

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"

Bulgaria

Project duration: 01.09.2022 – 31.08.2024

2022-1-DE02-KA220-VET-000089396



Evaluation interview 1

"Digital skills in the retail industry"

Teacher in VET school

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?

In our school and the curriculum in general these needs are not so common. Many of the learners are provided at their workplace with this information as they are at entry and lower levels of employment. The decision-making process involves supervision by higher managers and owners. Most of the time the needs are for sourcing the documents and materials and searching for the information from these sources. Different digital media tools are applied to teach students how to find the correct information from the provided documents – Chromebooks, laptops, PCs, Google classroom, Google Drive and MS Office are used; blended learning is becoming more popular especially when students have their practice at the retail store and do dual programs.

2. How do you develop skills for data analysis of your trainees?

Most of the trainees need to develop skills and knowledge about MS Excel so the focus is on definitions of data, information, insights and the correlation between them. Some basic functions and activities in Excel are elaborated most of the time. They develop tables, formulas, diagrams and also use survey products like Google Forms. In class and for homework assignments we use the software Shkolo and platforms provided by the Ministry of education together with Google Classroom. In all cases the syllabus and lessons follow the national curriculum with the changes after 2017 for professional education and training (VET).

3. How do you teach your students to find the information in order to better advise customers on relevant product information?

We use a lot of examples, hand-outs for students to fill them in and case studies for specific companies, type of work, data, analysis results and other. In general, data analysis is taught in specific classes in Mathematics, statistics, search for legal documents and use of knowledge and data from the National Statistical Institute. Textbooks and examples with different case studies; very few cases of flipped classroom.

4. How do you instruct your students to find information about recycling/reuse/reduce of products?

It is very specific and not very much related to the studies and the lessons for this level. However, they use the international websites and organisations together with product information and data sheets from companies and producers. We use the popular case studies and brands as examples together with Bulgarian companies who are famous for their sustainable business.

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?

All classes are face to face and on regular basis for online meetings – Zoom, MS Teams, Google Meet, they also prefer Viber and WhatsApp. It is used as means of communication but in classes related to Marketing and Digital marketing the topics about channels and strategy are developed as lesson plans.

6. What methods do you use to enable trainees to use these channels? (Teaching methods)

Use of assignments, homework and teamwork so they can practice the use of different channels online, specific examples, activities in class but most of the time they are divided into teams. Practical tasks, game-based learning, simulation and in-store practices with real customers.

7. How do you train your students to choose the right channel for communication with the customers?

Use of examples and situational exercises giving them the correct guidance is very important in the process. Most of the time we use traditional channel and personal meetings. They learn about social media, applications, products and the focus is on the strategy in Digital marketing: Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, LinkedIn and the purpose and role of each one in the overall company approach and strategy. Printed media is still used in Bulgaria and they review different brochures, catalogues and other materials to analyse their pros and cons.

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?

Internal platforms are the widest group, supported By Google products and services, online channels like Viber, WhatsApp, social media, Google Drive, Discordia, One Note, Google classroom with restrictions by the school.

9. In the company what internal communication channels do you use with your trainees/students?

Google Classroom, Shkolo, emails, chat, social media, Discordia, One Note are very common but mostly traditional personal meetings and classes. For their homework and assignments the use of Google Classroom is very convenient as it allows to grade students, set deadlines and performance criteria.

10. What tools, platforms and other methods do you use to develop the co-creation and creativity/exchange of ideas of your trainees?

Most of the time social media, Miro, mindmap tools: MindMeister, Prezi and Canva, Google Forms, Google slides and the other products by Google, MS Office, other.

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?

This is mostly taken from textbooks, legislation, internal information from examples and specific cases provided by the retailers. These sources of the National Statistical Institute is also taught how to be used. Ideation techniques mostly brainstorming, Kahoot, etc.

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.

There are examples, textbooks and general knowledge provided in the lesson plans as part of the Marketing programme and studies, Ministry of Economy, national, regional and global trends are often analysed and presented. Important topic that is taught and practiced is communication and the main rules: eye contact, empathy, active listening, presentation, feedback, conflict resolution, complaints handling, etc.

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?

Yes, mostly from there but we do not have aligned approach: Digital marketing and advertisements on social media. Ecommerce is also related to Entrepreneurship and setting up online business with the particular tools, platforms, channels, etc. It is a specific course and only basic definitions are provided to retail trainees.

14. In your opinion, which skills for digital content creation are particularly relevant for employees in their day-to-day work in retail?

In most of the cases these students are regular employees who don't have much decision-making activities and tasks so they simply follow orders and content that is already created. The general use and purpose of emails, websites of the companies, internal channels and other traditional topics are covered. They need to learn more about safety and protection online especially for online payments and wireless payment methods.