduction: In retail, customers today expect individual, needs-based advice and solutions to their problems as well as a clearly tailored benefit-related presentation. In order to advise customers according to their needs, sellers and retail merchant (KiE) must be able to recognize and analyse the latest trends in retail.

- 11. Which sources of information do you use in the company to observe, recognize and analyse (trade) processes?**
- 12. What are the tools and other ways to develop your trainee's digital customer service skills?- e.g., chatbot, company/store app, subscriptions, etc.**

None of these topics / areas are taught in the company. The interviewee refers here to the vocational school.

## **DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION**

*Online trading (AO – training regulations, § 5 paragraph 4 sentence 1 no. 6)*

Introduction: More and more retail companies set up their own online shop in order to be present for their customers on various channels.

- 13. Do you integrate content from the elective qualification "e-commerce" into your company/your lessons for digital content creation?**
- 14. In your opinion, which skills for digital content creation are particularly relevant for employees in their day-to-day work in retail?**

The area of "digital content creation" is not taught in the training because the store does not offer online trading. The maintenance and support of the online presence is done by the head office at another location. The interviewed person does not see any deficits in this area in apprentices. Apprentices have an advantage because they grew up as the smartphone generation. Younger employees have grown up with digital media and open up this field faster than older employees. The deficits in digital content creation can be taught well through e-learning. The only thing noted is that reliable access to e-learning must be guaranteed without technical disruptions in order to avoid frustration. Likewise, quick access for fast processing.