



**IMPLE-  
MENTING  
NEW IDEAS**

## Finding and retaining trainees

**A RECRUITMENT HANDBOOK  
FOR SMALL AND  
MEDIUM ENTERPRISES**



## FOREWORD

How can we attract successful trainees? For a growing number of companies that currently offer in-company training, this is a question of particular urgency. The times when small and medium enterprises (SMEs) could pick and choose their trainees are over. Far more, the competition for the trainee resource has already begun.

Here, it is important to use every option. Optimizing trainee recruitment and bringing it in step with the times is essential in this context. This handbook is designed to support companies, and in particular SMEs in these ambitions. It describes the challenges of contemporary trainee recruitment and explains how companies can respond appropriately.

It opens up a broad horizon. An impressive variety of instruments produces an enormous range of possible actions companies can take to attract trainees successfully.

This handbook is a guide for companies that want to make their trainee recruitment capable of addressing the current challenges in the training market. It guides the reader step by step through the individual phases of recruitment. Numerous tips and instructions ensure successful implementation of the recruitment measures in a practical business environment. It reveals new ways to inspire young people for a career and win them over as trainees.

\* \* \*

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# How to use this handbook

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**Who should read this handbook**

This handbook is aimed at companies in all sectors - mainly small and medium enterprises (SMEs) - which offer or would like to offer trainee programs. It provides different levels of orientation - depending on how much knowledge and experience with trainee recruitment a company already has:

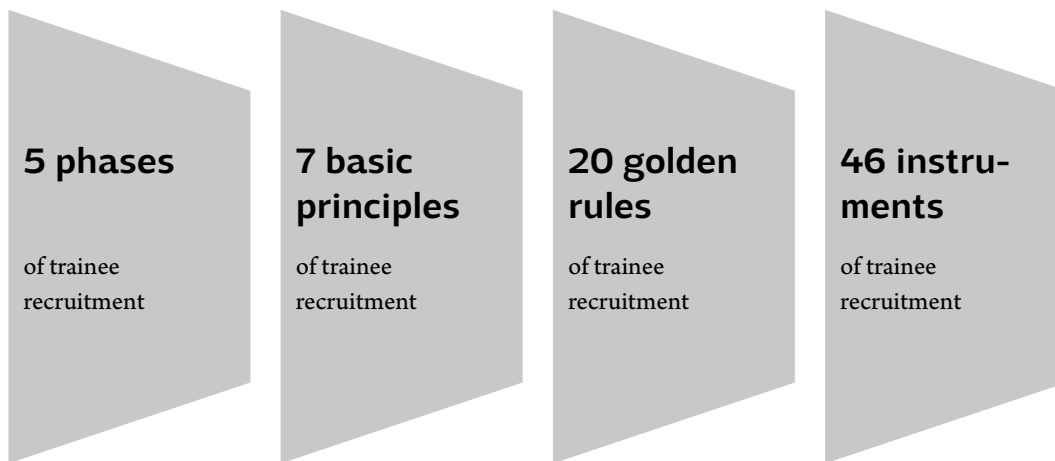
**GRAPHIC 1**  
Handbook  
target groups

Newcomers	Up and coming	Old hands	Old hands
Companies starting training programs for the first time	Companies planning training	Companies experienced in training with no difficulty attracting trainees	Experienced companies offering training facing difficulty attracting trainees
<b>Use this guide to ...</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get a thorough introduction to the issue of trainee recruitment</li> <li>• Orient yourself to the challenges and tasks associated with trainee recruitment</li> <li>• Get an overview of recruitment instruments</li> <li>• Learn how these instruments are put into practice</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn more about expanded opportunities for trainee recruitment</li> <li>• Learn about current recruitment trends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update your recruitment strategy and make it more efficient</li> <li>• Expand your knowledge of the range of recruitment instruments</li> <li>• Learn how to put these instruments effectively into practice</li> </ul>

**What the handbook offers companies**

A number of factors come into play in the success of trainee recruitment efforts. The recruitment practices companies use play a key role. This handbook is therefore devoted precisely to this subject: **Its aim is to help companies fully realize their capability to influence the process of attracting trainees. The way to get there is by optimization and updating trainee recruitment.**

This handbook provides the tools companies need to successfully attract trainees qualified for their company. It motivates firms to find solutions to the current challenges in this field, successfully implement them, and better use existing capacities. The following central elements act as signposts to guide readers through this wealth of information:



**GRAPHIC 2**

The central components of the handbook

Within this framework, the handbook provides extensive information to deal with questions like: What should I take into account today when it comes to trainee recruitment? What can we do as a company in this regard, and what should I do personally? What concrete steps can I take to tackle tasks associated with trainee recruitment, and what activities can I undertake? How can I continuously improve my recruitment practices?

Tasks for companies	Understand the challenges of trainee recruitment	Successfully meet the challenges of trainee recruitment	Check success
What companies should know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditions for trainee recruitment</li> <li>• Rules for trainee recruitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruments of trainee recruitment</li> <li>• Instructions for implementing the instruments</li> <li>• Fundamentals of trainee recruitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicators and instruments for measuring success</li> </ul>
Where companies can get information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See. Ch. 1: New solutions are needed</li> <li>• See. Ch. 2: Golden rules of contemporary trainee recruitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See. Ch. 4: Fundamentals of trainee recruitment</li> <li>• See. Ch. 3: Trainee recruitment instruments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See. Ch. 5: Ensuring recruitment success</li> </ul>

**GRAPHIC 3**

Contents of the handbook at a glance

### How companies can use the handbook

Companies should use the handbook in a way that best suits their needs and interests. Companies experienced in training will read it differently from companies looking to attract trainees for the first time. The success of the handbook in no way depends on its being read from cover to cover and fully implemented. Rather, it should be used to pursue specific goals. What do I want to know? In what areas do I want to improve my position? Where could I use some new ideas and suggestions? Companies can select just the chapters that apply to their situation.

Here are some examples of how to use the handbook:

1. **Want to find out how to develop a general approach to trainee recruitment?**  
→ See the section entitled Planning in *Chapter 3.3* to find out how to proceed strategically.
2. **Unsure about which recruitment instruments to use?**  
→ Then get a general overview in *Chapter 3.2* under Trainee recruitment instruments at a glance.
3. **Want to try out a new recruitment instrument?**  
→ Then find inspiration in *Chapter 3* Trainee recruitment instruments.
4. **Want some tips on how to use or implement a particular instrument properly?**  
→ Then, browse through the quick tip boxes in *Chapter 3* Trainee recruitment instruments.”
5. **Want to get involved in career guidance for young people but don’t know how?**  
→ Then get some ideas in *Chapter 4.3* How can I become a player in career counseling?
6. **Want to know how you can better prevent training drop-outs?**  
→ Find out in *Chapters 3.6* Concluding the contract and *3.7* Integration in the first few months about how to create trainee loyalty to the company from day one.
7. **Having a hard time filling training positions, and want to know what to do about it?**  
→ Review your recruiting practices with the checklists in *Chapter 5* Ensuring recruitment success and initiate improvements.

**Implementing new ideas in practice is even more important than reading the full handbook.** The handbook is put to good use if a company manages to implement at least one of the following measures:

**GRAPHIC 4**

*Using the handbook right*







New solutions are needed

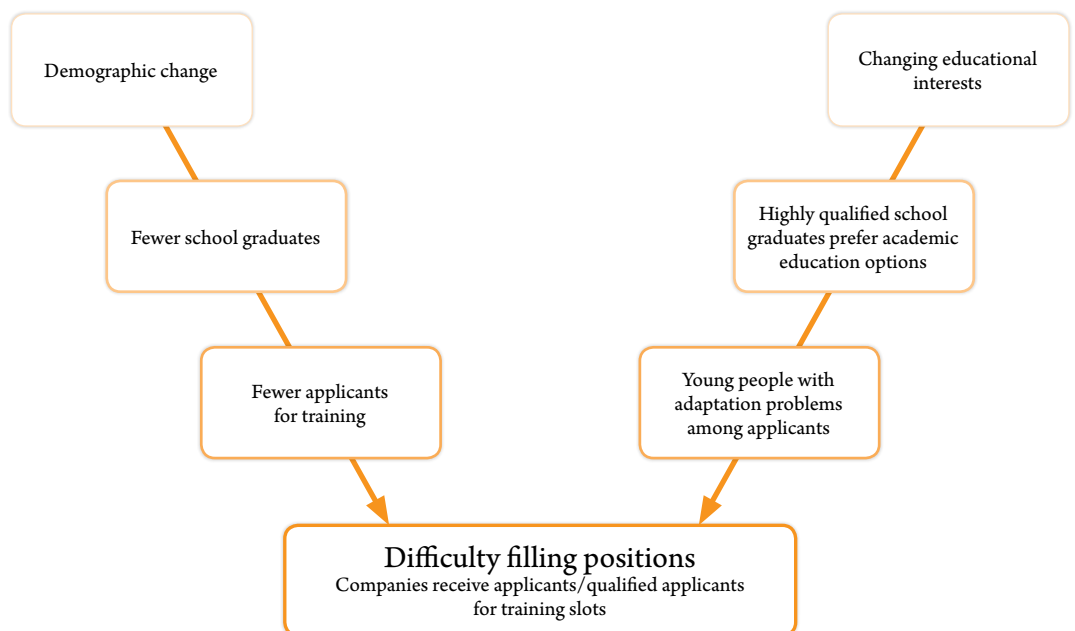
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## Why companies need to rethink trainee recruitment

In-company training starts with trainee recruitment. It is a matter of course for companies with training programs and is often associated with a number of routines. And yet for several years the field has been changing and become more challenging. Trainee recruitment today is not what it used to be, a simple matter of selecting the most qualified young people from a pile of applications.

Recruitment challenges are the results of the changing training market. The demographic shift and the trend towards more academic education have resulted in an ever-shrinking number of applicants in the vocational training system. Young people interested in vocational training are becoming a scarce commodity. And more and more frequently, the qualifications of applicants do not meet companies' training requirements. This trend is unlikely to change any time soon - if anything, it will become even more pronounced.

**GRAPHIC 5**  
Social conditions  
and effects on  
in-company training



If companies do not take action to counter this development, more and more training positions will remain unfilled in the future posing a fundamental problem for companies that rely on trainees as a means of securing skilled workers. Today a quarter of businesses offering in-company training in Germany are affected by unfilled training vacancies.

To ensure success at attracting trainees today and in the future, companies need to be more active, think more strategically, and invest more than they did a few years ago. In trainee recruitment, they will have to do much more than they used to.

At the same time, trainee recruitment is an important tuning dial because it is a area that companies actively influence. The way companies attract training candidates, the selection process, and ultimately the way the trainees are integrated into the company has a strong impact on how successful they are in filling training vacancies.

Optimizing recruitment practices is therefore a key task for businesses. Contemporary trainee recruitment must provide real solutions for challenges in the training market. The distinguishing features of this “problem-solving” form of trainee recruitment are a more strategic approach, new priorities and innovative approaches that adapt to changing circumstances.

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## **Companies can be proactive in the struggle to counter shortage of applicants**

Experience has shown that company actually can have a significant impact on the success of attracting trainees. Studies have demonstrated that companies able to fill all of their training positions act differently during the recruitment phase - better than those who failed to fill all of their vacancies.

Here are some of the things they do differently:

- They plan their training programs farther in advance.
- They use a range of different methods to attract young people.
- They make direct contact with young people by offering internships, for instance.
- They are open to applicants at every level of education.
- They put more emphasis on social skills and personal qualities than on school grades or test scores.
- They are willing fill traineeships with young people who do not necessarily conform to all their wishes.

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## **SMEs, a particular challenge**

SMEs are disproportionately affected by unfilled training positions. In this segment there is a particular dearth of qualified candidates. This is due in part to the recruitment practices of SMEs. Often they do not follow the above-mentioned success strategies.

Many of their recruitment practices are shaped by their limited financial and human resources and the limited predictability in SMEs. Nevertheless, it is a fact that SMEs use only a small fraction of the recruitment instruments available to them. This applies in particular to new areas of action and perceive all useful options.



## Golden rules of contemporary trainee recruitment

2

Changing conditions have created many new requirements for contemporary trainee recruitment in enterprises. These can be summed up in four guiding principles and 20 golden rules:

Lay the groundwork	Change outlooks
Try new approaches	Think long term

**GRAPHIC 6**  
Guiding principles of contemporary trainee recruitment

**Lay the groundwork**

**RRule 1: Take action.**

Assess your situation. Are you having problems filling trainee vacancies? Do you think that finding qualified trainees will get harder in the future? Then take action now. Don't wait for others to solve your problems. Instead, review your options and develop recruitment strategies that prepare you to compete for talent.

**Rule 2: Make trainee recruitment a priority.**

Make your trainee recruitment a priority and deploy adequate resources. It is not just a matter of financial resources, but also using personnel capable of implementing recruitment at a high level.

**Rule 3: Intensify your recruitment efforts.**

Enter the training market with active recruitment measures. Deploy recruitment instruments both intensively and offensively, and make use of completely new instruments. Work with a coherent mix of different recruitment instruments and measures.

**Rule 4: Make trainee recruitment an ongoing task.**

Although the intensity of recruitment efforts naturally increases in the period leading up to the start of training, take recruitment as a serious job that extends over the entire year. Plan your training program as early as possible. Begin candidate acquisition efforts well in advance and spread out measures in a sensible way across the implementation timeframe.

**Rule 5: Strengthen your marketing efforts for training programs.**

Make training marketing a top priority and anchor it within the corporate strategy. Strengthen every activity that increases the awareness, attractiveness and desirability of your company as a provider of training among potential candidates, and any activity that ultimately lead to the successful conclusion of a training contract.

**Rule 6: Remove barriers to application.**

Accommodate potential training candidates in every way possible. Simplify the application process and offer guidance during every phase. Always be available for inquiries.

**Rule 7: First, make a strong impression as a training organization.**

Provide attractive training conditions and high-quality training - and talk it up. Making a strong showing as an employer and a company that offers training is the only way to attract qualified trainees. And it is not slogans but deeds that convince candidates.

## Change outlooks

### **Rule 8: Introduce yourself to the candidate and not vice versa.**

Prepare yourself for the fact that it will increasingly be young people, and less you as a company, who will call the shots with regard to training. You should therefore think of your candidates as customers to whom you are doing your best to sell your product. Do not simply ask, „Why should we select you?“ Instead, shift the focus to the applicant’s perspective of „Why should I accept a trainee position with you over another firm?“ And know the answer.

### **Rule 9: Think like your applicants.**

Do not just use your own business interests as a guide, but also take into account the interests of potential trainees. Shift the focus of your recruitment strategy to the educational career needs and expectations of young people. Shape your recruitment practices so that they have a positive appeal to young people and arouse interest.

### **Rule 10: Convince applicants on both the factual and the emotional level.**

Information about your training programs is important. But you should also attract target groups on an emotional level. Young people often make gut-level decisions for or against a trainee position. You should therefore shape the recruitment process to create a consistently positive impression on applicants. Appreciation, friendliness, speed, convincing answers to whatever questions crop up, and a proven good working environment are the standards to strive for.

### **Rule 11: Open up to new target groups.**

Shape your recruitment policy with enough flexibility so that you do not exclude any group of people interested in training. Open your company up to applicants with a diverse range of qualifications. Take advantage of every kind of talent. Review which target groups have previously received little or no attention. Initiate moves to actively tap these talent reserves for your training programs.

### **Rule 12: Know exactly how to recognize qualified candidates.**

Gut-level hiring decisions were yesterday. Today, you need to define exactly the qualifications that applicants should bring to the table for a training at your company. Create skill profiles for the occupations for which you offer training, and make a thorough review of how well candidates meet those expectations.

### **Rule 13: Set realistic application requirements.**

Make sure that your expectations for future trainees are not too high when candidates are in short supply. Consider which skills are truly indispensable. Be ready to compromise, without making arbitrary decisions. If you do not find a candidate with the qualities you are looking for, consider accepting weaker candidates and if necessary offer additional development opportunities to help them successfully complete the training program.

## Try new approaches

### **Rule 14: Optimize access to your target groups.**

Make disseminating information a high priority and use as many communication channels as possible. Take new paths and make extensive use of the rich pool of direct and indirect channels of communication with people interested in training.

### **Rule 15: Tailor offers to specific target groups.**

Create space for individual solutions. Consider the expanded range of potential target groups on the one hand and the qualifications of today's training candidates on the other, and then offer customized solutions for individuals based on their individual strengths and weaknesses.

### **Rule 16: Involve parents and teachers.**

In your trainee recruitment efforts, also include so-called secondary target groups or multipliers. Parents and teachers, in particular, exert great influence on the career choices of young people. You should therefore also direct your training opportunities to these target groups and find ways to convince them of the attractiveness of training in your company.

### **Rule 17: Rely on your trainees.**

Nobody is closer to young young training candidates than your current trainees. What better reason to actively involve them in recruitment and other activities aimed at attracting new talent?

## Think long term

### **Rule 18: Bind future trainees to the company at an early stage.**

Design the recruitment process so that interested applicants are actively integrated into the company, from the moment the contract is signed, at the latest, even before the start of training. Forge a bond between future trainees and the company that goes beyond the contractual, extending to the emotional level. This minimizes the risk that candidates will leave the company before the start of training, during the program, or after the successful completion of training.

### **Rule 19: Consider persons interested in training as future professionals.**

Think sustainably with a recruitment strategy that follows long-term goals. Consider candidates as future professionals and the recruitment process as the initial investment in valuable future employees. Actively promote the development of unskilled young employees into esteemed professionals and longtime employees.

### **Rule 20: Consider the attractiveness of dual training.**

And finally, Make a contribution to a general upgrade of dual training. Today more young people than ever are giving preference to academic education options. Focus, therefore, on activities that convince young people of the value of in-company training. Explain all of the benefits associated with this approach.



## Trainee recruitment instruments

3



### 3.1 Five phases of trainee recruitment

Trainee recruitment includes all activities related to sustainably filling a training vacancy. Its fundamental task is to meet companies' demand for trainees according to their needs and at low cost. There are five phases of trainee recruitment:



**GRAPHIC 7**

*The five-phase model of trainee recruitment*

**Planning** is the development of strategies and the definition of goals and courses of action for attracting trainees. A central task is defining recruitment instruments.

**Acquisition** is the advertising of training vacancies and the recruitment of qualified people interested in training. Acquisition activities take place throughout the entire training year.

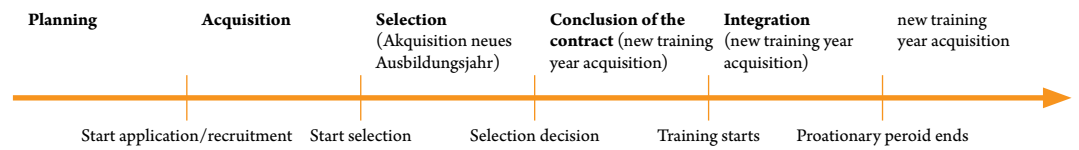
**Selection** includes all the activities that identify all of the qualified candidates who will be offered a training position within a pool of candidates.

**Concluding** the contract refers to the recruitment phase encompassing tasks performed between the selection decision and the start of training. These include the signing of the contract itself as well as further measures for forming a bond with prospective trainees.

**Integration** is the recruitment phase that lies between the first day of training and the end of the probationary period. It includes all of the tasks that strengthen the long-term bond between trainees and the firm and integrate them into the company. At the same time, a final review of the selection decision is made.

**GRAPHIC 8**

*Recruitment phases over the training year*



**Recruitment instruments are used in every phase**

Recruitment instruments are all the measures and channels that businesses use to recruit, select, employ and retain trainees. It is a central task of the planning stage to opt for those recruitment instruments deemed to be qualified and most promising.

Select the instruments such that a range of tools can be used in each recruitment phase. Instruments with identical or similar objectives should be applied in ways that they complement each other. There is a huge repertoire of instruments that can be used in the acquisition, selection, contract signing and integration phases.

### 3.2 Trainee Recruitment Instruments at a glance

The following table provides all the instruments for trainee recruitment discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Recruitment instruments	Benefits
<b>Instruments for recruitment phase 2, Acquisition</b>	
<b>Career Website for Trainees*</b> (Ch. 3.4.1.1)	<i>Instrument with a nearly unlimited scope; advertises always and everywhere for training and vacant training positions. A major information source for young people.</i>
Training blog (Ch. 3.4.1.2)	<i>Online medium that provides authentic glimpses of everyday training.</i>
<b>Vacancy announcements*</b> (Ch. 3.4.1.3)	<i>Effectively inform the public about available training positions.</i>
<b>Training brochures and flyers*</b> (Ch. 3.4.1.4)	<i>Medium ensuring that the company always has the most important information on hand and able to pass along in any situation.</i>
Other promotional materials (Ch. 3.4.1.5)	<i>Effective means to raise your profile among a target audience as a company offering training.</i>
Media reports (Ch. 3.4.1.6)	<i>An instrument for companies that are doing something special and want to spread the word.</i>
Social media (Ch. 3.4.1.7)	<i>Fresh medium for coming into contact with young audiences.</i>
Telephone-Hotlines (Ch. 3.4.1.8)	<i>A simple, easy way to field questions at almost any time of day.</i>
Training campaigns (Ch. 3.4.1.9)	<i>Cost-effective way, to promote training more effectively.</i>
Competitions (Ch. 3.4.1.10)	<i>Instrument for companies that excel in training and want to use their good reputation to strengthen their advertising.</i>
Open company day (Ch. 3.4.2.1)	<i>Instrument for meeting target groups, introducing them to traineeships and establishing direct contact.</i>
Factory tours (Ch. 3.4.2.2)	<i>Resource-efficient alternative to open company day.</i>
Lectures & seminars (Ch. 3.4.2.3)	<i>Complementary instrument for raising your profile among target groups.</i>
Teaching in schools (Ch. 3.4.2.4)	<i>Complementary instrument for arousing interest in vocational professions and establishing direct contact with target groups.</i>
Training fairs (Ch. 3.4.2.5)	<i>Opportunity, as a company offering training, to meet the public and establish direct contact with target groups.</i>
Career orientation days (Ch. 3.4.2.6)	<i>Cost-effective platform for introducing target audiences to vocational careers.</i>

#### GRAPHIC 9

Recruitment instruments and key benefits

\*Particularly effective recruitment instruments

**GRAPHIC 9 (CONT.)**

Recruitment instruments  
and key benefits

\*Particularly effective  
recruitment instruments

Recruitment instruments	Benefits
<b>Instruments for recruitment phase 2, Acquisition</b>	
<b>Company internships*</b> (Ch. 3.4.3.1)	<i>The most effective instrument for offering target groups deep insights into vocational careers while at the same time assessing their suitability. Assessed by young people as the most helpful career guidance option.</i>
Discovery days (Ch. 3.4.3.2)	<i>Resource-efficient alternative to an internship.</i>
Project weeks (Ch. 3.4.3.3)	<i>Exciting way to work with target groups on a common project and to come into closer contact with them.</i>
Training ambassadors (Ch. 3.4.4.1)	<i>An ideal way to promote training for young people.</i>
Student mentoring (Ch. 3.4.4.2)	<i>Instrument that maintains particularly close contact with target groups and offers targeted career preparation.</i>
<b>Collaboration with schools*</b> (Ch. 3.4.5.1)	<i>Open wide the doors to target groups. Cooperation programs with schools are a springboard for numerous recruitment instruments that rely on participation from a large number of young people.</i>
Networks (Ch. 3.4.5.2)	<i>A way to get support for trainee recruiting efforts from other players.</i>
Employee referral programs (Ch. 3.4.5.3)	<i>Cost-effective instrument for direct recruitment in target groups.</i>
<b>Instruments for recruitment Phase 3: Selection</b>	
<b>Qualification profile*</b> (Ch. 3.5.1)	<i>Indispensable for the suitability assessment of candidates. A prerequisite for the successful application of all selection instruments.</i>
<b>Written application materials*</b> (Ch. 3.5.2)	<i>Proven instrument to make a preliminary selection among candidates.</i>
Trainee speed dating (Ch. 3.5.3)	<i>Contemporary resource-saving instrument that enables a rapid pre-selection, or even a final selection of candidates.</i>
Last-minute training exchange (Ch. 3.5.4)	<i>A resource-efficient instrument for pre-selection, which is used when time is short.</i>
<b>Interviews*</b> (Ch. 3.5.5)	<i>Proven instrument for the final selection of candidates.</i>
Standardized tests (KCh. 3.5.6)	<i>Instrument for assessing work-related skills.</i>
Assessment center (Ch. 3.5.7)	<i>Instrument for assessing work-related skills. Has high practical relevance.</i>
Work tests (Ch. 3.5.8)	<i>A resource-efficient instrument for assessing work-related skills. Has high practical relevance.</i>
Trial days (Ch. 3.5.9)	<i>Instrument for assessing work-related skills. Has high practical relevance.</i>

**GRAPHIC 9 (CONT.)**

Recruitment instruments and key benefits

Recruitment instruments	Benefits
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**Instruments for recruitment Phase 4: Concluding the contract**

<b>Concluding the contract*</b> (Ch. 3.6.1)	<i>The legal requirement for sealing the training relationship.</i>
Welcome events (Ch. 3.6.2)	<i>Instrument for integrating future trainees into the company at an early stage.</i>
In-house events (Ch. 3.6.3)	<i>Instrument for integrating future trainees into the company at an early stage.</i>
Internal corporate communications (Ch. 3.6.4)	<i>Low-threshold option for integrating future trainees into the company at an early stage.</i>

\*Particularly effective recruitment instruments

**Instruments for recruitment Phase 5: Integration in the first few months**

<b>Orientation plan*</b> (Ch. 3.7.1)	<i>Prerequisite for a structured start to training.</i>
Training folder (Ch. 3.7.2)	<i>An effective instrument that gives new trainees orientation at the start of their training.</i>
<b>Reception day*</b> (Ch. 3.7.3)	<i>Instrument for welcoming new trainees to the company and giving them orientation.</i>
Introductory workshops (Ch. 3.7.4)	<i>Instrument to ease trainees into the start of training.</i>
Teambuilding activities (Ch. 3.7.5)	<i>Instrument to facilitate the integration of new trainees into the company.</i>
Trainee sponsors (Ch. 3.7.6)	<i>Instrument for optimal introduction of trainees to the start of training and providing support.</i>
Feedback discussions (Ch. 3.7.7)	<i>Effective instrument for comparing mutual expectations and finalizing the selection decision.</i>

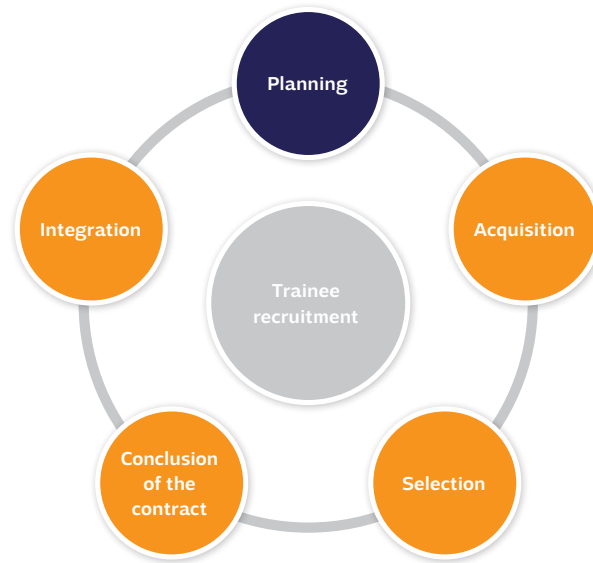
**Instruments for other target groups**

<b>Parents night*</b> (Ch. 3.8.1)	<i>Instrument for convincing parents of potential trainees of the value of company training and your own training organization.</i>
Project days & internships for teachers (Ch. 3.8.2)	<i>Instrument for winning over teachers to company training.</i>

### 3.3 Recruitment Phase 1: Planning

**GRAPHIC 10**

*Trainee recruitment,  
Phase 1: Planning*



Thorough planning of trainee recruitment lays the groundwork for its success will. At this phase, all of the critical aspects are anticipated with the aim of arriving at a realistic approach. Planning involves developing strategies, setting goals, and defining key steps necessary to attaining them. The advantages of a well-planned approach are obvious. Companies increase their professionalism and find qualified candidates faster and more efficiently.

The tasks that arise when planning trainee recruitment are extremely varied and arise from a range of company characteristics such as corporate goals, personnel policy, marketing strategy and the company’s employer branding.

#### Laying the foundations

**Nature and scope:** Determine the type of vocational occupations and the number of training positions. In doing so, use your business requirements as a guide (for which jobs will you need skilled workers in the medium-term?), as well as your corporate values (e.g. social responsibility for the next generation or the region).

**Training opportunities:** Think about what specific types of training your company will offer. Based on your assessment, determine instructional media, course offerings (e.g. additional courses), teaching and learning methods and equipment.

**Training conditions:** Determine the training stipend and other monetary or non-monetary incentives. These may include job prospects upon completion of training, additional qualifications, and the opportunity to participate in trade fairs and business trips, as well as small gifts (smartphones, tablets, etc.).

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## Developing a recruitment strategy and targeted alignment

**Recruitment targets:** Define trainee-recruitment objectives and make them as concrete as possible. Specify key quantitative benchmarks, in particular, the number of vacant training positions and the number of completed training programs. Ideally, you should also specify qualitative objectives, such as "recruit highly motivated trainees" or "find future professionals for department X". Formulate your requirements for trainee recruitment.

**Target groups:** Determine your target audiences. Decide which characteristics these audiences will possess. For instance, what level of schooling should your trainees have? Which characteristics, competencies and key skills are needed to complete the training course and should therefore be possessed by your applicants? Decide what geographic radius around your training location you want to address. Think also about so-called secondary target groups (multipliers), such as a parents or teachers, capable of motivating young people to seek training with your company.

**Recruitment methods and instruments:** Determine the number and type of instruments you will use to carry out a rational trainee recruitment campaign. Recruitment instruments are all those measures and channels you use to recruit, select, employ, and retain trainees in your company. Examples are career websites for trainees, cooperation with schools, student internships, interviews, assessment centers, as well as receptions and sponsorships for new trainees. You have a very broad spectrum of options. First, gather information and expand your horizons, rather than hastily reaching for one or two of the usual instruments. You can then select the instruments that will best attract the target number of trainees. Also consider how you can combine the various instruments so that they complement each other perfectly.

### Which recruitment instruments are the most promising for my company?

As a company, how do we even know which recruitment instruments will be successful in our company? The very fact that there are so many recruitment instruments often makes it even harder to make a sensible choice.

Unfortunately, there is no universal rule for companies indicating which instruments would be effective or ineffective in a specific case. Companies are therefore called upon to gather their own experience and conduct regular assessments of the success of the instruments they use, and then revise their selection as needed. Three criteria play a prominent role in finding the right instruments:

#### Feasibility

- How much time and money will have to be devoted to implementing the instrument?
- What competencies are needed to employ the instrument?

#### Number of applications

- Have you reached a large pool of candidates?
- Have you reached a lot of multipliers, such as parents and teachers?

#### Quality of applications

- Have you reached the „right“ candidates — that is, qualified groups of people?



**Implementation:** Plan the concrete use of your recruitment instruments. What are the distinct phases of an internship, for instance, or what questions can I ask during an interview? What are the conditions for successful implementation? Do I expect hurdles or problems, and how can I deal with them?

**Resources:** The design and implementation of a recruitment strategy depends largely on available resources. The crucial question here is what level of resources, at a minimum, must be committed in order to successfully attract trainees. You should determine this based on the conditions present in your company.



### What metric determines the resources necessary for trainee recruitment?

#### Personel policy

The level of resources needed tends to be greater if

- The corporate personnel policy puts a high premium on training
- There is great importance attached to training as a too for securing skilled workers

#### Prominence

The level of resources needed tends to be greater if

- There is little public awareness of the company
- There is a low-level of awareness of the vocational occupation

#### Attractiveness

The level of resources needed tends to be greater if

- The occupation or industry is less attractive

#### Requirements

The level of resources needed tends to be greater if

- There is a plentiful supply of training positions (number of training vacancies and jobs)
- There is a high demand for skilled workers (current and future)

#### Applicant situation

The level of resources needed tends to be greater if

- There is a low supply of qualified candidates
- Applications are of poor quality
- It is difficult to fill training positions (current and future)

#### Environment

The level of resources needed tends to be greater if

- There is stiff competition with other companies offering training in the region or industry
- There is a demographic-based shortage of young people in the region

**Efficiency and Effectiveness:** Make sure that the entire recruitment process strikes an economical balance between cost and benefit. For instance, it is not worthwhile to use cost-intensive recruitment instruments if the target number of training vacancies cannot be filled. Assess how the resources you have set aside for trainee recruitment can be used most effectively. Do this by conducting regular analyses of your strategy's success.

**Market analysis:** Ideally, the alignment of your recruitment strategy should be based on an analysis of the conditions present in your company. In doing so, take a look at the relevant training market and gain a deep understanding of regional trends (e.g. demographic development, the quantitative supply of potential applicants in the region) as well as the competitive situation (competition with other companies offering training). Find out how well you are positioned within this structure.



## Market Analysis - How can I do it as an SME?



Conducting thorough market studies is not an option for most SMEs with limited resources. But there are other ways to gain meaningful information. For instance the employer service (AG-S) of the German employment agency provides comprehensive industry- and region-specific knowledge on the labor and training markets and tracks current developments. Chambers of commerce and trade guilds also publish relevant information. You may also want to take the time to read the BMBF's annual report on vocational training or the training report published by the DGB to learn more about general trends. Find out what competing professions, companies offering training, and training vacancies are available in the region.

You can also take advantage of informal channels. Form an impression by networking and speaking with other entrepreneurs in your region or industry. Take a look at their websites or visit their booths at career fairs. Find out what others are doing. How do they organize training, what conditions do they offer, and where are they going to attract trainees? Compare what they offer and their approaches, and make sure that you are always a step ahead of your competitors.

**Needs analysis:** Develop an understanding of the expectations and needs of your target groups, especially young people you would like to win as trainees. What do these young people want from a training program, and under what conditions do they consider in-company training as an attractive education option? Shape your recruitment strategy to your findings.

## How can I find out the needs of my specific target group?



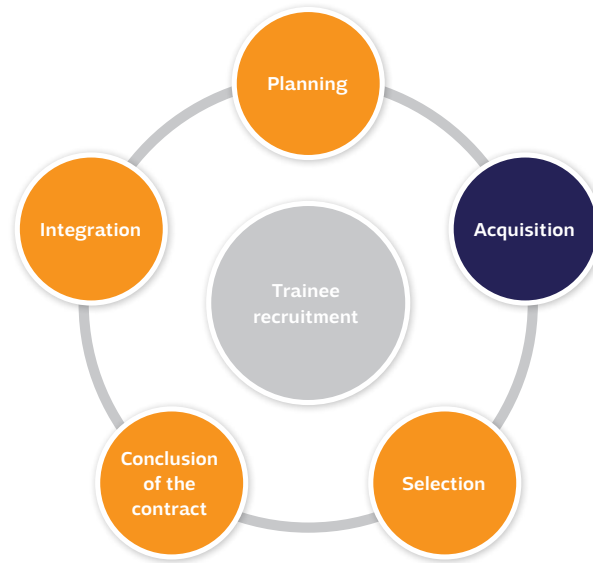
How can I actually find out what young people want from a training program in my company? Just ask your trainees! Organize informal discussions where young people can speak openly and confidentially about all aspects of the training program. Conduct regular anonymous employee surveys among your trainees and find out what you can do differently and what can be improved to make your company more attractive to potential trainees.

Invite students to get to know your business. This could take place within the framework of an internship, for instance, or an open company day. Give students the opportunity to get acquainted with the company, work areas and staff. Show them how your training program works. Afterward, ask the young people about their impressions - in the form of a conversation or a feedback questionnaire, for instance. You can find out what your visitors liked and did not like, and why they either submitted an application or declined to do so. Ask the young people what would make your company an attractive place in which to undergo training. If necessary, let the young people come up with their own ideas about how to make your company a more attractive place to pursue training.

### 3.4 Recruitment Phase 2: Acquisition

**GRAPHIC 11**

*Trainee recruitment,  
Phase 2 Acquisition*



Trainee acquisition — that is, advertising vacant training positions and recruitment of qualified training candidates — is a central and very extensive phase of trainee recruitment. It has two key aims. First, it seeks to increase awareness among target groups of the company, and potentially also the occupation for which the training is offered. Its primary goal is to ensure that relevant applicant pools are aware of the business as a company that offers training. In this context, target groups need to be addressed and every aspect of the training programs must be communicated.

Secondly, the acquisition phase is about increasing the attractiveness of the company or the vocational occupation in the minds of those in the target groups. In this regard, companies are called upon to present themselves to their target groups as attractive, coveted companies offering training. Thus, beyond making potential candidates aware of their mere existence, companies have to demonstrate a special quality in order to reach the awareness of as many potential applicants as possible.

#### Tips for the acquisition of trainees



**For information on how to implement the acquisition instruments, see also:**

- How do I present my company as an attractive training organization? (→ Ch. 4.1)
- On the expectations of young people I have to adjust myself? (→ Ch. 4.2)
- How do I join as a player on the professional orientation? (→ Ch. 4.3)
- How do I communicate successfully with young people? (→ Ch. 4.4)
- How can I use trainees in the recruitment process? (→ Ch. 4.5)

■ **Cater to your target group in every possible way.**

Design your recruitment measures in a way that will be well received by potential candidates for training. Get out of your company and go to places where you are likely to meet young people — at schools, youth clubs, sporting events and festivals, for example. You should also adapt yourself to the times when young people are active, making yourself available in the evening, for instance. Note that your main target group consists of digital natives and that they use the internet as their central medium of communication. You should therefore never eschew online discussion.

■ **Do not throw all of your audiences into a single pot.**

Secondary school graduates want to be addressed differently than dropouts, and future bankers differently than the next generation of cleaning staff; parents and teachers differently than students. It is therefore important to understand the information needs of the target groups and adapt your tone. Take the following questions into account: What interests the target audience, and what information they want to receive? What is the best medium for addressing the group?

■ **Rely on direct contact.**

Choose acquisition instruments that put you into direct, personal contact with potential applicants (e.g. company internships, open-door days, and training fairs). Although the circle of people you can reach directly is limited, compared with indirect acquisition paths (e.g. vacancy announcements or job boards), the contact is more intense and meaningful. Direct acquisition instruments enable a more in-depth impression on both sides. Companies can identify who is best suited for a training program, and applicants can find out if the training and the company offering the training are really right for them.

■ **Actively pursue qualified candidates.**

Use recruitment activities offering direct contact to young people not only as a way of introducing yourself as a company that offers training. You can also use them as a way of taking steps to find the young people that stand out from the crowd and appear to be well suited for training in your company. Develop a systematic judgment about the young people you come in contact with. Pay attention to those who demonstrate above-average interest, seem particularly motivated or do well in practical exercises. Make these potential candidates aware of training opportunities and recruit them actively.

■ **Maintain contacts.**

Whenever you come into direct contact with target groups, you should systematically take down the contact information of those individuals who have shown the interest in starting a traineeship or have a general interest in your company. Take particular care not to lose sight of young people who you have noticed are particularly engaged or well-suited to your company. Find ways to stay in touch with these people by sending additional information, reminders of deadlines or invitations to company events. Stay on the ball over the medium and long term as well. Also make sure that attractive candidates have ways to contact you and have relevant points of contact in your company.

■ **Use the right staff members.**

Not every specialist or manager will have easy access to young people. Therefore, for direct contact with young people, identify people in your company that can deliver information in a way that young people can relate to – simply, visually, and compellingly. Use personnel with pedagogical and rhetorical training who can strike a nerve with young people, are gregarious and motivating, as well as being good listeners and confident presenters. Train your staff if necessary.

■ **Always offer information materials.**

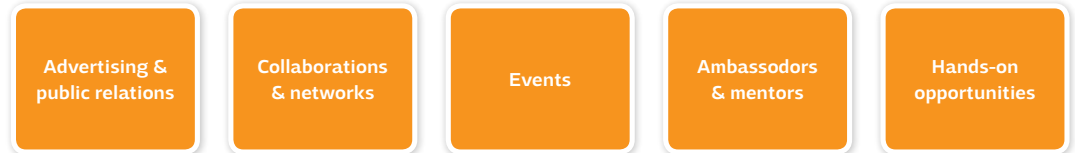
Particularly when you come into direct contact with target groups, you should always have information on hand about your business and training opportunities. Fliers describing your training programs, for instance are an ideal way to pass along the key facts and contact details.

### Sustainable instruments for trainee acquisition

Instruments for trainee acquisition are recruitment instruments that are used to attract trainees. They increase the awareness and attractiveness of companies. There is a hugely diverse range of instruments that can be used for this purpose. Broadly, they can be divided into five categories:

**GRAPHIC 12**

*Five categories of acquisition instruments*



#### 3.4.1 Advertising & public relations

**GRAPHIC 13**

*Overview of acquisition instruments: Advertising & public relations*



##### 3.4.1.1 Trainee Career Website

A professionally designed careers website for trainees as part of the company’s website is a must for companies offering training. After all, company websites are one of the top sources of information for young people looking for a training vacancy. The advantages of a career website are obvious. It is always and everywhere online and as such has an almost unlimited reach as an advertising instrument. It can provide highly detailed information and link current training vacancies with diverse information.

**Here’s how it works:**

- If you do not have a training careers site, set one up. They can either be part of a general careers webpage (as a separate category) or, better yet, create your trainee careers site as its own micro-site. In any case separate the areas addressed to potential trainees from those of other applicants.
- Grab attention by pointing to this site right on the home page (for instance, by creating its own tab or link). There should be a careers button in the main navigation bar.
- Consider the exact information that you want to deliver to young people interested in training on your careers website. Align it to the information requirements of young people. The goal of your site must be to arouse interest among young people and motivate them to submit an application.

## What information do young people want on a trainee career website?



Information on the following topics is particularly important to young people:

- Job profile
- Company
- Content of training
- Instructors
- Training stipend
- Job security, acquisition opportunities and career prospects
- Work environment

- In addition to this standard information you can present more content to increase your attractiveness to the target group. Mention anything that makes you stand out as a company offering training. This could include relocation assistance, help with career counseling, an above-average work environment, or opportunities to work in different locations. In addition, other aspects such as access to public transportation, leisure facilities, childcare facilities and information about the advantages of the region for young applicants can be discussed.
- On the careers website, feel free to go into detail, describing the typical work week of a trainee, for instance. This helps applicants imagine exactly what is in store for them.
- Current vacancies are an important component of career sites. Ensure that the training vacancy announcements on your careers website are adapted to the screen sizes of mobile devices (for mobile recruiting). The rising trend among young candidates, in particular, is reading ads on smartphones or tablets.
- Timeliness counts. Maintain the career websites continuously and make sure to update job vacancies. Hardly anything looks more unprofessional than an unkempt and outdated appearance.
- To attract applicants for training positions to your website, consider offering additional services or aids, such as application tips, newsletters with current vacancies, etc.

### 3.4.1.2 Training blog

A corporate blog on training topics offers a great opportunity for companies to present themselves as attractive employers to potential applicants for training positions. Scarcely any other online medium is so well-suited to presenting lively and authentic glimpses into the inner workings of a company. Blog posts can describe the day-to-day life of a trainee in unique depth and clarity. Texts, pictures, movies, links to other sites or social networks, small surveys and blogs offer a huge range of possibilities. In addition, they offer the opportunity for contact and mutual exchange.

#### Here's how it works:

- Set up the blog, ideally as part of your company website.
- Define responsibilities. Since a blog requires some resources, the responsibility should be shared among several people. Let your trainees play a key role in maintaining the blog. After all when it comes to day-to-day life in a training environment, they will have the best ideas for blog posts. Many of them will be familiar with the blog medium and maintain it with a minimum of effort and a maximum of enjoyment.
- Specify a procedure. A blog should be kept up on a regular basis – daily, at best. Usually, the effort is minimal and limited to reading and replying to comments and questions. There should be at least one post a week.
- Specify the range of topics and concrete content of the blog. A training blog is good if it is written by trainees for potential trainees and concerns itself with training issues. Make a conscious effort to use the blog as a way to give your trainees a platform for reporting and communicating. Emphasize authenticity in the posts.



### What kind of topics should a training blog include?

The life blood of a blog is a regular supply of interesting content. Topics should be diverse and the posts should be both informative and entertaining in equal measure. A training blog should contain a mix of professional and personal content. It should offer a space for trainees to report in detail on their work and their day-to-day life in training.

Explain at the beginning to your readers what you expect to accomplish with your blog and exactly what you want to convey Briefly introduce yourself. Then get started with your articles.

Here are some examples of topics for posts:

- Make reference to current vacancies for training positions
  - Describe the first training day
  - Describe the Welcome Day for new trainees
  - Explain exactly how entering a profession works
  - Describe the various stations trainees pass through
  - Provide glimpses into the tasks and work areas of trainees in a particular cohort
  - Reports on current tasks or projects of trainees
  - Profiles of trainees just before or immediately following their final tests
  - Reports about participation in additional training and what was learned
  - Reports on participation in a training fair or an open door day
  - Stories that communicate something about the corporate culture and human interaction - for example, a description of the company's Christmas party, they company outing or a corporate sporting event
  - A story about trainee sponsors who describe their activities and experiences
  - Reports about training ambassadors who introduce the company in school classrooms
  - Tips for applications and interviews
  - Guest post by student interns, who describe the day-to-day life of an intern
- Everyone involved in the blog should agree on rules for blogging. Define certain standards: Which topics should be presented, and to what extent, in what format and in what style? W, for instance. You should also clarify issues, such as confidentiality obligations regarding company-related information and take into account copyright and rights of use for text and images.
  - Train the future bloggers on the blog software.

#### 3.4.13 Vacancy announcements

Announcements for vacant training positions can be posted online – e.g. on internet job boards or company websites – or they can be posted off-line in print media, for instance. Online announcements can take advantage of the free German employment agency's job board and other specialized online job banks, such as the job boards for Chambers of industry and trade. Off-line announcements can be placed in traditional print ads in regional or national daily and weekly newspapers, regional student newspapers, or training-related magazines for young people (publications of trade organizations, for instance).

Regardless of the medium, vacancy announcements are a simple and effective recruitment instrument. They are a vehicle that easily brings together companies offering training and people interested in training. The online and off-line versions each have their own pros and cons. Traditional print ads are expensive, but are taken a bit more seriously. Advertisements on online job boards are particularly attractive for smaller lesser-known companies because their corporate websites are less likely to come to the attention of potential applicants. These are also the preferred medium for young people because they find it easy and convenient to view and sort through current announcements.

### Here's how it works:

- Ads should be designed to attract attention and pique curiosity; they have to have a teaser. The ads should communicate only the most important aspects of the position with meaningful, clear, and concise statements. Link to your company homepage where you can provide more detailed information.

## What information belongs in a job posting?



### Company introduction

Here you can describe the size, divisions, values and culture of your company. The less known your business is, the more detail you should provide. Do not forget to draw attention to the benefits your company offers.

### Describing the training opportunity

Always use gender-inclusive language.

### Description of the training position

Based on the qualification profile, describe concrete tasks and requirements and as well as associated privileges and responsibilities.

### Description of requirements

Here you should list the professional, personal and methodological skills that you expect from your future trainees. Distinguish between required and nice-to-have qualifications. A clear formulation should indicate exactly what is really wanted.

### The benefits you offer

Provide details about the training stipend and other company benefits. Discuss acquisition, advancement and further training opportunities, and also working time models, childcare facilities, and so forth.

### Contact

Indicate the name, function, e-mail address and telephone number of contact persons who are available to answer questions and accept applications.

### Information about the application procedure

Provide details about the form (e-mail, online or by mail), deadlines and documents required for the application.

### Conclusion

You may want to encourage special target groups (e.g. girls, people with disabilities) to submit an application by indicating that their applications are desired. Round out the job announcement with a friendly closing.

- When advertising on job boards, use terms that are meaningful and preferably keywords that potential trainees will use to search for vacant positions. To ensure that you do not slip in the rankings in the search results, remove your announcement after a few weeks and re-post it in a slightly different form if necessary.
- Also consider innovative formats for the vacancy notice. For example, instead of the HR department placing the ad, the team seeking trainees could place it directly. The team could introduce itself, perhaps with an accompanying picture, and then describe how it envisions new trainees and future coworkers.

- Job postings may even be supplemented by a link to YouTube offering a virtual tour through the company. The video introduces applicants to the working environment, workstation, the team, or the supervisor. Other links could lead to the company website, for example, with a description of the trainees' typical day or week.

#### 3.4.1.4 Training brochures and flyers

A training brochure - or a shorter version, a training flyer - is an excellent advertising tool which companies can have on hand all the time for a wide range of situations and purposes to raise its profile as a company that provides training and as a way of offering a first look at training-related information.

**Here's how it works:**

- Determine which content you want to convey in the brochure or the flyer. Depending on the industry, corporate culture or audience, this may vary quite considerably. In any case it is important to focus on the essential information.



#### What is contained in a training brochure?

An extensive training brochure can be designed as follows:

- It begins with an introduction or a foreword, written by the management, for example.
- It provides key information about the company.
- It gives an overview of the traineeships you offer.
- It conveys the most important information about course content, duration of training, services and opportunities, as well as prospects after training.
- It provides an impression of trainers.
- It gives an overview of good reasons to take up training at your company.
- It includes brief, first-hand reports and reporting from trainees (e.g. 'My typical day as a trainee').
- It includes interviews with and quotes from trainees or former trainees who have gone on to a career in the company.
- It gives advice on applying to the company - from trainers, for instance.
- It includes short talent-assessment tests (e.g. find your strengths).
- It calls for applications and provides information on ways to apply and necessary qualifications.
- It provides details on contact people and links to the company homepage and/or social media channels for additional information.

- Consider where and how the brochure can be distributed. After all, a brochure that does not reach the target group does not help anybody. The company itself – its offices, production halls, or branch offices – can serve as a suitable distribution channel. Brochures should be found wherever there is an interface with customers. Other places well-suited to brochure distribution are trading fairs, schools and career counseling facilities. Distribute the brochures online on your website or through social media. Ask your staff and trainees to distribute the brochure in their own circles of friends and acquaintances.
- Update the brochure periodically.

#### 3.4.1.5 Other promotional materials

In addition to training brochures and flyers, a number of other promotional materials can be used in the acquisition of trainees. These can often be less flexible and may be more expensive, but nonetheless more effective. Among such materials are posters, banners or other notices. These can be used in support of all kinds of recruiting events, such as presentations at training fairs, in class-



rooms, or at open door events. In addition they can also be used for advertising anywhere where they might be seen by the target group, places like branch offices, factory entry gates, in schools, on school buses, on the subway, etc.

### 3.4.1.6 Media reports

Reports in the media, whether the local press or on regional television, can quickly increase the attractiveness of hitherto unknown companies. You will not only reach young people interested in training, but also multipliers, such as parents and teachers.

#### Here's how it works:

- To take advantage of the effect of media reports, you first need a story that you can sell. Find a training-related story particular to your company that others may find exciting, new, and impressive.

#### What kind of stories are suitable for a media report?

Media outlets are always on the lookout for something new with some connection to topical issues. Training itself is already such a topic and when it is put in the context of youth unemployment, the demographic shift, and the shortage of trained professionals, it has a relatively high priority in the public discourse. You just have to be a bit resourceful and find a particular angle from your company to report on. Here are some examples:

- One of your trainees spent a couple of weeks in a foreign company as part of his or her training. After the trainee returns, there are not only exciting things to report but the young person has also acquired new skills from which the company derives concrete benefit.
  - Your best trainees help new trainees to settle into the company by acting as their sponsors. The dropout rate among your trainees has tapered off.
  - You have offered a „challenged“ young person a training position, someone who may have dropped out of school or been affected by homelessness. This young person has undergone outstanding development does good work and has become a valuable asset to the company.
  - You train non-traditional target groups, such as college dropouts, young parents, or senior citizens and report on their motivation, how you found your way to these trainees, and your experiences with them so far.
  - You offer an internship or a training position to a young refugee and describe the challenges and positive experiences this has brought to your company.
  - You report on your formula for how to attract the best new trainees despite being in a less than attractive industry.
  - You train a young person for the first time and describe the adventure it entails: What made you decide to start providing training? What did you have to do to become a company that provides training? What has this taught you, and what experiences has it brought? And did this adventure pay off in the end?
- 
- If you find it difficult to find such a story in your company, then make one happen! Consider what training-related highlight could draw attention to your company and implement it. Afterward, reporting about it should be easy.
  - Contact representatives of the local press or regional television and offer them the story. Do not give up after the first failed attempt; if your story is good you will find someone to run it.



### 3.4.1.7 Social Media

Making contact with young people through social media is a no-brainer. After all, most young people are on social media on a daily basis. That is why Xing, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are good places to publicize training opportunities, announce events like company two words, or even toot

your horn about awards the company has won. These platforms also offer good linking opportunities, in particular to the company's website and its news page.

As a recruitment instrument, social media can often be used in a way similar to training blogs. That is, they also offer an opportunity to provide interesting and vivid glimpses of in-company training through photos and videos. Interactive functions allow people interested in training to make contact with a company and perhaps even its trainees in a simple informal way.

**Here's how it works:**

- Find a social network that best reaches your target audience. Research the benefits and drawbacks the network offers as a basis for your decision.
- Establish a presence on the network similar to the way you would set up a training blog: Set up an account, create your company profile and set out responsibilities and procedures. Make sure to get your trainees involved. Specify standards and rules. Train the people responsible in professional handling of social media and sensitize them to potential risks. On the internet you can find a raft of guides and training materials to help you with this task.
- Specify the range of topics and concrete content. For possible topics → Ch.3.4.1.2 Training blog as a guideline. Of course, you will want to post your current vacancies for training positions.
- Consider how to publicize the network in order to build it up and expand it or attract as many contacts, friends, and followers as possible and generate the greatest number of „likes.“
- Generally, using social media only makes sense if it is maintained and updated regularly and is visually appealing. Allocate adequate resources for this purpose.

**3.4.1.8 Telephone hotline**

Telephone hotlines that are available even at unusual times of day are a way to ensure that you are reachable to potential trainees to the greatest extent possible. After all, potential candidates will not necessarily become aware of training vacancies during regular office hours. They discover them while surfing the internet at night, for instance, and have questions about training related issues. A telephone hotline enables companies to offer outstanding service and be available to field callers' questions immediately, even after business hours if necessary. It is as easy as providing the telephone number in the context of a vacancy announcement or on a career website. After business hours the calls can be forwarded to the mobile phone of a responsible person.

**3.4.1.9 Training campaigns**

Large companies launch their own training campaigns nowadays. For SMEs, joining existing training campaigns is an option. Many regional employers' organizations and federal associations of various sectors of the economy carry out such campaigns for their member companies. The goal is to make the sector and region - and their jobs and companies - as well-known and attractive as possible to potential applicants for training positions in order to recruit candidates for training in one of the member companies. Member companies can participate at no cost and without a great expense.

**Here's how it works:**

- Find suitable training initiatives and become a member of their sponsoring organizations.
- Take advantage of the many and varied possibilities of these campaigns and get free support for your trainee recruitment effort.



**How do training campaigns help with your trainee recruitment?**

- Training campaigns are always combined with attractive online portals. You can link to the web page and thus attract potential trainees to your own website.



- The campaign websites offer diverse information presented in a highly professional manner about industries, occupations and career paths; they provide success stories and reports about the typical workday, and present opportunities for advanced training. Many offer tips for applications, and some provide career guidance tests for young people. They use attractive formats such as videos and clips. Some offer chat features. It is easy for you as a company to make use of these supplemental materials by linking to this information and offering it to potential applicants.
- Job boards that let you advertise your vacant training opportunities or search for qualified trainees and interns are typical feature of such websites.
- You are almost always provided with promotional materials.
- Sometimes you can represent training campaigns at youth and training fairs.
- Some campaigns maintain school partnerships that you can use for your own career guidance events, such as acquisition events in schools. Sometimes there are other forms of collaboration, such as youth newspapers or sports associations.
- Particularly ambitious campaigns offer special services, such as access to teams trained to address young people, which you can book for open-door events or trade fairs.

#### 3.4.1.10 Competitions

An instrument that attracts the attention not only of young people but also of other target groups, such as parents or teachers, is successful participation in competitions for „Best company for training“. Even awards and competitions for the best trainee or best intern cast companies in a good light. Competitions are regularly held by trade chambers, unions, state offices, and associations. Often, they are aimed at specific regions, sectors or sizes of business. Awards are not only associated with prizes but even more importantly with a good deal of publicity: Media reports, training portals and job boards publish the winners, for instance.

##### **Here's how it works:**

- Research relevant competitions. To participate, you will either be nominated by others or apply on your own initiative.
- Of course, you should be able to demonstrate an above-average commitment to training. Excellent conditions and mentoring, unique trainee projects, regular training status reviews, measures to support underperforming or high-performing trainees, active school partnerships, training opportunities for trainers and good hiring prospects after training - all of these are factors that can help you score points. You can also convince judges with positive results, such as a high training success rate.

### 3.4.2 Events



For many types of events you have to rely on gaining greater access to young people. Partnerships with schools are a good way to do this. For more information on school partnerships → Ch. 3.4.5.1.

**GRAPHIC 14**

Overview of acquisition instruments: Events



#### 3.4.2.1 Open company day

At an open company day – or similar formats, such as open-door days, training days, or meet-the-company days – young people are invited to the company. On-site, they get a hands-on look at the company and professions for which the company offers training. An open company day is a win-win situation. Companies come into direct contact with potential trainees and get them excited about training, and young people can get information without any obligation and form a clear picture of the company in a real-world environment.

##### Here's how it works:

- First, consider exactly who you want to reach with the event. Young people one year before graduation and at the high point of their career search are an obvious target group. But an open company day can even be organized for younger schoolchildren or even kids from local kindergartens. Other suitable target groups are parents, school principals and teachers at primary education or vocational schools, who, come away from the event with a clearer picture of companies and job descriptions.
- Shape the scope, format and content of the event to the specific interests and expectations of your target groups. Inquire in advance about their respective needs and design the event accordingly. Shorter formats may be just as suitable as all-day events with several items on the agenda.
- An open company day should be designed in such a way that it leaves a lasting positive impression on the visitors. As such, the way the event is organized and its content are of critical importance.



#### How can an open company day be organized?

There is generally a lot of latitude in how to design such an event. The following example illustrates a collection of ideas for an all-day event geared toward students who are actively engaged in deciding their career plans.

##### Welcome

- A formal greeting to the visitors, by the company leadership if possible.

##### Introduction to the company

- Provide a brief introduction to the company: its history, how it is organized, its products, location-related factors, etc. Here you can present your business in the best possible light and underscore its benefits.



- Give the visitors a tour of the company; visit work areas and provide glimpses of different types of work and jobs performed in your company. Allow visitors to look over the shoulders of your personnel while they work. Provide your visitors an overview of the company as a whole. However, the more complex and diverse the different spheres of work are, the more important it is not to overwhelm the visitors with a flood of detailed information. Instead, be specific and offer an illustrative example – for instance, how a specific product is manufactured, from start to finish. Show visitors what is exciting and attractive about the work performed in your company.

#### **Provide information about training**

- Give visitors an opportunity to find out everything about your training program. In discussions with trainers and current trainees, visitors can learn more about jobs for which you provide training, careers and earning potential, your application and selection procedure, your requirements and expectations, and current internship vacancies.

#### **Practical tasks**

- Give visitors a chance to try their hand at performing some task. Realistic day-to-day tasks are well suited to this activity. Do not pass up the opportunity to give your visitors an experience of success. For example, let your visitors manufacture a small product or perform a typical task and give them the opportunity to present their results. Give them positive feedback.

#### **Application training**

- Other opportunities can offer special added value to your visitors. These might include application packet checks, application training (e.g. simulated interviews) or taking classification or suitability tests.

#### **Impart knowledge**

- Small seminars or discovery courses for typical activities in your industry can give your visitors a close-up look at the career field. For instance, discuss the proper way to place a telephone call or offer customer service, demonstrate on a computer how materials are ordered, or give visitors an introduction to how your machinery works.
- Talks on business and corporate governance topics serve a similar purpose. Talk about how the company is organized, tasks in a manufacturing company, assembly line work, etc.
- Are you a research company? If so, you will not want to miss the opportunity to let visitors perform a simple experiment.

#### **Conclusion**

- A quiz to test newly acquired knowledge rounds out the event
- Offer the opportunity to participate in a final discussion and a question-and-answer session. Ensure that any outstanding issues are resolved. Let visitors know what they can do next if they are interested in training at your company and provide them with a contact person.

- Ideally, you should set a regularly scheduled date during the year for the company's open-door day. A good time for students is right before or right after the summer holidays.

### **3.4.2.2 Factory tours**

Company tours are a resource-saving alternative to open-company days and are also a good way to introduce your business to young people and win them over for in-company training.

#### **Here's how it works:**

- Company tours are organized much like open-company days but limited to the tour element. Lead visitors through various departments of your company and explain their day-to-day work.

Focus on departments that offer training positions. Conclude the event with a discussion, and call attention to your training opportunities.

- You may also want to actively include teachers in the company tour and offer a follow-up session as a component of classroom instruction.

### 3.4.2.3 Lectures & seminars

Lectures and seminars are a sensible – if more theoretical – complement to other recruitment instruments. Young people are invited to the company for an hour or two and receive input on a relevant topic and afterwards have the opportunity to engage in discussion. The company has the opportunity to present itself as a training-providing business that makes special opportunities available to young people.

#### **Here's how it works:**

- The success of such an event depends largely on the topic. Find an issue that is not only a concern for your business but above all is an item of interest for the young target group as well. This could be a topic that explicitly relates to your business interests. For example, you could explain how you developed a particularly interesting product, the challenges involved, and how it will be used. More general topics are also a good choice – for instance, application and career-related topics. For young people, it is interesting to learn what companies currently consider most important when filling their vacant training positions, what they have to look forward to in the world of training and work, and how active engagement can help their careers develop.

### 3.4.2.4 Teaching in schools

Alternatively, lectures and seminars can also be offered directly in schools. They are often incorporated into instruction blocks which, once coordinated, are provided jointly with the company's personnel. Business-related subjects such as computer science and natural sciences are particularly well-suited to this purpose.

#### **Here's how it works:**

- With the teacher, choose an instruction topic relevant to your company. The added value of your input is based on your entrepreneurial perspective and your practical background, which is why you should make sure to present your topic vividly and with a high degree of practical relevance. For instance, in a math class, a master painter can demonstrate how to calculate surface area and thus determine much paint is needed to paint an apartment. Take advantage of the competencies of teachers ahead of time to come up with suitable content and ways of presenting it.

### 3.4.2.5 Training fairs

Every year, all of Germany's regions play host to numerous training and career fairs. At these events, companies can present themselves at their own information stands as attractive training organizations. Trade shows offer the advantage of facilitating contact not only with a large number of young people, but often also with teachers and parents as well.

#### **Here's how it works:**

- Do research to find suitable regional training and career fairs, or look for industry-specific fairs and register for them. Review which events are the most promising for your company and offer an attractive agenda.
- Plan your participation far in advance You can also take advantage of all the support services many trade fair organizers offer.
- Update your goals. These may include:
  - Recruitment of trainees
  - Gaining a better understanding of young people's expectations with respect to training
  - Educating multipliers (teachers, parents) about the attractiveness of training or jobs

- Initiate the development of school partnerships
  - Look what the competition is doing (market analysis)
  - Enhance the image and brand awareness of the company
- Designing your trade show exhibit around your objectives.
- When it comes to advertising your stand, do not rely entirely on the trade fair organizer, but rather take steps to attract the public. Your competition will also be exhibiting at the fair and you have to take steps to capture the attention of your target group. Use your public relations to the fullest. Tell key people where your booth is located and invite them.
  - Success at a trade fair depends largely on how well you to come into contact with the target group. Young people are often reluctant to address companies directly. Therefore you will have to find ways to reach out to young people.
  - Consider this task when designing your stand. Make sure that you have adequate space with lots of places to carry on discussions. A creative design attracts attention of visitors. Have the courage to try unconventional ideas. Convey your talking points with large, readable key messages. Offer drinks and seating.
  - Improvisation is important in connecting with young people. Nevertheless, you should prepare for dialogue.

### How do I engage in dialogue at a training fair?



- Try to capture the attention of passing visitors. Very few will take the initiative to stop at your stand. This often succeeds only by actively approaching visitors. The challenge is to avoid unwanted intrusiveness and instead arouse interest. You should therefore prepare your opening pitch well. Start out with a few warm-up questions to break the ice with young people. If you cannot come up with any good ideas, ask your trainees how they would like to be addressed (and how they prefer not to be). Use contests, raffles, surveys or other instruments to facilitate contact. Also, the trainees you take to the trade fair can act as icebreakers.
- Visitors to your stand should be able to look around without intrusive attention. Stay alert and be ready to answer their questions. If you detect signs of interest, take action immediately.
- Always start out with open-ended questions that help the conversation get started.
- Determined at an early stage in the conversation who you are talking to and what their interests are. Focus on these interests in your conversation.
- Prepare topics that interest young people well in advance, and offer important information in the course of the conversation without being asked. Let your trainees talk about a typical day in training. Always have information on hand to pass out the visitors. You may also want to send them on their way with a small promotional gift.
- Record important conversations in a prepared document.
- An key goal of trade fairs is to walk away with plenty of contact addresses. You should therefore make sure that interested audiences have your business card and record their contact details. Make sure to stay in contact with relevant people after the trade fair.

#### 3.4.2.6 Career orientation days

Career orientation days are centrally organized, government-sponsored events, carried out by trade chambers, guilds and employment agencies. Sometimes schools also hold career orientation days that welcome companies from the region. Career orientation days often have the format of training fairs, but they can also be similar to open-company days. Some are focused on specific themes; especially popular are Girls' Day (a campaign to introduce girls to MINT professions) and Boys' Day (boys are given insights into social and health professions ). Career orientation days are offered for one or more days.

While career orientation days are primarily addressed to people interested in training and assists them in choosing a career, they also offer participating companies an excellent platform for introducing young people to the professions for which they offer training. Companies can register for free and benefit from event organizers that design attractive agendas, perform public relations tasks, and recruit the young visitors. Often they reach parents and teachers in addition the young people.

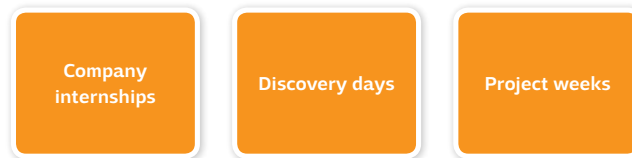
**Here’s how it works:**

- Career orientation days are announced far in advance. Find local events and formats that suit your purpose.
- Prepare yourself well in advance and think about how you want to design the event within the framework of the prescribed concept. Depending on the event format → Ch. 3.4.2.1 Open company day and → Ch. 3.4.2.5 Training fairs as a guideline.

**3.4.3 Hands-on opportunities**

**GRAPHIC 15**

Overview of acquisition instruments: Hands-on opportunities



**3.4.3.1 Company internships**

Internships in companies are among the most important trainee recruitment instruments. They create unique win-win situations for companies and for young people seeking career orientation.

The benefits of internships for companies are numerous. In particular, they enable early in-depth contacts to potential trainees. Internships enable companies to assess whether young people are a good fit, how they work on a day-to-day basis, what training-relevant skills they have, and what their work ethic is. Impressions obtained through internships are much more meaningful than what can be gleaned from a school transcript. Young people also benefit in a special way from internships that offer both practical experience and the best possible glimpse of the company and a profession. Companies also profit from this increased clarity. After all, young people who know what they are getting into when they enter training are less likely to drop out.



**What are the different kinds of internships?**

A typical form of internships are **student internships** for students in general education schools. These internships last for at least a week and maybe several weeks. They are often completed as mandatory student internships for career orientation mandated by various state laws in Germany. They take place during regular school hours. There are also internships that students take on their own initiative and can have the character of a summer job.

A special form of internship is designed for **recent graduates interested in vocational careers** who have not yet found a training vacancy or do not yet qualify for training. Ideally, these students should begin a dual education program upon conclusion of the internship. For this target group, there are company career orientation opportunities offered with the support of trade chambers, the employment offices will, or educational institutions. These include in particular:

- **Entry qualification EQ** (or EQ Plus) is aimed at young people who have not yet found a training vacancy. Under the program, they complete a six- to twelve-month company intern-



ship, which prepares them for a specific vocational occupation. When admitted to training, the regular training period can be shortened.



- **Pre-professional training measures** (known in Germany as BvB or BvB-Pro) sponsored by employment agencies are aimed at young people who are not yet fully ready for training. The young people spend up to half of the time in the company to prepare for training. In addition, an educational institution teaches technical expertise and social skills.
- The dual or cooperative **basic professional education year (BGJ)** is aimed at graduates who are ready for training and have a school diploma but have not yet found a training vacancy. They attend a vocational school and work at a company several days week. The goal is to prepare them for a specific vocational occupation. Participants can be accepted directly into the second year of training.

#### Here's how it works:

- Determine exactly for whom you want to offer internships and design the internship plan around your target group.
- Create an internship plan. The more detailed you can plan the activities of each day of the internship, the better – or in the case of longer internships, each phase of the internship. Discuss the plan with your interns on the first day.

#### How does an internship plan for a student internship look?



An internship plan includes various elements that need to be addressed before the internship begins:

##### Internship sequence

- First, clarify the organizational aspects. Determine the duration of the internship. Determine the number interns you can employ over the course of the year. Determine which workstations and tools you can offer. Designate staff to be in charge of managing the interns.
- Determine the sequence of the internship. Begin the internship with an introductory phase. At this point you should introduce the company, take a tour of the operation and introduce key personnel. Explain rules of conduct and safety regulations. Conclude the internship with an assessment phase. At this point you should offer the interns feedback on their performance.

##### Internship content

- Specify which activities and tasks will be performed during the internship. These should generally be aligned to the training you provide. This gives interns the opportunity to try their hand at real tasks with which they are likely to be confronted in the early phases of training. This is the only way to find out which interns are best suited to training and your company.
- Tasks should be designed so that they allow interns in-depth insights into the company and its work. This enables young people to find out if your company is a good fit for their company training.

##### Internship evaluation

- Filter out the interns best suited to your company from among the group. These are the young people you should recruit as trainees. To do this assess the performance of your interns according to a uniform and transparent system.
- Ideally you should generate a qualification profile which indicates the skills and competencies you expect from young people who you will take on as trainees. Assess the extent to which your interns possess the required skill sets. Evaluate the performance of the interns at regular intervals – their supervisors can handle this. Document the results.
- This should be used as a basis for judging the suitability of interns as potential trainees at the end of the internship. Give the interns feedback during the evaluation discussion and speak with them about the strengths and weaknesses you've identified. If necessary, offer interns the opportunity to perform a self assessment.



**Recruitment**

- Encourage interns who are qualified for training programs to submit applications. If necessary, immediately offer the best qualified young people a training contract. Finally, stay in contact with these young people. Invite them to corporate events and continue to encourage them to apply. If necessary, think of a special way to win the loyalty of the best interns to your company, and establish a mentor program, for example, to maintain contact with the young prospects until the beginning of training.

- For longer internships, you should consider whether you want to invite or even require interns to attend preparatory activities, such as workshops. This is a good way to test whether the future interns are really interested and motivated. After all internships cost time and money.
- Take actions that leave a good impression on your interns. In addition to the professional design of the internship, a pleasant atmosphere is vitally important. Internship supervision – that is providing professional and personal support at all times to interns – is a fundamental basis for creating this atmosphere. Integrate your intern into the company even during break times.
- Issue a training certificate to your intern. The certificate should contain information about the time and duration of the internship, activities performed, areas of work, as well as the performance, behavior and work ethic of the intern

**3.4.3.2 Discovery days**

Discovery days at the company are brief and therefore resource-efficient alternatives to internships. They offer young people the opportunity to look behind the scenes at a company and learn about working and training conditions over a period of just a few days. Discovery days are often a mix of observational and practical elements. On the one hand, they allow young people to look over the shoulders of staff while they do their work and on the other hand offer them the chance to try their hands at small tasks related to the company’s work.

**Here’s how it works:**

- Although your planning is less comprehensive than it would be for an internship, use a similar design (→ Ch.3.4.3.1). Determine in advance how you want to spend these days with the participants and how you plan to form impressions of the suitability of the young visitors. Always make the best possible impression on the young people.

**3.4.3.3 Project weeks**

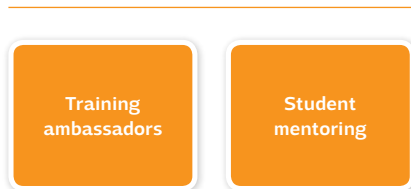
Project weeks are an exciting way to get to know potential trainees. They are carried out in cooperation with school classes and take from one to several weeks. Project weeks are part of the school curriculum, but the learning also takes place outside the school in places like businesses. During this time, in addition to instruction from their teachers, students receive instruction from others, such as company employees. The basis for this type of opportunity is a project topic which is related not only to a subject in school but also to the activities of the company. For example, a company in an agricultural or foodstuffs industry can share a huge amount of valuable information on the subject of healthy eating.

During the period of the project, students visit the company – usually on a regular basis – receive expert input, observe work processes, and gather hands-on experience. The practical aspect makes project weeks a success for students. But even companies benefit because project weeks offer good opportunities to raise your profile as a company offering training and come into close contact with young people. Project weeks are a popular way of learning, and businesses can therefore easily leave an excellent impression on young people.

**Here's how it works:**

- Project weeks are initiated by schools. To become a project partner as a company, it is generally necessary to have solid existing contact through school partnerships.
- Long-term and thorough planning are a must. Schools handle part of the planning and they will approach you with their ideas and expectations for the program. You should also develop your own ideas about how to shape the project. Make a thorough review of the opportunities and resources you have at your disposal.
- Clarify in advance exactly what your role and responsibilities are in the project. Work with the school to plan what your company will bring to the table and what students should learn from the project. Then, organize the necessary steps within your company.
- Take advantage of the pedagogical skills of teachers and seek advice from them on how best to deal with the students. Make sure that you always have a point of contact at the school.

### 3.4.4 Ambassadors & mentoring

**GRAFIK 16**

*Overview of  
acquisition instruments:  
Ambassadors &  
mentoring*

#### 3.4.4.1 Training ambassadors

Many instruments for recruiting trainees are more successful when they are implemented with the involvement of trainees. Training ambassadors – that is, upper-level trainees specially schooled to represent your company to the public – can be used very effectively. They are mainly used in schools with students who are in the phase of career orientation or forming an idea of the company where they will be trained, their vocational field, and the training itself. Training ambassadors can be used elsewhere as well. After all, the very fact that the ambassadors are trained for public appearances means that they can easily be put to use wherever the company comes into direct contact, such as an open company day, during company tours or at training fairs. Ambassadors represent the company in the best light, not only to young people but also to parents and teachers.

Companies benefit from the use of training ambassadors in two ways. First, they convey firsthand personal experience of day-to-day life in the company and in training, as well as providing detailed insights into the professional routine - insights that are authentic, practical and on an equal footing with their audience. Second, they are particularly close to the target group. Since they speak the same language as students, their able to overcome inhibitions about entering into dialogue and asking questions.

**Here's how it works:**

- Find trainees who are capable of the tasks associated with being an ambassador and are also interested in taking on the responsibility. Choose the best performing and most motivated trainees, and those best capable of motivating others. Coordinate with a vocational school, if necessary.
- Work together with the ambassadors to develop a concept for their appearances. The classic setting for a training ambassador is in schools where they make classroom presentations. Think about other possibilities.



### What exactly do training ambassadors do during school visits?

- Ambassadors should start off by introducing themselves to the classroom. In doing so, they should focus not only on their professional life but also on personal interests, hobbies, friends and family. This will help the students accept them as their peers.
  - In the presentation that follows the ambassadors discuss their professions. They talk in detail about their day-to-day training and their personal experiences during training.
  - Peace talks can be supplemented by ice-breaking activities, such as a quiz that tests students knowledge of the profession or role-playing games that depict workplace situations. Anything that can pique interest in the professional field is worthwhile.
  - Afterward, plenty of time should be devoted to letting the students ask questions. At this point the ambassadors act as subject-area experts during a Q&A session about training.
  - Finally, the ambassadors should ensure that the students know exactly how to apply for training positions at the company and are given a point of contact.
  - During the event, ambassadors distribute information from the company.
  - Typically, these sessions take up one to two hours of instruction.
- 
- Find schools interested in offering your ambassadors a platform. An obvious starting point are existing school partnerships. If no such partnerships exist inquire at schools in your region and bring them on board with your plans. Contact your local Chamber of Commerce to find out whether they offer support for the training ambassador model and can make contact with schools.
  - Prepare ambassadors for their tasks systematically. They should receive professional training in communication, presentation and moderation. They should also be well schooled in issues relating to training in order to conduct question-and-answer sessions. Arrange external training if necessary. Some chambers also offer free instruction for training ambassadors.
  - When designing training ambassador events, allow trainees to develop their own ideas and give them plenty of leeway to come up with creative formats which are not only informative but also entertaining. Your trainees will know best what will interest the target group.
  - Offer your ambassadors ongoing support. Rehearse their presentations with them, and following their appearances ask them how they rate their performance. Always support them with advice and practical help.
  - Create attractive conditions for your ambassadors. Release them from work for their appearances and cover all their costs. Show special appreciation for their work. Give them certificates for participating in training and for their voluntary efforts; offer them a bonus, if necessary.

#### 3.4.4.2 Student mentoring

A mentorship passes on knowledge from an experienced person to an inexperienced person. Used as a recruitment instrument for future trainees; a company employee takes on the mentorship of a young person. The young mentees are - often over a period of one year - are mentored one-on-one and may enjoy further benefits of the program. For students mentoring is a particularly intensive preparation for a career, and for companies it is an ideal way to get trainees excited about a career field, prepare them in a targeted way for training and develop loyalty to the company early on.

#### Here's how it works:

- Research whether there is already a mentoring program in place in your region or in your industry that you can join. If no suitable program exists develop your own, either for your own company or in cooperation with other companies from your industry in the region.
- Design your mentoring program. The opportunities mentoring programs offer vary greatly, and what you offer depends on what you want to achieve with the program.

## What can I do with student mentoring?

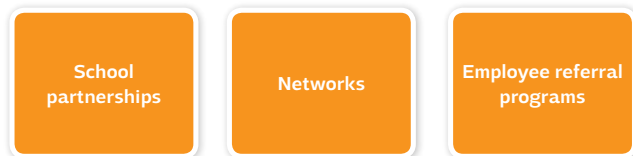
Suitable formats of student mentoring are:

- An exchange of experience and advice between the mentor and mentee
- Passing on knowledge in the form of seminars or talks on specialized topics, or even questions about the application process, for instance
- Hands-on activities in the company in the form of workshops or internships, for example
- A teaser class at a vocational school
- Skills assessment and personality tests
- Offering access to professional networks



- Find suitable mentors in your company. Depending on how you design your mentoring program, you may want to use particularly competent specialists or enthusiastic trainees. Recruit them by highlighting the benefits of the program for everybody concerned. Build on that by pointing out that becoming a mentor is an honor entrusted only to the best employees. Prepare mentors for their tasks and provide training and support for the process
- Find mentees. School partnerships are an excellent place to look. You should also use all of your public relations channels. Ask your local chamber for assistance.
- Match mentors to mentees. Make sure that there is good chemistry on both sides. Mentoring is based on empathy and trust. If there is bad chemistry between mentor and mentee, feel free to make changes.

### 3.4.5 Collaboration & networks



**GRAPHIC 17**

Overview of  
acquisition instruments:  
Collaboration & networks

#### 3.4.5.1 School partnerships

Cooperation with schools or similar formats, such as class sponsors and training partnerships, are almost indispensable in the recruitment of trainees. No other recruitment instrument ensures continuous access to such a large number of potential trainees. Thus, they make easier or even enable the use of many other recruitment instruments based on direct contact with young people. In addition to the primary target group school partnerships can also open doors to other target groups, such as teachers and parents.

##### Here's how it works:

- Select a suitable school or schools near you. Consider the type of school that you want to address. For orientation keep in mind the academic qualifications you require of applicants to your training program. Consider schools with particular specializations – for instance, magnet schools for mathematics or natural sciences – that overlap with the activities of your company.
- We create a partnership with one or more schools. This can be a challenge sometimes. Although schools play a central role in career counseling of students, they pursue this goal in very different ways. Not every school is open to cooperation with companies, and not every school is willing to put real energy into existing partnerships.



### How can I attract committed partners for school partnerships?

#### Gaining access

- Pitch your idea directly to schools in your area. Your first stop is the school principal's office.
- Take advantage of existing contacts with schools. Your company may have more of these than is immediately apparent. Consider your employees with school-age children. Might these employees contact highly dedicated teachers or principals and pave the way to a school partnership? Think about your trainees or younger employees who left school within the past few years. Make a speak with former teachers and win them over?
- Find out whether your local chamber supports partnerships with schools.
- Numerous regional publicly funded career guidance projects mediate between companies and schools and help to develop cooperation between them. Research this and make contact with those responsible.
- Get involved with regional networks. In many places, there are partnerships between different stakeholders active in the field of the transition from school to work. Schools are sometimes directly integrated into these partnerships, and sometimes third parties can mediate contact.

#### Establish a partnership

- When making initial contact, emphasize not only your own interests but also clearly underscore the benefit of a partnership for both sides.
  - Organize an initial meeting. At this point you should jointly clarify expectations and goals. Find out what interests the school is pursuing. Make suggestions for the activities you would like to carry out. Maybe the school has maintained partnerships with other companies, and you can use existing programs as a guide. If you fail to come to an agreement or sense a lack of interest, distance yourself from the school.
  - As a next step, invite the school leadership and points of contact in your company to outline the possibilities.
  - Conclude a formal cooperation agreement. The agreement should specify points of contact on both sides, planned activities, dedicated resources, and agreed goals.
  - Actively maintain the partnership. Carry on an ongoing exchange and jointly review the success of your activities.
- In cooperation with the school develop the concept for joint activities. The options are extremely varied. Activities may be limited to one or two items for recruiting trainees or may include numerous joint activities.



### How do I design a school partnership?

Here are some examples of activities carried out in the framework of a school partnership:

- Classroom presentations introducing the company and its professions
- Classroom presentations about how the application process works and what is truly important to the company
- School visits by executives who not only raise awareness of the company but also keep an eye out for qualified recruits and invite them to other activities in the company (company tours, application training, etc.)
- Advertising practical opportunities in the company (such as internships) and recruiting participants
- Publicizing trainee-recruiting events (company tours, for instance) and finding participants
- Application training and feedback on application forms from students
- Professional mentoring for students
- Support for project weeks and project work with school classes
- Carrying out certain competitions related to the company (creating business plans, for example)
- Sponsoring small research projects in fields of interest to the company



- Creating learning sponsorships to provide support for company-relevant projects by future student trainees
- Taking on the responsibility for Junior achievement companies and students' companies
- Articles and advertisements in student newspapers
- Carrying out joint events – for instance, exhibits and training fairs
- Mutual training
- Sponsorship of career guidance workshops at schools

### 3.4.5.2 Networks

Work better together! Recruiting trainees can also work better when done jointly. Networks are great way to do this. In many regions there are already networks that bring together a diverse range of actors with equally diverse objectives. Many of these networks also address training-related topics. These networks may be composed solely of companies that offer training or of other players as well, such as chambers, guilds, job centers, educational institutions, and youth centers. The benefit of such networks is that the network partners are no longer acting as individuals but present themselves to the public as a group. This makes it possible to take advantage of synergies. The opportunities such networks offer are highly diverse: Prominent examples include the exchange of experience as well as joint, and therefore more attractive, activities aimed at recruiting trainees (such as informational events offered by a group of companies, student internships, and mentoring programs).

#### Here's how it works:

- Research existing networks and partnerships in your region and assess the extent to which they address issues such as training and trainee recruitment. Get involved in one or more networks that you consider to be suited to your needs, and make active use of them for recruiting trainees.
- If you do not find a suitable network establish one yourself. To do this, actively engage companies in your region and find out what firms face challenges similar to your own in recruiting trainees. You may already know of such companies. From among these companies, you can attract the initial members of your network.
- Establish a formal network, possibly in the form of an association. Define common goals, tasks and activities and define roles and responsibilities. Assign responsibilities.
- Engage in effective public relations work (in the form of an online presence, for instance) to attract attention to your network and promote its growth.
- Determine whether your network is eligible for public subsidies.

### 3.4.5.3 Employee referral programs

Recruiting trainees through personal contacts and networks of employees and trainees is a particularly cost-effective form of recruitment. There are tremendous opportunities within private networks to distribute authentic information about companies and training positions. Employee referral programs promote and provide structured opportunities to name friends, acquaintances, and family members that would make strong candidates for training positions at the company. They are also a targeted channel of word-of-mouth for the benefit of the company.

Employee referral programs can be supplemented by special services and opportunities for the children of employees. Special school internships, vacation or holiday programs and mini-jobs for employees' children promote company loyalty early on.

#### Here's how it works:

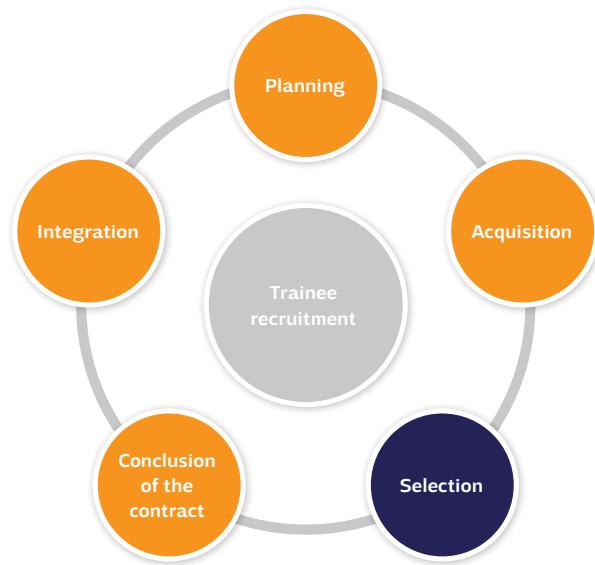
- Set up an employee referral program, which also includes free training positions.
- Create suitable (monetary) incentives so that your employees support the program. After all, your program will only be successful if your employees manage to find qualified candidates for

training and get them to apply. Satisfaction with the company as an employer is a prerequisite for this.

- Let your employees and trainees know what the program entails and how it works. Talk about the different ways employees can make referrals and discuss the role of social networks (e.g. Xing and Facebook).
- Make direct requests for referrals of potential candidates from employees' social sphere. Make clear how important the program is to your corporate culture and that regular staff recommendations are welcome. Lay out the benefits your employees will derive from the program.
- Address highly motivated employees personally through their supervisors and ask them at regular intervals whether they can recommend qualified candidates for training positions.
- Think about the circle of participants for your program. In addition to your current employees, this could also include former customers or suppliers who may be able to actively promote your company.
- When you have a vacant training position, let your place now and explicitly ask them to make recommendations. Make sure your employees have all of the relevant information and suitable materials.



### 3.5 Recruitment Phase 3: Selection



**GRAPHIC 18**

*Trainee recruitment  
Phase 3: Selection*

Selecting qualified candidates is another central phase of trainee recruitment. The main tasks involved in this phase are using a qualification profile to identify candidates from a pool of applicants who are in principle qualified for training, then selecting from among these the ones the company most wants to work with. The selection process often takes place in two phases. In most cases an initial selection is made based on written applications. Afterward, a final decision is made based on direct contact (an interview, test, etc.).

#### Tips for selecting trainees

**When implementing selection instruments, also refer to:**

How do I present my company as an attractive training organization? (→ Ch. 4.1)

How can I communicate successfully with young people? (→ Ch. 4.4)

Who are the trainees of the future? (→ Ch. 4.6)

What are the critical issues when making a selection? (→ Ch. 4.7)



■ **Show respect and appreciation.**

The selection phase is often the first contact a company makes with an applicant. This initial contact is the calling card of the company. Respect and appreciation clearly shown to applicants throughout the entire selection process is a prerequisite for the success of this recruiting phase. Applicants who feel that they are not being taken seriously easily decide for a competing company. Respectful treatment is a rule not only for candidates who ultimately are offered a training position, but also for candidates who do not receive an offer of training. After all, they too will discuss their experience at your company within their own circles – and that includes others interested in training. When you reject an applicant, you should therefore offer individual feedback which not only emphasizes the reasons why the application was rejected but also positive aspects of the application.

■ **Give the candidate the feeling that he or she is valued.**

Go the extra mile and show your candidates that young professionals in your company are coveted, and that is why you want to offer them something – above all, high quality training.

### ■ Make a positive first impression.

Applications often make their decisions about where to train based on seemingly insignificant details. Studies show that decisions are made more often based on a gut feeling than rational consideration. You should therefore make a conscious effort to design a selection process that will be a pleasant experience for applicants. Friendliness and good atmosphere should be obvious features. You may even want to include entertaining or playful elements into the selection process. A good starting point is the concept of „recruitment” - that is, a combination of recruitment and entertainment – by using a range of interactive and playful processes, for instance, that simulate professional situations.

### ■ Communicate quickly and reliably.

The younger generation places a premium on customer orientation and is used to rapid response times and answers. You should therefore design your selection process to make solid decisions as quickly as possible and allow as little time as possible to elapse between the individual phases. Respond promptly to incoming applications, invite qualified candidates within a reasonable time frame, and then provide feedback as quickly as possible. In addition, assign points of contact to support applicants throughout the selection process.

### ■ Offer transparency.

Ensure that there is transparency for applicants with regard to the specific sequence of the application process, to include deadlines. Clearly communicate requirements and criteria to applicants. In doing so, you can ensure that young people interested in training have their bearings and experience a fair selection process.

### ■ Communicate selection decisions convincingly.

Confirm the positive selection of an applicant in a personal message. Explain the reasons why the selection decision was made. Explain which of the applicants' strengths caught your attention and why you think the applicant is particularly well suited to the training position in your company.

### ■ Let potential be your guide.

Young people are not experts; they are coming to you to learn a trade. Their expertise should therefore take a backseat to their potential in the selection decision. Motivation and willingness to learn play a prominent role. The guiding principles in selection are questions such as „does the candidate have the potential to become the expert I want for my company?“ In addition to performance criteria, such as grades, take other aspects into account in your selection decision, aspects like personality, social skills and suitability for your company or the profession.

### ■ Make different selection instruments contingent upon each other.

Generally, a range of instruments are used in the selection of qualified applicants for training positions. Consider in advance how you can assess the results of a range of selection instruments with respect to each other. It is possible that different selection instruments may yield conflicting results about candidates. Think about how to deal with such situations and how you want to weight the results.

### ■ Sustainable trainee-selection instruments

Trainees selection instruments are the tools used to prepare and ultimately enable the selection of qualified trainees. Companies have an impressive array of possible instruments at their disposal. Some of these instruments are standard and are components of nearly every selection procedure – instruments such as written application documents or interviews while others supplement these.



**GRAPHIC 19**  
Overview of selection instruments

### 3.5.1 Qualification profile

The qualification profile is an instrument developed at the very beginning of the selection process. The profile outlines the criteria – characteristics, skills and abilities – that are required in order to meet the challenges of a training position and therefore characterize the qualified candidate. It allows a decision based on whether applicants meet the requirements of the profession and company-specific requirements. Applicants who do not meet these criteria are eliminated from the application process.

The selection criteria are derived from the tasks associated with training and later the professional position as well as the conditions present in the company. Companies should look not only at school diplomas and transcripts. Rather, candidates should be assessed with an eye to the professional, personal and social skills they possess.

The qualification profile is the foundation of the selection process. At the end of the day, all of the selection instruments refer to the qualification profile. They evaluate the extent to which candidates meet the specified criteria and therefore their suitability as trainees. Conversely, all of the selection instruments that follow are bound to fail if the qualification profile is poorly developed or non-existent.

#### Here's how it works:

- Qualifications of trainees are strongly influenced by the tasks they are expected to perform in their field of work. The first step should therefore be an analysis of the tasks performed in the position. Determine the typical work tasks with which the trainees are confronted. We should also take into consideration specific working conditions and relationships (e.g. teamwork on projects, customer contact).
- Use this as a basis for laying out the qualification criteria – that is, the characteristics, skills and abilities that are necessary in order to best perform the defined tasks. The more specific you can be at this stage, the better targeted the subsequent selection process designed around these criteria will be. The objective should be less to define must-have qualifications and more an effort to circumscribe the goal of developing an ideal future employee. For this purpose, it may be helpful to define areas of competence to use as a basis for sketching out the concrete qualifications.

### What training requirements should I include in the qualification profile?

#### Education requirements

For instance, a school diploma or certain grades in particular subjects

#### Technical/professional skills

Basic arithmetic, German language, scientific and technical fundamentals, basic knowledge of





economic relationships, computer skills, language skills, knowledge of other cultures, basic trade skills, for instance

**Personal skills**

Motivation, willingness to learn, work ethic and interest, ability to learn quickly, cognitive ability, independence, reliability, responsibility, resilience, ability to concentrate, ambition, organization, flexibility, diligence, perseverance

**Social skills**

Teamwork, attitude toward supervisors, colleagues and customers, conflict resolution skills, ability to take criticism and self-assessment, tolerance, and communication skills

- Not all of these qualification criteria have the same weight. To make the qualification profile more concrete, we should therefore assign a weight to each of the criteria. One possibility is to distinguish among the criteria between the necessary requirements (musts), and desired qualifications (nice to have). Moreover, you should define which competencies are prerequisites for training and which can be developed as part of the training.
- Finally, determine which observable behaviors demonstrate whether and to what extent your qualification criteria are present in your candidates. How can you determine whether a candidate is capable of teamwork, has a willingness to learn or an ability to solve problems? Find appropriate selection instruments that can show you the extent to which your candidates demonstrate these characteristics.

**3.5.2 Written application documents**

Written application documents are a classic and much proven instrument which can be used to create a shortlist of candidates for a training position. With relatively few resources they make it possible to gain a good first impression of the applicant situation as a whole learn about individual candidates. At the same time, this instrument offers an initial fundamental and reliable assessment of the suitability of applicants.

**Here’s how it works:**

- Decide what specific documents you want to require in order to make an initial review of the suitability of your candidates. Communicate exactly in the vacancy announcement which documents should be submitted.



**What are the typical components of a written application?**

**Cover letter/letter of motivation**

This gives a first impression of the personality of the candidates as well as their motivations and interests that prompted them to make a specific application. The letter of motivation also provides insights with regard to written expression, which plays a subordinate role in some training profiles.

**Resume**

This provides information on key biographical data, the school career and possibly on professional and practical experience, as well as club and volunteer activities. Often it also contains information about the hobbies and interests of applicants.

**Standardized application form**

This contains typical data also found on a resume but it structures the information much more by asking questions requiring answers.

### **School transcripts**

These convey information about the basic level of literacy and mathematical skills.

### **Internship certificates**

Depending on the quality of the certificate, these can provide information about an applicant's first practical experience in a profession, tasks performed, skills and strengths, as well as certain soft skills, such as work ethic, punctuality and teamwork.

### **Employment evaluations**

You can use these to find out about the professional career, previous and lawyers, tasks performed, technical skills, professional strengths, and soft skills of older applicants.

### **Letters of recommendation and references**

These contain judgments on past performance as well as the personality of candidates. They may give you the opportunity check the claims candidates have made.

### **Tests**

Personality tests, aptitude tests or other tests are sometimes requested, together with other application documents for the pre-selection process. Depending on the test format they can provide information about personality traits, interests or the state of certain skills.



- Think about how much you want to weigh the significance of the various documents. Do not put too much weight on school grades, as these are a limited predictor of professional performance. Pay special attention to school subjects that are particularly relevant to the respective occupation. A well-designed internship certificate can sometimes convey a better idea of the suitability of a candidate than a school transcript.
- Assess the advantages and disadvantages of various documentation for everyone involved. You may find that a standardized application form is best because it allows you to collect detailed information and obtain comparable data. However, such forms take a long time to fill out and are unpopular with applicants, which could cost your company potential trainees.
- Decide how you want application documents to be submitted. Paper applications are popular even among internet-savvy young people. They are regarded as particularly reputable and offer sufficient space for the applicants to express their personalities. Less expensive e-mail applications have become more commonplace and risen in popularity. In this form of application, the documents are attached to an e-mail. Standardized application forms are submitted online, sometimes via a link on the company website.

### **3.5.3 Trainee speed dating**

Trainee speed dating is a special instrument companies can use for their initial selection or in some cases their final selection of trainees. These are regionally organized events, with invitations sent out by chambers or employment offices, and which allow the participation of companies. In speed dating, companies meet a new candidate every ten minutes. In brief talks, both sides can find out if they are interested in working together. Often speed dating is accompanied by free offers for candidates - for instance, application packet reviews, application photo shooting, or brief application training offered by the organizer. The candidates are often young people who have come away empty-handed from previous interviews.

Trainee speed dating is a resource-efficient instrument. The event is organized by third parties for companies, enabling them to meet numerous candidates personally in a short time.

#### **Here's how it works:**

- Research regional opportunities for trainee speed dating in your professional association. Before signing up, make sure that the event makes a good pre-selection of qualified candidates.

- The challenge of trainee speed dating lies in its fast tempo. Within minutes, you have to provide relevant information about your business and training opportunities, and at the same time gain an impression of the candidate. Create a handbook of talking points ahead of time that provides pre-structured information which is important to communicate to candidates as well as key questions to ask the prospective trainees.
- In speed dating you have the opportunity to view the candidates' application documents. But the first impression is most important. Is there good chemistry between the two parties? Resist the temptation to make a hasty decision based on a gut feeling. Orient the short conversation along the lines of the qualification profile of the training position and assess the extent to which candidates have the desired qualities.
- Record every conversation using a prepared document.
- If you are particularly impressed by a candidate you can offer a training contract immediately. Usually, however, you will want to invite qualified candidates promptly to another interview or an internal company selection process. Arrange an appointment immediately. The subsequent appointment can be used in order to determine suitability with due deliberation.

### 3.5.4 Last-minute training exchange

Last-minute exchanges are also centrally organized, government-sponsored events offered by organizations such as chambers of commerce and the employment office. They take place at the beginning of the new training year and bring potential trainees who have not found a training position into contact with companies unable to fill all of their training positions. Companies present themselves at their own stands. These events offer you the opportunity to speak directly with potential candidates and review their application documents. Participation is free for companies. For the young people, other services are frequently offered, such as application packet reviews or application photo shoots.

#### **Here's how it works:**

- Find last-minute exchanges and register.
- With regard to presenting your stand and initiating discussion prepare as you would for a training fair (→ Ch. 3.4.2.5). Specify guidelines that help you to obtain key information about candidates and present your company in the best light. Document every conversation.
- Represent the company with HR managers or training managers. The presence of trainees who can talk about their training can also be advantageous.
- Invite appealing candidates immediately to an interview at the company.

### 3.5.5 Interview

The job interview is still a central and reliable selection instrument for making the final decision in filling training positions. It enables companies to obtain more information about candidates in support of the final decision phase. Often, the first direct contact with the applicant takes place in the interview and it gives companies an important individual impression of the candidates, their personalities, motivations and skills.

At the same time, the applicant comes away with information about the company, the profession for which the training is offered, and information about the training opportunity. Interviews are a good venue in which to address applicants' questions. Applicants can use the interview to bolster their decision for or against accepting a training position.

#### **Here's how it works:**

- Score points as early on as the invitation to an interview by composing a friendly text and a pleasant design. A brief telephone call beforehand to schedule the interview is a good idea because it gives both sides the opportunity to test the water.

- On the morning of the interview text the candidate with a friendly reminder. Let them know that you are looking forward to meeting them and remind them of the time and location.
- Be well prepared for the interview. Develop an interview guide which covers all of the information you think you will need. Develop a concept with which to shape the interview.

## How do I design a job interview?



### Welcome and introduction

Accompany the candidate from the reception area to the meeting room so that they do not have to find their way through an unfamiliar building alone. Offer the candidate a friendly welcome. Offer the interviewee a seat and something to drink. Introduce everyone involved and what they do in the company. Thank the candidate for coming. Break the ice with small talk (ask them about their trip, for example).

### Introduce the company

First explain what the company does and the products or services it offers. Provide general information about the size, corporate history, corporate culture and successes of the company. Finally, explain the profession for which you are offering training, as well as the training vacancy and its requirements. Explain who the candidate will work with during training, who will provide support, and the role of teamwork in your company. Explain the sequence of the training. Make sure to point out the benefits of training with your company. Make sure to make a convincing argument for why a candidate should undergo training in your company without being asked. Let the interview take the form of a conversation; engage in active dialogue, and respond to the candidates questions.

### Get to know the candidate better

Now take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about the candidates. Ask them to introduce themselves and give a brief overview of their resume. Let candidates talk about experiences at school, during an internship or their behavior in critical situations. Find out more about their motives for applying, and make sure that they have a real interest in training. Get an impression of their personality. As you do this keep your qualification profile in mind and make sure that you have gathered all of the relevant information by the end of the interview.

### Conclusion

Once you have discussed all of the key points, wrap up the conversation. Summarize the discussion and highlight positive aspects. Give the applicant an opportunity to ask any final questions. Wrap-up with a candid summary of your impressions. Explain the next steps in the process.

### Evaluation

Use a structured document to evaluate the interview immediately after it is concluded. For the final evaluation of suitability and the offer of a training position, you will later use all of your selection instruments.

- Ensure a positive atmosphere before and during the interview. Keep in mind that young people have little or no experience with job interviews. You should therefore explain the procedure in detail. Meet nervousness with understanding and dispel your applicants' fear with friendliness and patience. Avoid stressful interviews.
- Think about which representatives of your company you could include in the interview apart from just management and HR. For instance, colleagues of the future trainee or experienced trainees can offer authentic glimpses into the company during the interview.
- Find a suitable location for the interview and consider atypical locations, such as the future workplace or at the applicant's home. In any case, create a pleasant atmosphere.

### 3.5.6 Standardized tests

In addition to the written application documents and the interview, companies can use other selection instruments in order to get an accurate picture of their candidates and ultimately make a sound selection decision. Standardized tests are one such instrument. Tests measure different characteristics and abilities of candidates. A sensible use of such tests is when they are used to evaluate precisely the skills relevant for the occupation for which you offer training. They are therefore often more meaningful than school grades. Another benefit is that they make it easier to compare the abilities of each candidate.

Tests are available in a variety of formats.



#### What kinds of tests are there?

##### Interest tests

Profiles and interests are often generated in connection with career guidance in schools. In that context, they enable young people to reflect on their own interests and affinities when making career decisions. Companies use these tests to learn more about the professional interests and motivations of their candidates. In particular, they examine the extent to which candidates are enthusiastic about the specific professional field for which training is offered.

##### General knowledge test

General education is becoming increasingly important in the working world. In many professions, a good general education is a necessary prerequisite. Companies use knowledge tests to assess the general education and fundamental cultural tools of applicants, such as German, mathematics, and foreign languages.

##### Personality tests

Successful training not only depends on cognitive and technical abilities but also on social and personal aspects. The aim of personality tests is to predict individual social behaviors in a professional environment, such as team-orientation, conflict resolution, motivation, and flexibility.

##### Aptitude tests/competence assessment tests

This category includes all of the instruments targeted to determining the suitability of candidates for a particular profession. They compare the qualities of candidates directly with the requirements for a training position or profession. Depending on the training profile, aptitude tests can determine the presence of hard skills and soft skills – for instance, general knowledge, logical thinking, technical capability, personality characteristics, interest in a profession, and so forth.

Each test format has its own strengths and weaknesses, of course. Consequently, it is sometimes necessary to administer a combination of different tests to obtain a comprehensive picture of the candidate. For instance, scholars disagree about the meaningfulness of personality test results. High-quality tests are also resource intensive. Yet tests are a popular instrument for gathering additional information on candidates.

#### Here's how it works:

- Decide what kind of test you want to use and for what purpose. Not every test is equally relevant for every occupation. Clarify whether and how much added value a specific test can have for the selection process.
- Gather information on existing testing procedures. In principle, you can develop your own test procedure. However, it is far more economical to use existing testing procedures, which are often designed for specific professions. Find out from your industry advocates (chamber of commerce,



employment offices). Evaluate the options for your purposes by asking yourself the following questions: What testing procedures are available, and from whom? Does the test work for my company, or will it have to be adapted? What costs are involved, and are they proportionate?

- Make a critical assessment of the different options. Not all tests are of equal quality and reliability. As a general rule, you can assume that tests offered by public institutions are of adequate quality.
- Think about how you will integrate the tests into the overall selection and application process. There are various possibilities:
  - Tests are administered within the framework of pre-selection and their results are submitted with the written application documents.
  - Specific online tests can be administered in conjunction with online application forms, for instance, as part of online applications.
  - In a later phase tests can be integrated directly into the interview and taken either before or after the interview.
  - Another possibility is to administer the tests in groups – for example, several applicants might take the test either simultaneously or even as a group.

### 3.5.7 Assessment center

An assessment center enables a structured personnel selection process which is also frequently used for selecting trainees. Individual and group tests in the assessment center precisely evaluate the skills and abilities that are particularly important for carrying out the tasks associated with the training position. Role-playing or simulation games, as well as games simulating practical problems that call upon candidates to find solutions are classic components of an assessment center. These often focus on the social skills of the candidates. How the applicants behave during the exercises is observed and assessed by trained personnel or experienced professionals. Generally an assessment center takes a full day. Typically four to eight - or a maximum of 12 - candidates participate at one time.

The assessment center offers many advantages especially for companies with a large number of trainees because it tests a number of candidates at one time. This is both economical and makes it easier to compare the performance of a number of applicants. At the same time relevant skills and abilities are tested under realistic conditions.

#### **Here's how it works:**

- First, decide whether you want your assessment center to be located elsewhere and run by a specialized organization or if you want to do it yourself within your company with the help of experts.
- If you opt to do it outside your company, first find out about the various options. The first stop should be your advocacy groups (e.g. chambers, employment offices). If you decide to contract out the assessment center it is a good idea to take part in order to obtain an authentic impression of your applicants.
- If you opt to run the center on your own, prepare the assessment thoroughly. Based on your qualification profile determine the skills and abilities you want to test with the assessment center (e.g. briefing skills, teamwork, sales orientation, interest). Then, create practical, real-world problems.
- A successful assessment center depends on a good assessment rubric and trained observers. Decide what skills you want to observe and evaluate and which exercises will be used for this purpose. Find qualified personnel to act as observers and perform evaluations – for instance training supervisors, experienced professionals, or advanced trainees who have experience in training and working with trainees. If necessary, train them for the task.
- Invite the selected applicants to the assessment center. Prepare them well for what they will encounter at the assessment center by offering them the most comprehensive information possible.
- Determine the sequence of the assessment center, and from all of the possible elements, select those which best enable evaluation of the suitability of the candidates.



## What elements comprise an assessment center?

### **Presentations**

Assessment centers often begin with a round of introductions. The moderator/presenter starts with a company presentation, and then the evaluators briefly introduce themselves. Afterward, the trainees are also asked to introduce themselves briefly. This can either be done as a group or in the form of partner presentations. As soon as this early phase of the assessment center, rhetorical abilities and presentation techniques already become evident and companies get a personal impression of the candidates.

### **Individual practical exercises**

At this point candidates receive practical tasks which they alone have to deal with. Generally, they finish by presenting their results to the group. Here are some examples: a sales presentation for a product or preparation of a meal from a list of ingredients. During this exercise, companies can observe skills needed for the profession, as well as soft skills like creativity, precision and interest.

### **Practical group exercises**

In this exercise, tasks are assigned to small or large groups which must be performed using teamwork. The exercises can vary widely and range from simple design exercises to strongly job-related tasks. Here, companies mainly tests skills, such as teamwork, the ability to take criticism or assertiveness.

### **Interest, aptitude and knowledge tests**

The assessment center can be supplemented with a range of tests for determining information about other characteristics and abilities of the candidates.

- Assessment centers may have rigid formats. For your young target group it is better to choose playful exercises the candidates will enjoy and which will spark an interest in the profession. Avoid exercises with a high stress level. Convey the fun factor in advance.
- Young people often associate the term „assessment center” with anxiety and uncertainty. Reduce the stress level by using a different name, such as ”trainee casting“.

### 3.5.8 Work test

Assessment centers are not a suitable selection instrument for every company. Companies who nevertheless want a test with a highly practical element may instead opt for a work test. This calls on the applicant to perform a small, practical exercise the corresponds to the challenges of the profession for which the training is offered. In a painting company, applicants were required to paint a wall, for instance, and in an auto shop they were asked to check the oil in the car, whereas a logistics company called on candidates to find an ordered part in a warehouse.

Depending on the conditions, a task may be solved from home and the results presented in the course of the interview. But the work test can also be performed directly in the company – on the day of the interview, for instance – but it can be solved either alone or together with other candidates. The workload for the applicant should be between half an hour and a maximum of four hours. The advantage of this simple instrument is that it gives companies a quick impression of the job-related skills of the candidate.

### 3.5.9 Trial days

A trial day is a good way to learn more about the job-related skills of the candidate. Here, candidates are invited to spend one or more days (a maximum of three) in a company to solve practical tasks. Trial days are an excellent way to develop an impression of how candidates will behave in

their future work environment, find out about their work ethic, and how well they master new challenges. Many companies use a test day after the interview, to make a final hiring decision.

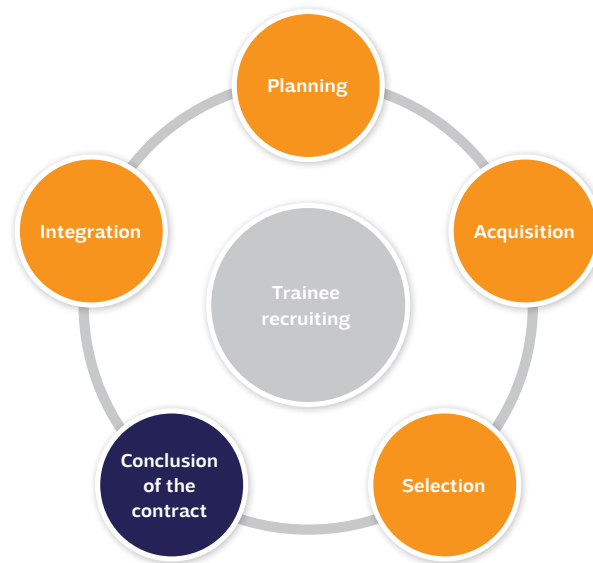
**Here's how it works:**

- Find a simple, typical task to present to your candidate on the trial day. A task should be selected which reflects genuine tasks arising in training and one which tests the critical skills and abilities the candidate will need in order to perform tasks associated with the training. Prepare everything the candidate will need on the trial day (a workstation, work clothes, etc.).
- Invite the candidate. In addition to formalities (place, time, work clothes), clearly communicate to the candidate what to expect on the trial day. If necessary, offer advice on how to prepare for it.
- Observe candidates during the trial day. Evaluate performance using a uniform, transparent system based on the qualification profile. Review the performance at the end of the day together with the applicant, and offer the candidate an opportunity to provide feedback. Offer a candid description of your impression. Make a final selection decision based on all of the selection instruments used and communicate your decision in a timely manner.
- Trial days often have a bad reputation and are unpopular among applicants. You should therefore go to great lengths to avoid the impression that you are using the applicants as free labor. Instead, you should emphasize the benefits for the applicants as well who can also take advantage of the event as an opportunity to evaluate their training decision. Design the day so that it is a positive experience for the candidate. A pleasant working environment is essential. Offers some small form of compensation in the form of vouchers, company products, or financial compensation.

### 3.6 Recruitment, Phase 4: Concluding the contract

**GRAPHIC 20**

*Trainee recruitment,  
Phase 4: Concluding  
the contract*



Concluding the training contract is another phase of trainee recruitment and is undoubtedly the high point of the recruitment effort because it is the objective of all recruitment activities. In the previous recruitment phases, the company successfully attracted candidates for training and find qualified trainees from among them.

The contract conclusion phase is devoted to tasks that come between the selection decision and the start of training. The near-term goal is to forge a bond with the selected candidate by ensuring an expeditious contract signing. Finally, the prospective trainee should be accompanied until training begins. That means that even at this early stage, new recruits must be integrated into the company. The objective of this phase is to ensure that the selected candidate of choice actually makes it to the first day of training. To achieve this, companies must take steps to foster loyalty and integrate the future trainees into the company.

#### Tips for the contract-signing phase



**When implementing this phase, also refer to:**

- How do I present my company as an attractive training organization? (→ Ch. 4.1)
- How can I communicate successfully with young people? (→ Ch. 4.4)
- How can I use trainees in the recruitment process? (→ Ch. 4.5)

■ **Clarify why training at your company is uniquely attractive.**

In the course of the contract signing, reiterate the benefits of completing training in your organization. Make abundantly clear to the future trainee why your company offers such outstanding training. Present concrete examples. Discuss the possibility of subsequent employment with the company and also professional development opportunities following successful completion of the training.

■ **Consider the future trainees as part of the company.**

Spark candidates' anticipation of the training process by making your presence known as their future training organization. Partially integrate new trainees into the company; encourage contacts

and include them in the social community of the company. Give newcomers the feeling that they are already fully-fledged members of the company and that your organization is looking forward to their arrival.

■ **Prepare trainees to enter the working world.**

The transition from school to the working world is a transition into an unknown world with many new challenges. Support your new arrivals by standing by them in every possible way as a partner, even before training begins. Offer them a helpful information to encourage curiosity and motivation and dispel potential tension and fears.

■ **Sustainable instruments for use in the contract-conclusion phase.**

Here, the relevant recruitment instruments are those that promote the conclusion of the training contract and strengthen the bond between the new trainee and the company.



### 3.6.1 Concluding the contract

The signing of the training contract seals the relationship between the company offering the training and its trainees. It is therefore subject to legal guidelines. Beyond the legal act, the contract for juice a formal and binding relationship between the company and the trainee. This calls upon the company to actively shape this relationship and form a bond with the new trainee.

**Here's how it works:**

- Find out from your local chamber about legal guidelines that have to be taken into account when concluding the contract. You may want to request a boilerplate contract.
- Provide the future trainee all of the important details of the contract before the day of the signing – for instance, the exact title of the profession being trained for, compensation during training, duration of training, the training schedule or the training regulation.
- On signing day review all of the key components of the training together with the candidate. This gives the applicant the opportunity to reconsider what is involved in the profession and reflect on his or her expectations.
- Apart from the compulsory activities of the contract signing, make it a special event that young people will have fond memories of. There are many ways to do this:
  - Embed the contract signing in a festive welcome ceremony.
  - Organize a group breakfast or dinner and celebrate the contract signing in a relaxed atmosphere.
  - Immediately after the signing handover a welcome packet with work clothes, a toolbox, or even promotional gifts, such as keychains or thumb drives to symbolically welcome the trainee aboard.
  - Conduct the contract signing outside of the company at a special location.

### 3.6.2 Welcome events

Group welcome events for future trainees prior to the start of training our outstanding way to forge a bond with them and and present your company as an attractive provider of professional training. Welcome events let companies create opportunities for people to meet and greet each other in a pleasant, low-pressure atmosphere. These events also alleviate fear and reservations among future trainees prior to the first day of training. The possibilities for such events are almost unlimited.

**Here's how it works:**

- Consider what type of event would be most attractive to your future trainees. Involve your trainees in preparing and designing the event, if necessary.
- Give the event an official character. Depending on the format of the event, you can invite different stakeholders. From your own company, you can invite the upper management, the HR department, training personnel, and trainees. In addition, you can invite representatives from business partners, customers, or parents and relatives of the future trainees.
- Let the newcomers know that this event is for them, to welcome them to the company.



**What welcome events can I put on prior to the start of training?**

Here are some examples of events:

**Welcome meal or drinks**

In addition to your employees, invite all of the future trainees, either to a restaurant or an in-company buffet. You could combine such an event with your company's summer party. Publicly extend a warm welcome to the newcomers as an important addition to your staff and introduce them to their colleagues. A welcoming speech by the management gives the event a more official character.

**Meet-and-greet café**

Organize a nice afternoon in a cafe where your current trainees, and maybe even your trainers, can meet the newcomers in a relaxed atmosphere and discuss training.

**Graduation celebrations**

Take advantage of graduation celebrations for trainees who have completed their training as an opportunity to combine the event with a welcoming celebration for future trainees. The special charm of this is that the new trainees are immediately faced with the experience of successfully completed training. At the same time they are experiencing how training performance is honored in your company.

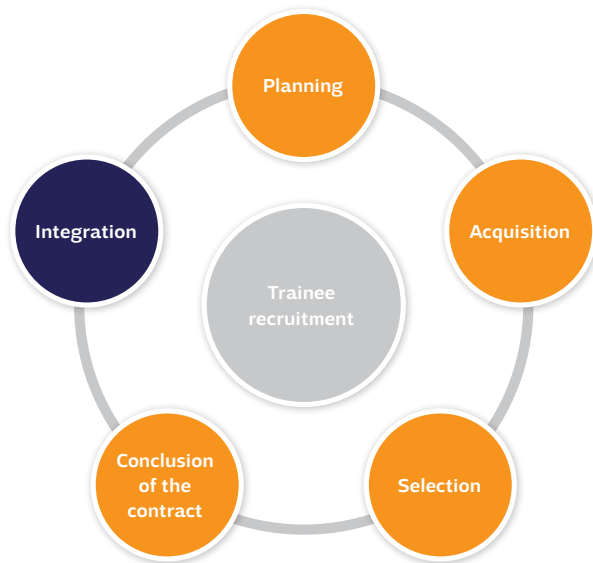
**3.6.3 In-house events**

Events need not necessarily cater especially to your future trainees. Companies often have a number of events which can be used as opportunities to invite and welcome newcomers. These include summer, Christmas and other celebrations and corporate outings. Even traditional, informal gatherings - going out for a beer in a nearby bar on a Friday after work, for instance, can be used for this purpose. Many companies hold regular staff meetings where the management updates employees on developments in the company. These gatherings can also be used, along with open-door days or company tours, to invite future trainees and give them an opportunity to be more present and get to know more people, thus giving them a head start on integrating themselves into the company. However, it is important not to leave newcomers to their own devices at these events, but rather to actively introduce them to the company.

**3.6.4 Internal corporate communications**

Many companies have corporate communications in the form of internal newsletters or employee magazines. It is also part of the corporate culture of many companies to send birthday, Christmas, and other greetings to new employees. Future trainees should be placed on the relevant distribution list immediately upon conclusion of the contract. This lets them benefit from the communication media and allows them to think about current developments in the company even before they begin training. This also gives future trainees a feeling of inclusion and that they are being taken seriously.

### 3.7 Recruitment Phase 5: Integration in the first few months



**GRAPHIC 22**

*Trainee recruitment,  
Phase 5: Integration*

Integration in the first few months is the last phase of the trainee recruitment cycle. This is the conclusion of the recruitment effort. This phase begins with the first day of training, and includes the trainees' first few months which usually corresponds to the probationary period. As a result of the integration phase, the company now has trainees who have not only signed a contract on paper but have also „arrived“ at the company. Ideally the bonds between the company and trainees have stabilized by this point, and trainees have found their place in the company, on their teams, and within their areas of responsibility. This is the cornerstone on which successful training is built.

During the integration phase, the company is faced with incorporating the new trainees into the operation. At the same time, this is also the probationary period, a time in which both parties closely examine, and either confirm or deny, their selection decisions. At this point the company assesses the professional suitability of the new trainee and whether he or she is a good fit for the company. For their part, the trainees are considering whether this training indeed corresponds to their interests. The company is therefore challenged with a situation with seemingly divergent aims: on the one hand it has to organize a good start for the new arrivals, and present itself as an attractive company in which to undergo training, but on the other hand, it has to keep a critical eye on the progress of the trainees.

#### Tips for the integration phase

**When implementing this phase, also refer to:**

How do I present my company as an attractive training organization? (→ Ch 4.1)

How can I communicate successfully with young people? (→ Ch 4.4)

How can I use trainees in the recruitment process? (→ Ch 4.5)



■ **Show the trainees they are welcome.**

How trainees are received on the first day leaves them with a lasting impression of the company. You should therefore give the newcomers a feeling of being welcome in the company and on their teams from the very beginning. Receive the trainees in an open and friendly manner.

■ **Build a trusting relationship** Build a trusting relationship.

Studies show that the personal and emotional relationship between the instructor and trainees is a critical element of successful training. You should therefore take care to ensure that this relationship can develop in a positive direction. You should therefore consider trainees not only as employees who fulfill certain functions in the company but also as young people who are going through a phase of their lives that is not always easy. Build trust. Offer support to the new trainees, not only in technical matters but also with problems of a personal nature.

■ **Actively support the transition between school and work.**

The working world is something new for the in-coming trainees, a place where they need to get their bearings. They are confronted with numerous challenges and they need your help to overcome them. You should therefore organize a systematic and helpful introduction. Communicate the rules and requirements of the company and offer support. Give the trainees time to learn how to find their bearings within the company and adapt to its rules.



**What are the challenges of the transition from school to career?**

The training environment confronts trainees with a new reality. The transition to the new learning location is accompanied by completely new demands which are unknown to the young people and which must be experienced firsthand.

- A workday is often longer than a school day. Working hours are firmly fixed.
- The new activities may even come with new physical demands. Many work activities are carried out in a standing position or in other postures for extended periods, which may be something new for the new trainees.
- The new work situations are real and serious. Every action, and in particular errors, have consequences.
- In-company training confronts young people with a new form of learning (learning through work).
- The role of teachers is replaced by trainers, colleagues, supervisors, or customers.
- The trainees work in professional organizational structures with hierarchies, formal and informal rules of behavior.
- The corporate organization poses new demands on social behavior.
- For the first time, the trainees receive their own regular income to spend as they choose.
- This also marks their transition to adulthood, which requires independence and personal responsibility.

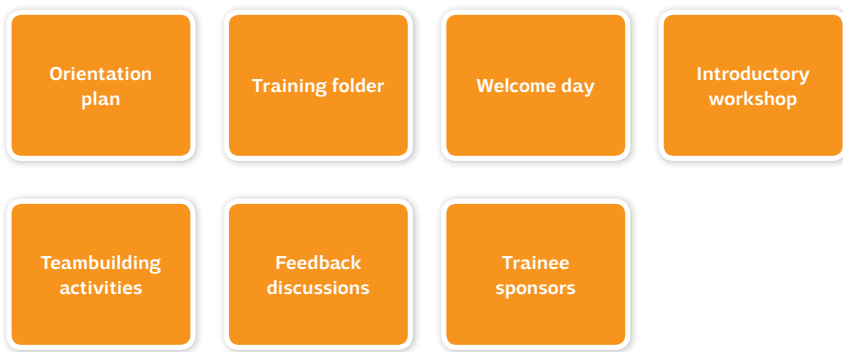
■ **Prove that you are an attractive company in which to complete training.**

Actively forge the bond between the company and the new trainees by proving to the young people that they have made the right decision. Structure the orientation period such that the newcomers feel that they are well taken care of in your company, both professionally and personally.

■ **Sustainable integration instruments**

Integration instruments are recruitment instruments that promote bonding and integration of the new trainees into the company in the first few months of training. These include instruments that ensure the successful completion of the probationary period and confirm the selection decision at the end of the probationary period.





**GRAPHIC 23**

*Overview of instruments for integration in the first few months*

### 3.7.1 Orientation plan

At the beginning of training, the trainees go through a training phase. This usually spans several months and must be organized by the company. The orientation plan is the instrument in which all of the measures undertaken in this phase are planned in detail and coordinated.

#### **Here's how it works:**

- Create a training plan.

#### **What is included in the orientation plan?**

A good orientation plan should contain information on the following:

##### **The period prior to the start of training**

At this point you should determine what information and materials will be provided to future trainees (e.g. in the form of a training folder), plan welcome events, and other measures.

##### **Design of the first training day**

Here, you should work out the exact structure of the first training day with a clear sequence – in the form of a welcome day, for instance.

##### **Design of the probationary period**

This should include a description of all the activities associated with actively integrating the new trainees. For instance, definition and implementation of learning objectives, assistance and support for trainees, initial feedback sessions, etc.

##### **Feedback conference at the end of the probationary period**

This should include a discussion that consciously marks the end of the orientation period, as well as coordinating mutual expectations and goals.

- Organize practical implementation of the orientation plan by mapping out a schedule and responsibilities, for instance.

### 3.7.2 Training folder

The training folder is an instrument designed to support the incorporation and integration of new trainees. It should contain all of the relevant information about the training and the company. An essential component is an overview of the sequence of training. Its central function is to help the new trainees get their bearings. The folder can also be used in the course of training to document training results and milestones.



**Here's how it works:**

- In the folder, combine all of the content that is particularly important for new trainees and provides with especially good guidance. Avoid providing too much information and overwhelming the trainees. Instead, focus your attention on the essentials. Update the folder regularly.
- Handout the training folder on the first training day, at the latest. The training folder can also be issued prior to the start of training – that is during recruiting phase 4, "concluding the contract". This gives the future trainees advance information about the training and allows them to prepare themselves better for the first days of training.
- Actively use some elements of the training folder (the training plan, for instance) as an instrument to accompany training, in order to reflect on the learning process.



**What information is in the training folder?**

Here are some examples of the contents of a training folder:

**Information about the company**

- The information about the company offering the training (corporate goals, industry, history, services, products, etc.)
- Corporate culture
- Organization chart
- What to do in case of illness or other problems
- Corporate benefits (e.g. bonuses, excursions)
- Important interpersonal rules within the company

**Information about the training and work area**

- Overview of key points of contact during training
- Training objectives
- Important information on the sequence of training
- Training plan/job description
- Outline of the rights and obligations of trainees
- Training requirements
- Information about vocational school and attending vocational schools
- Safety instructions and rules
- Professional development opportunities for trainees
- Training documentation (vocational school certificates, additional training, documentation of training and feedback sessions, etc.)

**3.7.3 Welcome day**

The first training day or the first week of training is a challenge for new trainees - it is often a pleasant experience, but it can also be a time of fear and anxiety. Structured welcome days are an excellent way to receive young people welcome them to the company and at the same time help them get their bearings. Depending on how they are designed welcome activities can last one or more days. Their central task is to lay the ideal cornerstone for integrating new trainees into the company.

**Here's how it works:**

- Develop an agenda for the welcome days. This defines the content, schedule and responsibilities associated with the activities. Consider the needs and information requirements that new trainees have at the start of training.

## How do I design a welcome day?



### Welcome

Infuse the next chapter of your trainees' lives with meaning by receiving them with an official greeting and welcome from corporate management and supervisors. Make this a festive act.

### Company tour

Give the new trainees a guided tour through the company, showing them the key areas and departments.

### Getting acquainted

Introduce the newcomers to their trainers, key colleagues, supervisors, and where applicable their training sponsors. Introduce key points of contact. When making the introductions, each person should introduce him or herself, giving their names, positions, and stating what they do.

### Introduction to training

Review the sequence of training and the training plan with the new trainees. Present the content of the training program and discuss expectations and requirements. Take this opportunity to learn more about the interests and wishes of the new trainees. Introduce them to key company processes and policies (e.g. lunch breaks and vacation time).

### Introduction to the workplace

Show the new trainees their workstations and their most important tools and supplies. Present them with their work clothes and various access codes (e.g. computer passwords) and keys. Explain to employees how to use their workstations (how to use the telephone, for example).

### Teambuilding

If you have hired a number of trainees, give them time to get to know each other. Do this with casual activities, such as icebreaker games or scavenger hunts. When designing such activities, get inspiration from some of your senior trainees.

### Concluding discussion

At the end of the welcome days, discuss how the initial entry into the training program will proceed for everyone involved. Give the new trainees an opportunity to ask questions. At this point, any uncertainties or concerns should be addressed. Put the emphasis on initial successes. Provide a glimpse of what will happen over the next few days and weeks.

- If you have not already done so, hand out your welcome packets – with work clothing, supplies, a company brochure, and perhaps a gift certificate for a local restaurant or movie theater or some other small perk.

### 3.7.4 Introductory workshops

In addition to the welcome days, companies can conduct introductory workshops. These are particularly useful when a group of trainees has been hired. Overarching themes that help to ensure a successful training program are discussed in workshops. The workshops help to cushion the shock of the first few days of training. These events allow the trainees to gently ease into the new demands of the working world. The advantage of workshops is that they can address topics in a focused, but entertaining way. This makes them particularly popular among young trainees.

#### Here's how it works:

- Establish the focus topic of the workshop. Consider holding a number of workshops if a range of topics are particularly relevant.



### What are some topics for introductory workshops?

Here are some examples of topics:

- Getting to know each other in the group
  - Teambuilding
  - Building trust between trainer and trainees
  - Reflecting on personal strengths and weaknesses
  - Behavior and finding one's place in the group
  - Conflict management
  - Expectations for training
  - Behavioral requirements in the working world
  - Diversity in the group
  - Multiculturalism
- 
- Think about the format. When doing so, specifically consider whether the workshop should be conducted with outside help. In any case, consult with those responsible for training. Also, specify the venue. Often this will be a location outside the company.
  - Choose a casual format. The workshop should be fun for the new trainees. You should therefore space out working phases. Make time for leisure activities (a pick-up ball game for instance). Particularly, when planning a multi-day workshop, leisure activities should be incorporated into the agenda.

#### 3.7.5 Teambuilding activities

You can promote the integration of new trainees into a team with a number of team-building measures. There is a wide range of possibilities: group day trips or sports activities are very well suited to this, as are group meals, concerts or movie nights. Activities like this at the beginning of training build confidence between trainees and their trainers, in addition to strengthening the team.

#### 3.7.6 Trainee sponsors

In training sponsorships, trainees in more advanced years provide guidance to new trainees. The newcomers are integrated into the company and offered assistance both on a human and a professional level by „their own kind“ and at their own level. Questions, uncertainties or even fears are much easier to talk about with sponsors, improving the general well-being of new arrivals in the company. Sponsorships are a win-win situation for all sides. After all, the older trainees in the sponsorship program develop or strengthen skills such as responsibility or helpfulness. The program also relieves the company's trainers of certain duties.

##### Here's how it works:

- Select sponsors from among the trainees in the upper years. The selectees should be capable for the tasks of sponsorship both in professional and human terms. Part of this must be a keen interest in assuming the role of sponsor.
- Specify the duties of the older sponsors and provide them precise guidance on their role. Key tasks include supporting professional orientation, as well as social integration into the team. However, sponsors can also offer assistance in finding an apartment, getting to know the city, and other challenges associated with the beginning of training. Make the sponsorship duties into personal goals of the sponsors. Involve sponsors in the newcomers' feedback meetings.
- Initiate the sponsorship program by allowing both sides to get to know one another in a suitable context. A welcome day offers a good opportunity to do this. It is beneficial to begin sponsorships even before the beginning of training – in recruiting phase four, „concluding the contract,“ for instance. This enables sponsors to give valuable tips even before the first day and counteract concerns. Every newcomer will be assigned a sponsor.

- Support your sponsors and let them know how to respond to problematic situations. Show appreciation for sponsorship efforts.

### 3.7.7 Feedback discussions

In the first few months of training – in the probationary period – both the company and the new trainees carefully review their selection decisions. Regular feedback meetings between the two sides are an important instrument for examining how successful training is proceeding. In this context, both sides can indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied they are, and as a result, both sides can counteract unfavorable developments.

It is therefore important from the very beginning to build feedback routines into day-to-day activities. This may take the form of casual feedback from trainers at the end of the workday or work week, for instance, feedback upon reaching a milestone, or upon scoring a major success. The discussions should center on building a consensus as to which activities were performed well and which need improvement.

In addition, more comprehensive and structured feedback sessions should focus on long-term developments and further prospects. Such a conversation lasts one to two hours. It should ideally take place after the first two months of the training period but not later than the end of the probationary period. When problems occur in training structured feedback sessions should be initiated immediately. A subsequent session should be carried out 2 to 6 months after the initial feedback session.

#### **Here's how it works:**

- Develop a guideline for structured feedback sessions. Initiate a schedule of regular feedback sessions.
- Augment the discussion with additional tools, such as an evaluation catalog. The catalog should be based on the qualification profile and it helps you assess current performance, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of your new trainees. Actively refer to the catalog during the feedback session.
- At the beginning of the discussion, lay out the rules of the game. Emphasize that both sides have an equal right to speak and air their views.
- Do not skimp on praise during the session. Make your criticism as specific as possible. The trainees must have a clear understanding of how you rate their current performance.
- At the end of the discussion summarize the key points. Offer prospects for development and generate an agreement on targets for the coming period.

### 3.8 Involvement of other target groups

It is no longer adequate to focus trainee recruitment efforts on perspective trainees alone. Golden rule number 16 of contemporary trainee recruitment states that companies should also involve secondary target groups, so called multipliers, in recruiting.

Such target groups include first and foremost the parents of potential training candidates. A large majority of young people seek career guidance from their parents. Parents are also considered as a particularly helpful source of information for deciding how to continue their education. As such, parents have a profound influence on the professional behavior of their children. Therefore, companies that can convince parents of the attractiveness of their training programs have made a huge step toward recruiting young people to their programs.

Parents can perform two crucial tasks in the recruiting process:

1. They can urge their children to pursue in-company training. At first, they do this in a general way once they understand the benefits of in-company training and explain it to their children. In addition, they may promote certain professions if they become acquainted with them and find them to be attractive. Finally, they may promote specific companies if they see them as offering extraordinary training.
2. Parents can help to prevent drop-outs. They do this when they know the company offering the training and are convinced of its quality.

Companies are therefore encouraged to create opportunities for discussion and activate parents. After all, parents will not do this automatically but companies can motivate them to do this. Companies have a broad range of instruments with which to do this. Many of the recruitment instruments presented in this handbook can also be used for parents. A few minor adjustments are all that is needed for companies to adapt to addressing this special target group. Even using just a few of these instruments to address parents decisively increases the companies chances of successful recruiting.

Instruments for winning over parents can be used in just about any recruitment phase. The following **GRAPHIC 24** provides an overview of the options available to companies.

#### 3.8.1 Parents' nights

Parents' nights are an effective instrument for making contact with parents. They can be used in different phases of recruitment. In recruiting phase 2, Acquisition, parents' nights mainly serve to acquaint parents with the options and opportunities in-company training offers. In recruitment phase 4, Concluding the contract, and Phase 5, Integration, they convince the new trainees' parents of the quality of the company offering training, so as to avoid potential drop-outs. This gives parents an opportunity to participate in the professional and personal development of their children while at the same time gaining an insight into the real world of their children's training.

##### **How it works in the acquisition phase:**

- Review your options for making contact with parents. Access to parents is a crucial hurdle that must be overcome. You can raise awareness of your event by passing out flyers that shopping malls, pedestrian zones or other places where people gather. Your networks may provide access to other companies and players. However, partnerships with schools are more promising way to reach larger groups of parents.
- Organize a parents' night with your partner school on the topic of career guidance. Your partner school will welcome this event in a new environment because it is more exciting for everyone involved than they typical parents' night at school and because the atmosphere is more casual. With the school, issue a joint invitation to the event.

**GRAPHIC 24**Measures for  
activating parents

Recruitment phase	Parent-related tasks	Instruments (examples)
<b>Acquisition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of the benefits of job training</li> <li>• Educate about training processes and procedures</li> <li>• Publicize company as an outstanding training organization</li> </ul> → Result: parents promote training	Parents' nights ( <i>see Ch. 3.8.1</i> ) Training brochures/flyers ( <i>see Ch. 3.4.1.4</i> ) Media reports ( <i>see Ch. 3.4.1.6</i> ) Competitions ( <i>see Ch. 3.4.1.10</i> ) Open company day ( <i>see Ch. 3.4.2.1</i> ) Company tours ( <i>see Ch. 3.4.2.2</i> ) Training fairs ( <i>see Ch. 3.4.2.5</i> ) Career orientation days ( <i>see Ch. 3.4.2.6</i> ) Employee referral programs ( <i>see Ch. 3.4.5.3</i> )
<b>Selection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicize company as an outstanding training organization</li> <li>• Bring parents on board</li> <li>• Forge a bond between parents and the company</li> </ul> → Result: Parents prevent training drop-outs	Participation of parents in the interview ( <i>see Ch. 3.5.5</i> )
<b>Concluding the contract</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicize company as an outstanding training organization</li> <li>• Bring parents on board</li> <li>• Forge a bond between parents and the company</li> </ul> → Result: Parents prevent training drop-outs	Parents' nights ( <i>see Ch. 3.8.1</i> ) Participation in contract signing, even with adult trainees ( <i>see Ch. 3.6.1</i> ) Invitation to welcome events ( <i>see Ch. 3.6.2</i> )
<b>Integration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicize company as an outstanding training organization</li> <li>• Bring parents on board</li> <li>• Forge a bond between parents and the company</li> </ul> → Result: Parents prevent training drop-outs	Parents' nights ( <i>see Ch. 3.8.1</i> ) Delivering the training folder ( <i>see Ch. 3.7.2</i> )

- Consider what you want to achieve with the evening, and design it accordingly. Prepare an agenda approximately 90 minutes long. Following an introduction and overview of the company, tours of the operation and activities which offer a glimpse of what the company does are particularly well suited to such events. Take the opportunity to educate parents about career opportunities within the company. It is critical to show parents that in-company training is just as valuable as a college education. You may want to offer tips for the training application and make sure parents understand the company's key concerns. Close the evening with a discussion.
- Give parents the opportunity to meet your trainees and thus get a first-hand look at your program.
- Think about inviting teachers from the school to parents' night. After all, your program may be equally interesting for both groups.
- And finally, if you are unable to invite parents to your company you can try to take part in a regular parents' night at a school to advertise your training positions.

**How it works in the contract-signing and integration phases:**

- Extend an invitation through your future or new trainees to a parents' night. Discuss this in advance with the trainees and make sure they consent (particularly with adult trainees). Not all of the trainees will be enthusiastic about your plans. You should therefore thoroughly explained to them the purpose of the parents' night and how everybody benefits. Encourage your young people to be proud of their achievements („show your parents all the great things you are doing“).
- Even among the parents, not all of them will be excited about a parents' night. You should therefore make it clear in the invitation how the event benefits both parents and young people. Explain that you are doing this in the interest of transparency and communication.
- Create an agenda for the parents' night. Use the above descriptions as a guide, but focus less on aspects of career guidance and more on the sequence, the content and the conditions of training. Show parents how training takes place at your company, what the professional life of their children involves and all of the great products and services created as a result.
- Actively involve the children of the parents and let them show off familiar work areas or products.
- You should also provide for their physical well-being. Round out the evening with a dinner or buffet for everyone involved.

**3.8.2 Project days & internships for teachers**

Parents are not the only groups of people who can advocate for training. Other groups include relatives, teachers, principals, general education schools, vocational school teachers, employment office representatives, and career guidance counselors. The company can recruit anyone who serves as a role model for young people – athletes, musicians, successful business people – to promote in-company training.

The secondary target groups can also be addressed by the numerous instruments discussed in this handbook. Project days or internships are other examples of instruments that can be directed at teachers or school administrations.

Project days are a form of practical training for teachers. This is an activity which explores specific topics over the course of a single day. Teacher internships offer the teaching staff of schools to work in a company for periods ranging from a few days to several months. During this time, participants gain a general overview of the company as well as deeper technical knowledge. Depending on the links of the internship, they may even be involved in the day-to-day business.

While the primary goal of such events is to impart practical knowledge for teaching, they can also strengthen ties with schools. Teachers can either recommend the company has a place to seek a training position or act as door-openers among students for numerous recruitment efforts.

**Here's how it works:**

- Appoint a specialist in your company to be in charge of the teachers and knowledge exchange.
- In coordination with the teaching staff, create a concept specifying tasks and a time frame.
- Offer competent support and ensure that your staff deals with the teachers in an open and respectful manner.
- In a wrap-up session discussed the project day or the internship and issue a certificate of completion.
- Afterward, maintain contact with the teaching staff and make an explicit request for them to help recruit trainees.



A woman with her hair in a bun and a man with glasses and a beard are leaning over a workbench, focused on a task. The woman is using a tool to work on a small component. The man is assisting her. In the background, other people are visible, suggesting a workshop or training environment. The scene is brightly lit and has a professional, educational feel.

# Fundamentals of trainee recruitment

4

## 4.1 How do I present my company as an attractive training organization?

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Note Golden Rules 5 and 6:

First, make a strong impression as a training organization.  
Strengthen your marketing efforts for training programs.

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SMEs often face special challenges presenting themselves as attractive employers and training organizations. Generally, larger companies are more likely than smaller ones to be associated with high-quality training opportunities. SMEs are often unable to offer the qualities of larger companies, such as an international presence, global market leadership, or the manufacturing of well-known products. Young people also have a special attraction to companies they know, which can be a hurdle for SMEs. Nevertheless, SMEs can market themselves successfully as training organizations.

### ■ An employer brand that appeals to young people

A positive employer brand that makes a lasting impression in the hearts and minds of young people, is a key element of trainee recruitment. The implementation is critical, as well as communicating attractive working and training conditions. In this context, SMEs can capitalize on their classical strong points to be especially appealing to young people:

- The personnel in SMEs are often involved in important corporate decisions
- New employees, including junior staff, can independently shape work processes and rapidly assume greater responsibility
- Short decision paths
- Varied activities
- A strong value system, which also includes social responsibility (for the region, for instance)
- Informal working atmosphere

In addition, companies need to develop and maintain unique selling points - distinctive characteristics specific to the company's - and communicate these clearly to the broader public. Key questions in this context are: What makes my company stand out as a training organization? How can I best distinguish my company as a training organization from other training organizations? What makes my company attractive to potential trainees?

### ■ Young people decide what training is attractive

SMEs will be successful when they can answer the above questions with a view to the expectations and interests of potential trainees and implement them in the day-to-day work of the company. Young people consider training attractive when:

- A solid training program is offered. The emphasis is on acquiring technical skills in a stimulating learning environment. Diverse and varied tasks are particularly important to young people. The level of difficulty should always be adapted to the young peoples' level of knowledge. Trainees should do „real work“ in the company and be involved in large-scale tasks. Space to grow is important in learning: independent planning, performance, and assessment of work should therefore be part of the training program.
- They must receive positive support. Competent and committed trainers who are regularly available in the workplace for instruction and guidance, play a central role. Attention, care, appreciation and continuous feedback - especially praise for good performance - from instructors are particularly important to young people.
- Future prospects must be good. This includes good chances of gaining employment following training, long-term job security, further training opportunities after initial training, as well as professional development and advancement opportunities.
- The working atmosphere must be good. Companies with esprit de corps and respectful treatment of staff, particularly trainees, carry the day in this regard.

- The training conditions must be right. An adequate training stipend plays an important role, as do the length of the training period, and compensation for overtime. Young people like easily accessible workplaces. Companies can score additional points with family-friendly facilities.
- The company must make an overall favorable impression. Young people attach importance to a great corporate culture (social, environmental or ethical) corporate values, meaningful activities as well as a good reputation, but also to the type and quality of products and services they will help create as a trainee.

#### ■ Commitment and innovation are a must

The better companies address the fields mentioned above with a range of opportunities and the better they communicate it, the deeper the impression they leave on young people. The opportunities of SMEs to make themselves appealing are unlimited and finding them is a matter of commitment and innovation. Here are some examples of attractive training opportunities for young people:

- Opportunities to acquire additional qualifications, in addition to training
- Opportunities for further professional development, such as a masters degree or dual studies
- Opportunities for special target groups in the form of part-time training or tutoring, for instance
- special support structures - sponsoring and mentoring programs, for instance
- Public awards and “best-of” honors - e.g. bonus payments, trainee of the month, etc.
- Training days with a special program, such boss-for-a-day opportunities for trainees to take on the role of management and run the company
- Special phases of training – e.g. exchange programs that let trainees learn the trade at branch offices in other cities or even other countries
- Financial perks, such as mileage compensation for the commute to the workplace
- Special conditions, such as excellent equipment in the workplace or use of new (digital) technologies
- Special teambuilding exercises
- Family-friendly activities, such as home office opportunities

Companies win out when they come up with imaginative ways to extend this list and successfully communicate it. Many of these activities require neither additional financial resources nor special personnel knowledge. Rather, the point is to address the attitudes and ambitions of the next generation. SMEs can win over trainees with a culture that puts a high premium on training and places young people and their professional and private development at center stage.

#### ■ The strategy for making a company appealing is called training marketing

As part of personnel marketing, training marketing contains all the activities directed at securing the recruitment of an adequate number of qualified training candidates. The goal of training marketing is to raise awareness of the company as an attractive training organization within the target group so that it is sought-after and chosen by the right candidates. Training marketing is promising to the extent that it strongly caters to the needs and expectations of potential trainees.

Like marketing in general, training marketing involves activities in the following areas:

- **Product:** The central product is in-company training culminating in professional qualifications and quality training. In addition, the training stipend, additional qualifications, prospects for subsequent employment, the image of the industry as a whole, and the company are important.
- **Price:** This is connected with the qualification profile demanded of applicants.
- **Communication:** This area covers advertising and public relations activities, hands-on opportunities in the company, such as internships, ambassador and mentor programs, as well as building and maintaining partnerships and networks.
- **Distribution:** Here the concern is with dissemination via multipliers such as parents and teachers, but also career counselors, chambers, industry representatives, etc.

## 4.2 What expectations of young people should I prepare myself for?

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**Note Golden Rule 8:**  
Think like your applicants.

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If companies want to attract trainees successfully, they have to adapt to the expectations young people have about work and training. But what exactly are these expectations?

■ **Young people have high expectations**

Working in an attractive profession is one of the leading priorities and the value system of young people. High expectations are derived from this high priority. The young generation attaches great importance to good training quality, and there is little willingness to make compromises in this respect. Young people are accustomed to having their needs catered to and expect your company to do this as well.

■ **Enjoyable work is the highest priority**

What young people most want from their employment is work that is fun and fulfilling. They want jobs that match their skills and interests in which they can enjoy recognition. Friendly colleagues in a good working environment are the key foundation. In addition, they have a special interest in job security as well as good chances for success and a future. Increasingly, work-life balance issues are playing a key role.

■ **Training should focus in particular on the real-world work environment**

Good training for young people should be designed to prepare them ideally for the real-world occupation that awaits them. As such, they want to be highly involved in the work of the company and not just perform menial tasks. Practical varied tasks and the opportunity to engage in comprehensive training are key criteria. At the same time, young people also want support in the form of a fixed point of contact within the company. Of course, a reasonable training stipend is also part of a good training opportunity.

■ **Generation diversity**

But be careful because there is no such thing as a typical young person with specific expectations and needs. Rather, every young person marches to the beat of a very different drum. Companies should therefore determine the needs of their specific target group and conform their training opportunities to those needs.

## 4.3 How can I become a player in career counseling?

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**Note Golden Rule 12:**  
Optimize access to your target groups.

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In the struggle to find qualified candidates for training opportunities, companies cannot rely completely on other stakeholders, such as employment offices, or career and education counselors, to offer career guidance. Rather, they too must take an active role in this field. After all, the better they succeed in influencing the career choice behavior of young people in their favor, the more likely they will be to fill their training vacancies with qualified trainees.

### ■ Anticipate uncertainties and concerns of young people

For many young people, the career guidance phase is connected with numerous challenges and concerns. Many students are unsure whether they can cope with the demands of today's professional world or of in-company training. The fear of choosing the wrong profession is widespread. Many have no concrete ideas about what they want to do professionally and career choices are difficult for them.

Companies that actively provide support and guidance have a clear advantage in trainee recruitment. Despite the flood of existing information, young people often feel ill-informed about their professional opportunities. The situation becomes even more precarious considering that the greatest uncertainties surround the most important questions, the question of which profession they are best suited for or which professions have the best prospects in the future.

Here, companies can fill information gaps. In doing so they can dispel uncertainties and concerns among youth and at the same time open up outstanding opportunities to recruit young people for their training programs.

### ■ Use channels that make young people a source of information

The success of businesses as stakeholders in career guidance depends largely on them adapting to the outlook of young people. In doing so, it is advisable to use the information channels young people actually use when searching for a suitable career.

The **GRAPHIC 25** illustrates these information channels in order of importance to young people. In principle, companies can take advantage of all of these information channels with the right recruitment instruments, but some channels are more important than others. For instance, internships, the exchange of experience with professionals, and information on the internet play a key role for young people seeking career guidance. As stakeholders in career guidance, companies should therefore focus on three fields of activity:

- Place a high importance on hands-on practical opportunities: An internship in a company is perceived by young people as the most helpful way, by far, to orient themselves professionally. Companies should therefore make sure that they regularly offer high-quality internships to a significant number of students and that the internships give them a taste of the profession.
- Increased outreach through multipliers. Conversations with parents are among the most frequent sources of information for young people. Teachers and other individuals with relevant practical experience are often asked for advice. Companies should therefore increase their use of such multipliers and win them over as advocates. Creating opportunities to provide multipliers with relevant information and convince them of the quality of the company as a training organization, are important tasks in the context of trainee recruitment.
- Create a strong internet presence. Young people are "digital natives" and therefore use the internet extensively for career guidance. An informative website that appeals to young people is therefore a must. Vacant training positions should always be searchable on the internet. Other digital products are plus.

### ■ Tapping into new information channels

The fact that many information channels are used so little by young people is often a problem of supply. It is not only the size but also the quality of some information services that make them inadequate for reaching out to young people. Companies should therefore not conclude that little-used information channels should be eliminated. After all, the principle still applies that the more information channels are used, the more potential future trainees the company can reach. Thus, a key recruiting measure can be tapping into information channels and also finding completely new, original paths of communication to young people. Even rarely used channels can be an ideal recruitment instrument if well implemented - well implemented, meaning that the young people feel well informed and oriented.

**GRAPHIC 25**

Channels of information used by young people and their relation to recruitment instruments

\* Rated by young people as particularly helpful

Degree of use by young people:

- 76-100%
- 51-75%
- 26-50%
- 0-25%

Information channels used by young people	Examples of recruitment instruments a company could use
<b>Discussions with parents*</b>	Parents' nights (see Ch. 3.8.1) School partnerships (see Ch. 3.4.5.1) Open company day (see Ch. 3.4.2.1) Training ambassadors (see Ch. 3.4.4.1)
Talking with friends and acquaintances	Employee referral programs (see Ch. 3.4.5.3)
<b>Internet search*</b>	Trainee careers website (see Ch. 3.4.1.1) Training blog (see Ch. 3.4.1.2) Online vacancy announcements (see Ch. 3.4.1.3)
<b>Company internship*</b>	Company internships (see Ch. 3.4.3.1)
Discussions with other family members	Employee referral programs (see Ch. 3.4.5.3)
Discussions with teachers	Project days/internships for teachers (see Ch. 3.8.2) School partnerships (see Ch. 3.4.5.1) Open company day (see Ch. 3.4.2.1) Training ambassadors (see Ch. 3.4.4.1)
Brochures, information material	Training brochures/flyers (see Ch. 3.4.1.4) Other promotional materials (see Ch. 3.4.1.5)
<b>Discussions with people who work/ worked in the field*</b>	Open company day (see Ch. 3.4.2.1) Company internships (see Ch. 3.4.3.1) Employee referral programs (see Ch. 3.4.5.3)
<b>Discussions with people to our training/ trained in the field*</b>	School partnerships (see Ch. 3.4.5.1) Open company day (see Ch. 3.4.2.1) Training ambassadors (see Ch. 3.4.4.1) Employee referral programs (see Ch. 3.4.5.3)
TV reporting	Media reports (see Ch. 3.4.1.6) Training campaigns (see Ch. 3.4.1.9)
Job Fairs	Training fairs (see Ch. 3.4.2.5)
Articles in journals and magazines	Media reports (see Ch. 3.4.1.6) Training campaigns (see Ch. 3.4.1.9)
Employment office	Have notion with the employment agency (see Ch. 6)
Social networks	Social media (see Ch. 3.4.1.7)
<b>Information directly from the company*</b>	Trainee careers website (see Ch. 3.4.1.1) Telephone hotline (see Ch. 3.4.1.8)
Company information days	Open company day (see Ch. 3.4.2.1)

Source of information channels: ALLENSBACH DEMOSCOPICS INSTITUTE: The McDonald's TRAINING STUDY 2013: Practically happy: Trainees between the couch and a career. A representative survey of young people aged 15 to 25 years, Munich 2013 [in German]

#### 4.4 How can I communicate successfully with young people?

Note Golden Rule 9:

Convince applicants on both the factual and the emotional level.

■ **Adapt content to the interests of young people.**

The candidate-friendly in every respect. What that means is that, in terms of content, companies have to orient themselves strictly on the information needs of young people and address all of the issues that make training attractive to young people.

■ **Convey key messages.**

Adhere to minimum standards when it comes to content and provide information on the company and its products, professions for which training is offered, the tasks involved with those professions, concrete pictures of day-to-day work, required qualifications, the likelihood of landing a job after training, as well as further training opportunities in the company.

■ **Communicate in language they don't people understand.**

Speak to your audience as equals – you may even decide to address them informally. Choose a writing style that is easy to understand and abstain from technical terms and company-specific jargon. Adapt the language to the level of young people with a limited understanding of your business. Discussed topics in an interesting and entertaining way. Fresh language and humor always pay off. This reduces inhibitions and builds trust.

■ **Keep it real.**

Young people want to have genuine, real-world impressions. They want credible information and are not interested in reading polished advertising copy or seeing pictures of models. You should therefore keep the text and pictures real and convey a sense of your corporate culture. Present in an honest light what defines your company as an employer and a training organization.

■ **Be specific.**

Provide detailed descriptions. Give detailed information about the traineeships available, the sequence of training, the team, and the work environment. This gives young people a feel for the training opportunity and gives them a realistic picture of it. Avoid sweeping generalizations. Focus on key messages and convey accurate information.

■ **Make the information tangible.**

Make the company and the training situation immediately accessible to young people. Do not simply make claims; instead offer concrete examples and make your messages vivid. One way to do this is to present pictures of real people in real situations in the company showing how people work there and what the workplace looks like. Bolster your text with visuals. A virtual tour or a short film from the company or a typical training day give young people and immediate experience the company and the training environment.

■ **Give your company a face.**

Make sure to introduce your trainers and if possible training sponsors. Show them not only in their role in the company, but put human face on them.

■ **Present testimonials.**

Interviews or short films with trainees or former trainees talking about the first days of their training, life as a trainee, or further training following the program provide deeper insights and authenticity.

■ **Advertise with exciting stories from everyday training.**

Has one of your trainees spent a couple of weeks in a foreign company? Have you taken on and at-risk youth who has flourished? Do you offer training to college dropouts or older people? Are you training a refugee or asylum-seeker? Do training sponsors go the extra mile with trainees in your company? Then report it. After all, these stories capture attention and set you apart from other companies.

■ **Show that training is fun.**

Fun at work is a top priority for young people. You should therefore show in both words and in pictures that although training in your company is a serious matter, there is room for fun and humor in the daily routine. Show that there are interesting, fulfilling and meaningful tasks in your business, even for young professionals.

#### ■ Talk to both genders.

Always make sure that your text and your images appeal to both genders. Prevent gender stereotypes in career selection. This applies even more to professions in which one gender is disproportionately represented. Show that boys can be good teachers and girls can make great electro-mechanical engineers.

### 4.5 How can I use trainees in the recruitment process?

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**Note Golden Rule 17:**

**Rely on your trainees.**

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The trainees in your company are not much older than the young people that you want to recruit as future trainees. They have similar interests, concerns and uncertainties about the transition to working life and they speak the same language. Nobody can describe training as up close and personal as those who are currently in training. They are therefore ideally suited to be intermediaries in the recruitment process. They can be used in a number of different ways:

#### ■ Trainees inform future trainees

On many platforms trainees have the opportunity to report on their training and the company providing their training. This may take the form of direct contact — during school visits, that open-company days and company tours, at training fairs, or career guidance days, for instance. Corporate blogs written by trainees can be used to communicate with young people. Trainees can also communicate through career websites for trainees or through training brochures. All of these forums allow trainees to report from their own unique perspective in more or less detail about their training – on the following topics, for instance:

- How is the training structured?
- What expectations are placed on the trainees?
- Who supports the trainees during the training, and what makes the trainers/supervisors tick?
- What happens on the first day of training?
- What are the details of a typical training day?
- What exactly do you learn during the training program?
- What skills do you have after the first year of training/once the training program is complete?
- How are trainees prepared for exams?
- What career paths are possible after training?
- What is fun about the training?
- What is the corporate culture like?

#### ■ Trainees inform multipliers

Trainees are also very well-suited to delivering training-related information to other target groups – in particular, parents and teachers. Parents' nights, job fairs, or open-company days are excellent opportunities to do this.

#### ■ Trainees actively support future or new trainees

In the context of sponsorship or mentor programs, experienced trainees can offer support to new trainees entering the program. The focus of these activities is often the probationary period of the new trainees; however, these programs can begin well before the start of training and last far beyond the probationary period. In addition to the professional assistance, experienced trainees can help familiarize the new employee with the company. In this way, the company creates an atmosphere in which new trainees quickly feel comfortable and can be easily integrated into the company.



Another possibility is to use trainees to supervise interns. In this role, they give potential applicants for training positions a realistic look into the company and at the same time monitor their professional development.

#### ■ Trainees recruit future trainees

Trainees have friends, former schoolmates, young relatives and innumerable contacts in social media. There are likely to be young people among them who would also make qualified candidates for training program. Companies offering training should take advantage of this source and systematically encourage trainees to recommend the company in their circle of friends and relatives, as well as actively recruit new trainees. Employee referral programs that offer incentives for such recruitments are also a useful instrument to use with trainees.

#### ■ Trainees directly support the company

Trainees can also provide very direct support to a company's recruiting effort. Specifically, they can advise the company in the design of new recruitment instruments, such as career training websites or flyers. Their feedback ensures that the company delivers the right perspective, tone and information needs of young people.

In addition, trainees can help to build the business network by contacting their former teachers and thus helping to establish school partnerships.

#### ■ Success factors for the use of trainees

Trainees who are active in trainee recruitment often carry out important symbolic tasks for the company. For this work to be successful, the company must carefully target its efforts.

**Selection:** It is advisable to choose the best performing and most dedicated trainees. They should be friendly, open and good communicators – and they must be enthusiastic about the position.

**Training:** Introductory training is critical, especially where trainees come into direct contact with target groups. This should include communication, presentation or moderation techniques. The selected trainees should be empowered to provide information on all matters relating to training. Prior to their first assignment, they should therefore receive a comprehensive input as to the structure and content of training and career opportunities.

**Tempo of assignments:** Ideally, there should be one to three assignments per trainee, per month. It is important to ensure that trainees are not overwhelmed by their additional duties and, if necessary, they should be relieved of some of their other duties.

**Supervision:** Over the course of their work, the trainees should be supervised in their duties.

**Rewards:** This special assignment the trainees take on should be rewarded with a certificate, public honors, or a bonus.

## 4.6 Who are the trainees of the future?

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Note Golden Rule 11:

Open up to new target groups.

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Companies need strategies to counteract the demographic decline in applicants. A partial strategy is to increase consideration of groups of people who have so far been scarcely or in adequately taken into account.

**Young people with problems getting started:** This group includes young people with few or no qualifications, those with poor grades or young people who have already failed to secure a training position. This is a promising target group, especially for companies who offer training in low-demand occupations. After all, many of these young people stay on the job market every year without any prospects. And yet, young people with poor grades in school often show astounding performance in dual training programs. Opening up to this target group calls on companies to have a willingness for compromise on their hiring criteria. Motivation and personality traits of young people must be ranked higher than grades. It may also be necessary to offer additional support, such as tutoring programs. Various governmental funding instruments are available to companies to overcome the additional demands and financial costs (such as trainee assistants through the employment agency, opportunities for entry qualification preparation, and, in Germany, the assisted training program).

**Youths with an immigrant background:** This is another group of young people with limited career opportunities. Youths with an immigrant background are affected by discriminatory corporate recruitment practices and therefore underrepresented in the training system. Nevertheless, they represent great potential for cooperative training programs, because the number of young migrants is rising. And companies can benefit from both the language skills and the intercultural experience of this group. Here, too, companies should rethink their qualification criteria with a critical eye. Successful recruitment programs ideally put a special focus on public education efforts and involve parents, who frequently consider in-company training as a second-class system. Companies should contact the employment agency to determine whether public funding is available to assist with educating these target groups.

**Young people with disabilities:** This target group is also confronted with problems getting started in a career, often due to the prejudice that disability implies a lack of capability. This is generally untrue, however. To the contrary, young people with disabilities are often highly motivated. Even where limitations exist, they can frequently be offset and mitigated at no additional cost with the help of government incentives. Again, companies should take a hard look at their qualification criteria and assess candidates based on their abilities and knowledge, despite their disability. Vacancy announcements should encourage applications from disabled persons and note when job sites are wheelchair-accessible. Companies can obtain information and assistance with recruiting trainees with disabilities from the employment agency, integration services, or directly from vocational training centers.

**College-preparatory schools:** Young people with higher educational qualifications are an attractive target group for demanding high-demand professions. Their resumes reflect a high level of motivation and willingness to perform. Attracting applicants from this target group requires recruiting measures which market training as an appealing educational alternative and present the advantages of in-company training over higher education. This implies special opportunities, such as additional or double qualifications (e.g. cooperative studies), additional advanced training (e.g. master or certified technician qualifications), and prospects for rapid advancement. Career guidance activities in preparatory schools make good platforms for recruiting efforts.

**College dropouts:** This is a special target group of young people with higher education qualifications. Students often drop out of college as a reaction to a lack of practical knowledge and excessive theory. In addition to greater maturity, people from this group often show above-average motivation and relevant knowledge. In order to attract this target group, companies should explicitly encourage applications by specifying that applicants without a college degree or with checkered careers make desirable candidates. In this case too, companies need to sweeten the pot. This could be done by shortening the training period, which can be approved by certifying organizations under certain conditions.

**Girls and young women:** This group is underrepresented in numerous industries - in particular the MINT professions. Apart from the career choices girls make, this is due to prejudice and a lack of corporate infrastructure. And yet, girls often graduate school with better grades than boys do,

making them attractive for any industry. Companies have to break the habit of hiring stereotypes and judge applicants without regard to gender. Vacancy announcements should specify that applications from girls are encouraged. Pictures of girls on career websites also help. Companies must show that they can also offer a female target group an attractive professional environment. School visits or student internships are an ideal way to introduce girls to the profession.

**Young mothers and fathers:** This group is often at a disadvantage to childless applicants in the application process and are more likely to be affected by a lack of professional certifications. However, companies' concerns about issues such as lack of flexibility or absences due to illness are often unfounded. To the contrary, young parents are highly motivated, well organized, and show a particularly high level of responsibility. Furthermore, the company benefits from a family-friendly image when it offers young parents the opportunity to undergo training. However, young mothers and fathers need the opportunity to reconcile their family responsibilities with a professional training program. Part-time training can make this possible. This allows trainees to work a few hours less in the company. Companies should request information from the employment agency or the responsible chamber about this little-used training option.

**Older applicants:** People more than 29 years old, and who have worked in self-taught, unskilled or unrelated career fields can undergo training as senior trainees. They combine the ambition and motivation of beginners in the profession with the experience and willingness to perform of the older generation. To be attractive to this group, companies have to offer particularly good conditions and higher trainee stipends, often on par with junior employee salaries. Companies can get information about programs and funding from the employment agency or the responsible chambers.

**Training candidates from other regions:** Many young people these days are flexible with regard to the location of their training and are often far more willing to commute or move for training than they were just a few years ago. Companies rarely tap into this potential. Companies themselves can do a great deal to encourage young people from other regions to pursue training far from home. Support structures play a key role, such as covering travel expenses for trips home, flexible working hours to enable home visits, assigning mentors or sponsors, help finding an apartment, or help developing a social network at the new location. Nationwide job fairs are a simple way to recruit trainees on a national level and advertise support opportunities.

**Training candidates from other European countries:** Many young Europeans are interested in training in Germany. They are often highly motivated, and the bold step of leaving their home country proves their strength and motivation. They are therefore attractive even to companies not yet active in international markets. Language skills and cultural skills of young European trainees can also prove valuable to domestic customers, as well as showing a company's cultural diversity. Nevertheless, these young people often require more conceptual and organizational support than young people from other regions of Germany. Companies have to pay special attention to their language development as well as social integration into their new environment. The German employment agency's foreign and professional referral office (ZAV) offers companies support for their European trainee searches. Chambers and educational institutions also offer a diverse range of assistance. Through publicly funded programs like MobiPro-EU youth already receive instruction in the German language in their home countries, and companies have the opportunity to form a first impression of young people in the context of a pre-training internship.

**Young refugees:** The number of young refugees is currently rising dramatically. For companies offering training, they are challenging but highly motivated target group with a great willingness to work. Many have professional qualifications, work experience and multilingualism. Due to their refugee status, however access to the training and job market is limited in various ways by law and is subject to the approval of immigration authorities. For the referral of refugees to training programs, companies can contact the local employment service of the employment office, responsible chambers, or the regional network of the national „Integration through Qualification (IQ)“ program. Companies may receive support in the form of supplements to salaries.

## 4.7 What is essential in the selection of trainees?

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Note Golden Rules 13 & 15:

Set realistic application requirements.

Tailor offers to specific target groups.

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In this time of applicant shortages, companies have to rethink application requirements and hiring criteria for trainees. Studies show that companies are unable to fill their training vacancies when they fail to show flexibility in this regard.

### ■ Report cards are not everything

Graduation and school grades are a classic part of qualification profiles. There is good reason for this because for many training programs solid knowledge of certain school subjects is a necessary prerequisite. Nevertheless, companies should be careful not to give too much weight to a certain level of schooling in placement criteria.

For instance, there are constant complaints that report cards do not adequately reflect the actual level of knowledge of students. Companies therefore are increasingly using theoretic performance tests to measure the specific knowledge of their candidates.

Also, report cards are often a poor measure of suitability for a profession. Every profession has its own set of technical and professional aptitudes, which are a prerequisite for starting a training program. Often other skills, such as the ability to work with one's hands, are far more important than theoretical knowledge learned in school. The presence of such skills difficult to determine by looking at his school transcript. Instead, they can be tested with other selection instruments - specifically, through practical tests as part of the selection process.

Transcripts often reveal little about how someone will behave at work or their further professional development potential. Therefore, a strict adherence to school grades as a strong selection criterion often has problematic consequences. On the one hand, qualified candidates are often eliminated from the selection process due to poor grades; and on the other, young people with good grades may turn out to be unsuitable for the profession. Looked at in the context of society as a whole, the result is that training vacancies remain unfilled and at the same time there is a surplus of people eager for a training position who cannot find one.

Companies would therefore do well to consider educational achievements as one of many selection criteria and, depending on the type of training, place far more weight on other qualification criteria.

### ■ The increasing importance of personal qualities and social skills

Personal qualities and social skills are among qualification criteria which may be given more weight. Today, more and more companies are of the mind that occupational/professional abilities can be developed during training. As such, they have low expectations in this regard from applicants. What matters to them, however, is the presence of qualities that cannot easily be acquired in training, such as motivation, willingness to work, reliability, responsibility, teamwork and the ability to accept criticism. These qualities are a prerequisite for the professional knowledge that can be successfully acquired during training.

Such an approach is based less on existing skills and more on the development potential the candidates bring to the position. Here it is sufficient for candidates to possess a certain potential – such as genuine interest in the profession, curiosity, willingness to learn, thoroughness, or strong communication skills – to be accepted for an apprenticeship.

Companies should round out their qualification profiles for training-vacancy applicants with relevant soft skills. Personal and social skills are becoming ever more important at the expense of scholastic performance and professional/technical skills. Companies with unfilled training vacancies, in particular, should be willing to compromise with regard to scholastic achievement and professional skills, preferring instead to insist upon key soft skills.

However, soft skills are not always easy to demonstrate. Companies can use certain skills assessment tests to do so. Also, hands-on tests, such as a trial day in the company, can be used to evaluate these qualities.

#### ■ Goodbye dream candidate?

Many companies are able to find their dream candidates when filling their training vacancies, despite demographic change and other hurdles. However, numerous other companies can no longer manage to do so. And in the future, even more companies will see their hopes to do so dashed. This results in a situation that presents companies with three courses of action from which to choose:

- A They simply abandon training and risk not being able to cover their own demand for trained professionals in the future.
- B They implement stronger measures to present themselves as attractive training organizations on the training market and thus better attract their dream candidates, a strategy which, in view of the lower birth rates, can promise success for only part of the company.
- C Companies show a greater willingness to compromise and filled their training positions with candidates that do not meet all of their desired standards.

Willingness to compromise on selection criteria is the best course of action because it gives companies access to new target groups of candidates interested in training. Every year so many young people search in vain for a training position – they should be the focus of recruitment efforts. These young people are often not the top candidates. In many cases, they are even considered either not ready for training or unemployable, whether because they have not completed school, because they are immigrants with inadequate command of German, or because their appearance and presentation does not meet traditional expectations.

But even these young people can successfully complete a training program, under certain conditions. What conditions these are depends on the individual needs of the applicant. Sometimes all that is needed is sufficient faith in these young people to trigger a willingness to work which they have never before demonstrated. Frequently, companies have to offer additional support opportunities, such as special professional supervision or tutoring. In other cases, social counseling or psychological stabilization is needed.

These are challenges that companies will increasingly have to deal with, but they are not alone. Companies that accept young people for training who have special difficulties getting started in their professional careers can take advantage of government-sponsored support services (assisted training, for instance).

As important as it is for many companies to show flexibility and a willingness to compromise on selection criteria, it is also important to keep the following in mind: The criteria should never be arbitrary. Well founded selection decisions form the basis of successful trainee recruitment.

Companies are especially well advised to focus on the truly essential abilities – scholastic, occupational/technical, personal, and social – when filling training vacancies. These can sometimes be very modest and in extreme cases reduced to a single criterion: motivation and interest in the profession. However, experience has shown just how much this quality can compensate for a lack of other skills at the start of training and lead to a successful completion.



# Ensuring recruitment success

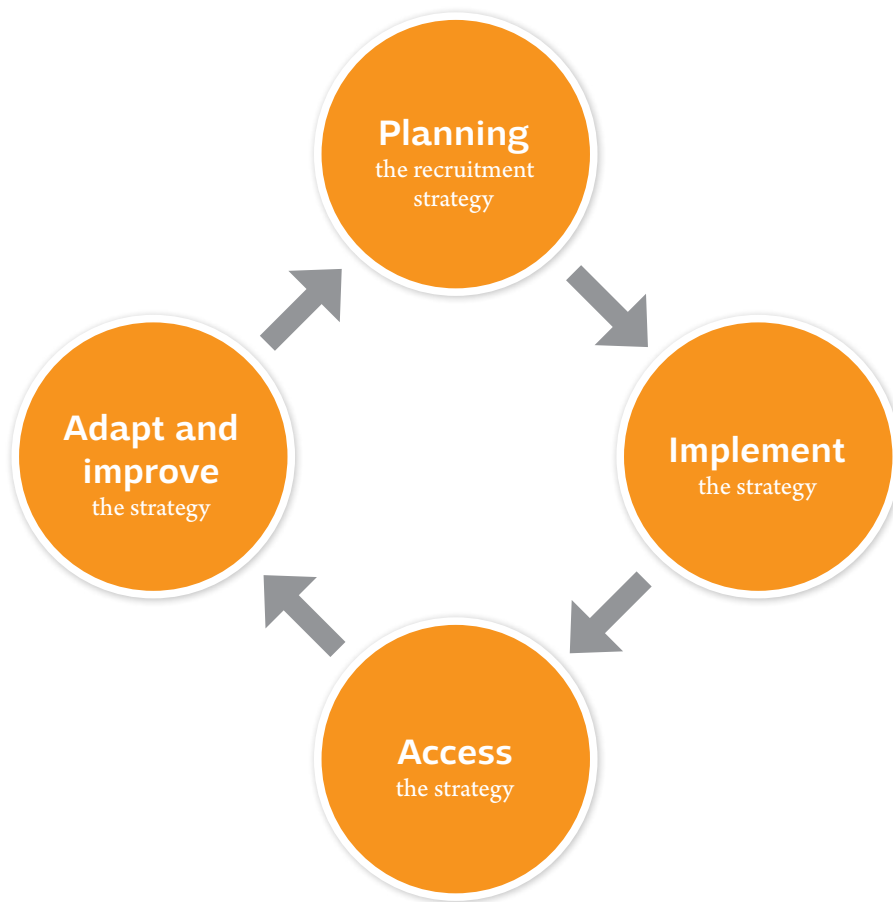
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■ Learning from experience

The ways and means of obtaining trainees are varied. Companies therefore have to be flexible and imaginative. There is no universal rule for the correct way to proceed or which are the best instruments for achieving success in finding trainees. And even once suitable measures are found, they will not necessarily always be a reliable source of trainees for a company. Conditions are subject to change - a competing firm may come along and attract potential candidates; young people may leave the region, for instance, with the result that proven recruitment strategies may fail and realignment may be required.

GRAPHIC 26

Quality cycle  
trainee recruitment



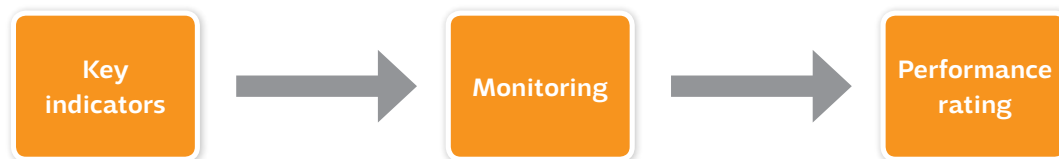
It is therefore important for companies to review their trainee recruitment strategies and measures at regular intervals evaluate and assess their success. Learning from one's own experience and continuous improvement are the cornerstones for successful recruitment of young professionals.

■ Assess successes and failures

But how can companies determine precisely how successful their trainee recruitment efforts are? Every company has some idea of this. They would do well, however to assess their own actions based on precise facts.

They can do this by introducing relevant indicators (target ) and are reviewing them with a monitoring system. The actual figures achieved are then compared with the targets and the results are evaluated. Is my trainee recruitment program working as desired? What, if anything, needs to be changed?

**GRAPHIC 27**  
Trainee recruitment assessment



Trainee recruitment efforts are considered successful when actual figures are as close to target figures as possible. If there is a large deviation, changes have to be made. This is particularly true in the event that not all the available training vacancies are filled and/or the number of trainees completing the program is too low.

The figures can be determined using the following key performance indicators:

**GRAPHIC 28**  
Checklist - Success verification of trainee recruitment efforts

Performance indicators for trainee recruitment	Indicator X achieved - not achieved?
Number of potential applicants reached through recruitment measures	
Total number of applicants for training vacancies	
Number of applicants considered qualified (acceptable applications)	
Number of candidates invited to an interview	
Number of candidates invited to an interview who failed to show	(Indicator 0)
Number of training vacancies not occupied by applicants and following acceptance/ conclusion of the contract	(Indicator 0)
<b>Number of occupied Traineeships</b>	
Number of vacant training positions	(Indicator 0)
<b>Number of personnel successfully completing training</b>	
Number of personnel who dropped out of training prior to completion	(Indicator 0)

Each of these indicators is determined individually by the company, depending on its training requirements. Some of these indicators should naturally tend towards zero, such as the number of vacant training positions.

■ **Initiate improvements**

What can companies offering training do if the target and actual figures drift too far apart and trainee recruitment efforts falter?



## Step 1: Find out where the problem lies.

Thorough problem analysis is the basis for improvement. The following guide shows companies which recruitment phases and which recruiting tasks require improvement.

Problem	Affected recruitment phase(s)	Assessment questions	Solution
<b>Number of potential candidates reached is too low</b>	<b>Acquisition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was a sufficient number acquisition instruments used?</li> <li>- Are these instruments suitable for reaching the target audience?</li> <li>- Were these instruments implemented effectively?</li> <li>- Were parents and other multipliers involved?</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4; Ch. 3.8</i>
<b>Total number of applicants too low</b>	<b>Acquisition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was a sufficient number acquisition instruments used?</li> <li>- Are these instruments suitable for reaching the target audience?</li> <li>- Were the acquisition instruments used capable of increasing awareness and the attractiveness of the company, or should other instruments be used?</li> <li>- Were these instruments implemented effectively?</li> <li>- Were parents and other multipliers involved?</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4; Ch. 3.8</i>
<b>Number of qualified applications too low (quality of the applications too low)</b>	<b>Acquisition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was a sufficient number acquisition instruments used?</li> <li>- Are these instruments suitable for reaching the target audience?</li> <li>- Were the acquisition instruments used capable of increasing awareness and the attractiveness of the company, or should other instruments be used?</li> <li>- Were these instruments implemented effectively?</li> <li>- Were parents and other multipliers involved?</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4; Ch. 3.8</i>
	<b>Selection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Were the selection criteria based on a precise qualification profile?</li> <li>- Were the criteria in the qualification profile adapted to the applicant pool, or were they too high?</li> <li>- Were the selection instruments chosen capable of identifying qualified candidates?</li> <li>- Were these instruments implemented effectively?</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.5</i>

### GRAPHIC 29

*Guide for problem analysis in the event of recruitment problems*

**GRAPHIC 29 (CONT.)**

*Guide for problem analysis in the event of recruitment problems*

Problem	Affected recruitment phase(s)	Assessment questions	Solution
<b>Number of interview no-shows too high</b>	<b>Acquisition</b>	- Were acquisition instruments used that adequately convey the attractiveness of the company?	<i>See Ch. 3.4</i>
	<b>Selection</b>	- Was initial contact with the applicant designed to adequately convey the attractiveness of the company? - Was the initial contact with the applicant designed to adequately convey how much the company values the applicant?	<i>See Ch. 3.5</i>
<b>Number of no-shows following contract signing too high</b>	<b>Acquisition</b>	- Were acquisition instruments used that adequately convey the attractiveness of the company?	<i>See Ch. 3.4</i>
	<b>Selection</b>	- Was the selection process designed to adequately convey the attractiveness of the company? - Was the selection process designed to adequately demonstrate how much the company values the applicant?	<i>See Ch. 3.5</i>
	<b>Concluding the contract</b>	- Was the contract signing designed to adequately convey the attractiveness of the company? - Were targeted instruments used to integrate the future trainee into the company or to form a bond with the future trainee? - Were these instruments implemented effectively? - Were parents involved?	<i>See Ch. 3.6; Ch. 3.8</i>
<b>Number of vacant training positions too high</b>	<b>Acquisition</b>	- Was a sufficient number acquisition instruments used? - Are the instruments suitable for reaching the target audience? - Were the acquisition instruments used capable of increasing awareness and the attractiveness of the company, or should other instruments be used? - Were the instruments implemented effectively? - Were parents and other multipliers involved?	<i>See Ch. 3.4; Ch. 3.8</i>

Problem	Affected recruitment phase(s)	Assessment questions	Solution
Number of vacant training positions too high	<b>Selection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Were the selection criteria have been determined on the basis of a qualification profile?</li> <li>- Were the selection instruments chosen capable of identifying qualified candidates?</li> <li>- Were these instruments implemented effectively?</li> <li>- Was the selection process designed to adequately convey the attractiveness of the company?</li> <li>- Was the selection process designed to adequately demonstrate how much the company values the applicant?</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.5
	<b>Concluding the contract</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was the contract signing designed to adequately convey the attractiveness of the company?</li> <li>- Were targeted instruments used to integrate the future trainee into the company or to form a bond with the future trainee?</li> <li>- Were these instruments implemented effectively?</li> <li>- Were parents involved?</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.6; Ch. 3.8
Zahl der vorzeitig gelösten Ausbildungen zu hoch	<b>Concluding the contract</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Were targeted instruments used to integrate the future trainee into the company or to form a bond with the future trainee?</li> <li>- Were these instruments implemented effectively?</li> <li>- Were parents involved?</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.6; Ch. 3.8
	<b>Integration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Were targeted instruments used to integrate the new trainee into the company and to form a bond with the trainee?</li> <li>- Were these instruments implemented effectively?</li> <li>- Were parents involved?</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.7; Ch. 3.8

**GRAPHIC 29 (CONT.)**

Guide for problem analysis in the event of recruitment problems

**Step 2: Assess your recruitment strategy.**

Weaknesses in the recruitment strategy lead almost inevitably to problems recruiting trainees. Companies can use the overview below to assess the extent to which their strategies are up to the task of trainee recruitment. These requirements follow the golden rules of contemporary trainee recruitment.

**GRAPHIC 30**  
Guidelines for assessing  
recruitment strategy

Recruitment requirements	Affected recruitment phase(s)	Solution
<b>Lay the groundwork</b>		
Are you actively striving to recruit qualified trainees? <i>Golden Rule 1</i>	Planning Acquisition Selection Concluding the contract Integration	See Ch. 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7
Are you giving trainee recruitment a high enough priority and adequate funding? <i>Golden Rule 2</i>	Planning	See Ch. 3.3
Are you using a variety of recruitment instruments? <i>Golden Rule 3</i>	Acquisition Selection Concluding the contract Integration	See Ch. 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7
Is trainee recruitment a task you pursue year-round? <i>Golden Rule 4</i>	Planning	See Ch. 3.3
Is your training marketing strong? <i>Golden Rule 5</i>	Planning	See Ch. 3.3; 4.1
Are you reliably eliminating all of the possible obstacles to application? <i>Golden Rule 6</i>	Acquisition Selection Concluding the contract Integration	See Ch. 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7
Do you give training quality a high priority? <i>Golden Rule 7</i>	Planning	See Ch. 3.3; 4.1
<b>Change outlooks</b>		
Are you seeking out your candidates, and not and not vice versa? <i>Golden Rule 8</i>	Acquisition Selection Concluding the contract Integration	See Ch. 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7
Are you taking into account the needs and interests of your applicants? <i>Golden Rule 9</i>	Acquisition Selection Concluding the contract Integration	See Ch. 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7; 4.2; 4.4

**GRAPHIC 30 (CONT.)**  
*Guidelines for assessing  
 recruitment strategy*

Recruitment requirements	Affected recruitment phase(s)	Solution
Are you selling your training both on an informative and an emotional level? <b>Golden Rule 10</b>	Acquisition Selection Concluding the contract Integration	See Ch. 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7; 4.4
Are you open to new groups of applicants? <b>Golden Rule 11</b>	Planning	See Ch. 3.3; 4.6
Do you know precisely which qualities your preferred candidates possess? <b>Golden Rule 12</b>	Selection	See Ch. 3.5; 4.7
Are the qualifications you desire from your preferred candidates realistic? <b>Golden Rule 13</b>	Selection	See Ch. 3.5; 4.7
<b>Trying new approaches</b>		
Are you using different communication channels? <b>Golden Rule 14</b>	Acquisition	See Ch. 3.4; 4.3
Are you creating individualized opportunities for different groups of applicants? <b>Golden Rule 15</b>	Planning	See Ch. 3.3
Are you involving parents and teachers in recruitment activities? <b>Golden Rule 16</b>	Acquisition Selection Concluding the contract Integration	See Ch. 3.8
Are you involving your trainees in recruitment activities? <b>Golden Rule 17</b>	Acquisition Selection Concluding the contract Integration	See Ch. 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7; 4.5
<b>Think long term</b>		
Are you forging bonds with trainees at an early stage in your company? <b>Golden Rule 18</b>	Concluding the contract Integration	See Ch. 3.6; 3.7
Do you think of trainees as future professionals? <b>Golden Rule 19</b>	Planning	See Ch. 3.3
Are you adequately demonstrating the attractiveness of training? <b>Golden Rule 20</b>	Acquisition Selection Concluding the contract Integration	See Ch. 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7

**Step 3: Assess your recruitment instruments.**

Problems recruiting trainees are not necessarily always caused by fundamental, strategic weaknesses. Often, they can be traced to a single recruitment instrument that has either not fulfilled its purpose or is simply not yet adequately developed. Examples include trainee career websites that are rarely visited, company internships that do not give trainees a close enough look at the company, intimidating assessment centers or poorly organized welcome days for newcomers.

Companies would therefore do well to periodically review how well their recruitment instruments are working and which ones should be sustained, adapted or possibly eliminated. Instruments work well when they contribute efficiently to the recruitment goals in each respective phase:

- The goal of acquisition: An adequate number of people are made aware of the company and the attractiveness of its training opportunities. A sufficiently large applicant pool is created.
- The goal of selection: From among all of the candidates, a sufficiently large number of qualified candidates is identified and offered a training position.
- The goal of contract conclusion: A sufficiently large number of qualified candidates is offered a position and signs a training contract. All of the candidates who signed a contract start the training.
- The goal of integration: All of the trainees successfully complete the probationary period and are sustainably integrated into the company.

Targets are set for each recruitment phase and success in achieving the targets is reviewed. In the context of the review, the contribution of each recruitment instrument toward achieving the targets of the respective recruitment phase is assessed. For example, how much the trainee career website contributes to the total number of persons reached, or how many qualified candidates were found during trainee speed dating. It is also important that the actual figures are compared across various recruitment phases. For instance, what is the ratio of people reached by acquisition measure X to those who ended up submitting applications? What is the ratio of qualified applicants identified with selection instrument Y to those who actually started training and, in turn, those who eventually successfully complete the probationary period? When these ratios are found to be unfavorable, companies would do well to ask why, and then initiate changes. Since the entire recruitment process is geared not only to the needs and interests of the company but also of the target groups, it is critical to understand the perspectives of the target groups.

The following table provides companies with a jumping off point for self-examination.

Recruitment instruments	Instruments & indicators for evaluating success (Examples)	Solution
<b>Instruments Phase 2, Acquisition</b>		
Key questions:		
<i>What did we do?</i>		
<i>How many people were reached by the instrument?</i>		
<i>How attractive is the instrument for the target groups?</i>		
<i>How many candidates were recruited with the instrument?</i>		
<b>Trainee Career Website</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of updates; number of page-views; number of downloads; number of applications</li> <li>- Group interview with the target audience: Attractiveness of the page</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.1.1</i>
<b>Training blog</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of posts; number of views; number of comments; number of applications</li> <li>- Content analysis of the comments: Attractiveness of posts</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.1.2</i>
<b>Vacancy announcements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of job vacancies; number of applications</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.1.3</i>
<b>Training brochures and flyers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of brochures distributed; number of applications</li> <li>- Short interviews with company trainees or the target group: Attractiveness of the brochure</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.1.4</i>
<b>Other promotional materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number and type of materials distributed; number of applications</li> <li>- Short interviews with company trainees or the target group: Attractiveness of materials</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.1.5</i>
<b>Media reports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of reports, number of references/ links to the report, number of readers/viewers; number of applications</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.1.6</i>
<b>Social media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of posts; number of friends, followers, etc., number of likes, retweets, etc. ; number of applications</li> <li>- Content analysis of the comments: Attractiveness of posts</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.1.7</i>
<b>Telephone hotline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of calls; number of applications</li> <li>- Feedback questions with participants: Satisfaction with the phone call</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.1.8</i>
<b>Training campaigns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number and type of participation in campaign activities; number of people interested in training with whom contact is made; number of applications</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.1.9</i>

**GRAPHIC 31**

*Instruments and indicators for evaluating the success of recruitment instruments*

**GRAPHIC 31 (CONT.)**

*Instruments and indicators for evaluating the success of recruitment instruments*

Recruitment instruments	Instruments & indicators for evaluating success (Examples)	Solution
<b>Competitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of competitions competed in; number of competitions won; number of applications</li> <li>- Media analyses: Number and type of references/links to the company in connection with the competition</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.1.10</i>
<b>Open company day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of events; number and type of participants; number of people interested in training and other target groups with whom the company maintains contact; number of applications</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with participants: Satisfaction with event</li> <li>- Group interview with participants: Satisfaction with event</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.2.1</i>
<b>Factory tours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of events; number and type of participants; number of people interested in training and other target groups with whom the company maintains contact; number of applications</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with participants: Satisfaction with event</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.2.2</i>
<b>Lectures &amp; seminars</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of events; number and type of participants; number of people interested in training and other target groups with whom the company maintains contact; number of applications</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with participants: Satisfaction with event</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.2.3</i>
<b>Teaching in schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of events; number and type of participants; number of people interested in training and other target groups with whom the company maintains contact; number of applications</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with participants: Satisfaction with event</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.2.4</i>
<b>Training fairs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of training fairs attended; number and type of visitors to the stand; number of people interested in training and other interested parties with whom the company maintains contact; number of applications</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch 3.4.2.5</i>
<b>Career orientation days</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of events; number and type of participants; number of people interested in training and other interested parties within the company maintains contact; number of applications</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with participants: Satisfaction with event</li> </ul>	<i>See Ch. 3.4.2.6</i>



Recruitment instruments	Instruments & indicators for evaluating success (Examples)	Solution
<b>Company internships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of internships; number and type of interns; number of people interested in training with whom the company maintains contact; number of applications</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with interns: Satisfaction with internship</li> <li>- Group interview with interns: Satisfaction with internship</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.4.3.1
<b>Discovery days</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of events; number and type of participants; number of people interested in training with whom the company maintains contact; number of applications</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with participants: Satisfaction with discovery days</li> <li>- Group interview with participants: Satisfaction with discovery days</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.4.3.2
<b>Project weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number and type of events; number and type of participants; number of people interested in training and other interested parties with whom the company maintains contact; number of applications</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with participants: Satisfaction with project weeks</li> <li>- Group interview with participants: Satisfaction with project weeks</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.4.3.3
<b>Training ambassadors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of ambassadors; number and type of assignments and activities; number and type of participants; number of people interested in training and other interested parties with whom the company maintains contact; number of applications</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with ambassadors and participants: Satisfaction with events</li> <li>- Group interview with ambassadors and participants: Satisfaction with events</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.4.4.1
<b>Student mentoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number and type of mentoring opportunities; number and type of activities; number of people interested in training and other interested parties with whom the company maintains contact; number of applications</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with mentor and mentees: Satisfaction with mentorship</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.4.4.2
<b>School partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number and type of partnerships; number and type of activities and measures; number of students reached; number of people interested in training and other interested parties with whom the company maintains contact; number of applications</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with students and teachers: Satisfaction with the partnership; satisfaction with activities</li> <li>- Group interview with student and teachers: Satisfaction with the partnership; satisfaction with activities</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.4.5.1

**GRAPHIC 31 (CONT.)**

*Instruments and indicators for evaluating the success of recruitment instruments*

**GRAPHIC 31 (CONT.)**

*Instruments and indicators for evaluating the success of recruitment instruments*

Recruitment instruments	Instruments & indicators for evaluating success (Examples)	Solution
<b>Networks</b>	- Monitoring system: Number and type of collaborations; number and type of measures and activities; number of people interested in training and other interested parties with whom contact has been established; number of applications	See Ch. 3.4.5.2
<b>Employee referral programs</b>	- Monitoring system: Number of employees actively participating in the program; number of referrals leading to interviews; number of occupied traineeships through the program	See Ch. 3.4.5.3

**Instruments Phase 3, Selection**

Key questions:

*What did we do?*

*How many people have been contacted with the instrument?*

*How many qualified candidates were identified using the instrument?*

*How high is acceptance of the instrument among the target groups?*

<b>Qualification profile</b>	- Monitoring system: Number of qualified applications	See Ch. 3.5.1
<b>Written application documents</b>	- Monitoring system: Number of application forms received; number of qualified applications; number of candidates invited to interviews; number of training positions offered	See Ch. 3.5.2
<b>Trainee speed dating</b>	- Monitoring system: Number of persons contacted; number of qualified persons; number of candidates invited to interviews; number of training positions offered	See Ch. 3.5.3
<b>Last-minute training exchange</b>	- Monitoring system: Number of persons contacted; number of qualified persons; number of candidates invited to interviews; number of training positions offered	See Ch. 3.5.4
<b>Interview</b>	- Monitoring system: Total number invited to interviews; number of invitees who show up to the interview; number of qualified applications; number of training positions offered	See Ch. 3.5.5
<b>Standardized tests</b>	- Monitoring system: Total number invited to tests; number of candidates who show up to the test/take the test; number of qualified applications; number of training positions offered  - Feedback questionnaire with participants: Acceptance of the test	See Ch. 3.5.6
<b>Assessment Center</b>	- Monitoring system: Total number of invitees to the AC; number of persons showing up to the AC; number of qualified applications; number of training positions offered  - Feedback questionnaire with participants: Acceptance of ACs	See Ch. 3.5.7

Recruitment instruments	Instruments & indicators for evaluating success (Examples)	Solution
<b>Work tests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Total number of candidates invited to work test; number of persons completing the work test; number of qualified applications; number of training positions offered</li> <li>- Interview with participants: Acceptance of work test</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.5.8
<b>Trial days</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Total number of the trial day invitees; number of persons showing up for trial day; number of qualified applications; number of training positions offered</li> <li>- Feedback interview with participants: Acceptance of trial days</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.5.9

**GRAPHIC 31 (CONT.)**

*Instruments and indicators for evaluating the success of recruitment instruments*

**Instruments Phase 4, Concluding the contract**

Key questions:

*What did we do?*

*How attractive is the instrument for the target groups?*

*How many qualified people sign a training contract?*

*How many of these people start the training via this instrument?*

<b>Concluding the contract</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of qualified persons signing the training contract; number of qualified persons starting training</li> <li>- Feedback questions with participants: Satisfaction with the contract signing</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.6.1
<b>Welcome events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number and type of events; number of qualified persons starting training</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with participants: Satisfaction with event</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.6.2
<b>In-house events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number and type of events; number of qualified persons starting training</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.6.3
<b>Internal corporate communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number and type of measures; number of qualified persons starting training</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.6.4

**GRAPHIC 31 (CONT.)**

*Instruments and indicators for evaluating the success of recruitment instruments*

Recruitment instruments	Instruments & indicators for evaluating success (Examples)	Solution
<b>Instruments Phase 5, Integration in the first few months</b>		
Key questions: <i>What did we do?</i> <i>How attractive is the instrument for the target groups?</i> <i>How many of those recruited by the instrument successfully complete the probationary period (i.e. prove to be qualified)?</i>		
<b>Orientation plan</b>	- Monitoring system: Number of selected individuals who successfully complete the probationary period	<i>See Ch. 3.7.1</i>
<b>Training folder</b>	- Monitoring system: Number of selected individuals who successfully complete the probationary period	<i>See Ch. 3.7.2</i>
<b>Welcome day</b>	- Monitoring system: Number and type of events; number of selected individuals who successfully complete the probationary period - Feedback questionnaire with participants: Satisfaction with event	<i>See Ch. 3.7.3</i>
<b>Introductory workshops</b>	- Monitoring system: Number and type of events; number of selected individuals who successfully complete the probationary period - Feedback questionnaire with participants: Satisfaction with event	<i>See Ch. 3.7.4</i>
<b>Teambuilding activities</b>	- Monitoring system: Number and type of events; number of selected individuals who successfully complete the probationary period - Feedback questionnaire with participants: Satisfaction with event	<i>See Ch. 3.7.5</i>
<b>Trainee sponsors</b>	- Monitoring system: Number of sponsors; number and type of activities; number of selected individuals who successfully complete the probationary period - Feedback questionnaire with sponsors: Satisfaction with sponsorship	<i>See Ch. 3.7.6</i>
<b>Feedback discussions</b>	- Monitoring system: Number feedback sessions; number of hires who successfully complete the probationary period - Feedback questions with participants: Satisfaction with discussion	<i>See Ch. 3.7.7</i>

Recruitment instruments	Instruments & indicators for evaluating success (Examples)	Solution
<b>Instruments for other target groups</b>		
<b>Parents' nights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of events; number of participants; number of selected trainees who successfully complete the probationary period</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with participants: Satisfaction with event</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.8.1
<b>Project days &amp; internships for teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring system: Number of events; number and type of participants; number of participants with whom contact was maintained; number of school partnerships created as a result; number of activities with students which came about as a result</li> <li>- Feedback questionnaire with participants: Satisfaction with day/internship</li> </ul>	See Ch. 3.8.2

**GRAPHIC 31 (CONT.)**

*Instruments and indicators for evaluating the success of recruitment instruments*

**Step 4: Doing it better.**

When trainee recruitment no longer works as it should the solutions are just as individual as the problems. To best tap into improvement potential, companies often have to acquire new expertise. This handbook, with its numerous cross-references, helps companies do that. The companies have to draw the conclusions for themselves: What has worked; where do I need to try new approaches; and what are my options? The need for improvement sometimes results in a strategic shift in trainee recruitment and sometimes merely to an adaptation of individual recruitment instruments and measures. However, periodic reviews and adjustments to recruitment strategies and ensure that companies continuously improve when it comes to trainee recruitment, and succeed in the struggle for an increasingly scarce resource, young professionals.



## Partner institutions and support

6

### ■ Employment agency

As a company offering training, you can take advantage of numerous support services, which include trainee recruitment. The German employment agency's employer service (AG-S) is an important partner offering free support for companies' search for qualified trainees and is now integrated into the newly introduced youth career agencies located throughout Germany.

- The service offers advice to companies on how to word their vacancy announcements.
- Employers can also take advantage of the German employment agency's free job bank, Germany's largest online job portal. The portal lets companies search directly for qualified applicants and offers assistance in posting training vacancy announcement.
- In addition, companies can get help finding qualified candidates. The AG-S offers advice on how to proceed and invites qualified young people to apply.
- The AG-S can also carry out a professional prescreening of candidates based on a coordinated qualification profile. Qualified candidates are informed of training opportunities and receive an invitation to apply. Thanks to internal networking of the employment agencies, candidate searches can be conducted not only on a regional, but also on a multiregional or national scale within Germany.
- During the recruitment process, companies can obtain advice on recruitment strategies.
- If necessary, the AG-S can also establish contact with chambers, associations, vocational training centers, schools and guidance counselors.
- Finally, the German employment agency offers financial support for training to companies and trainees. In this regard, a number of different incentives are available to companies.

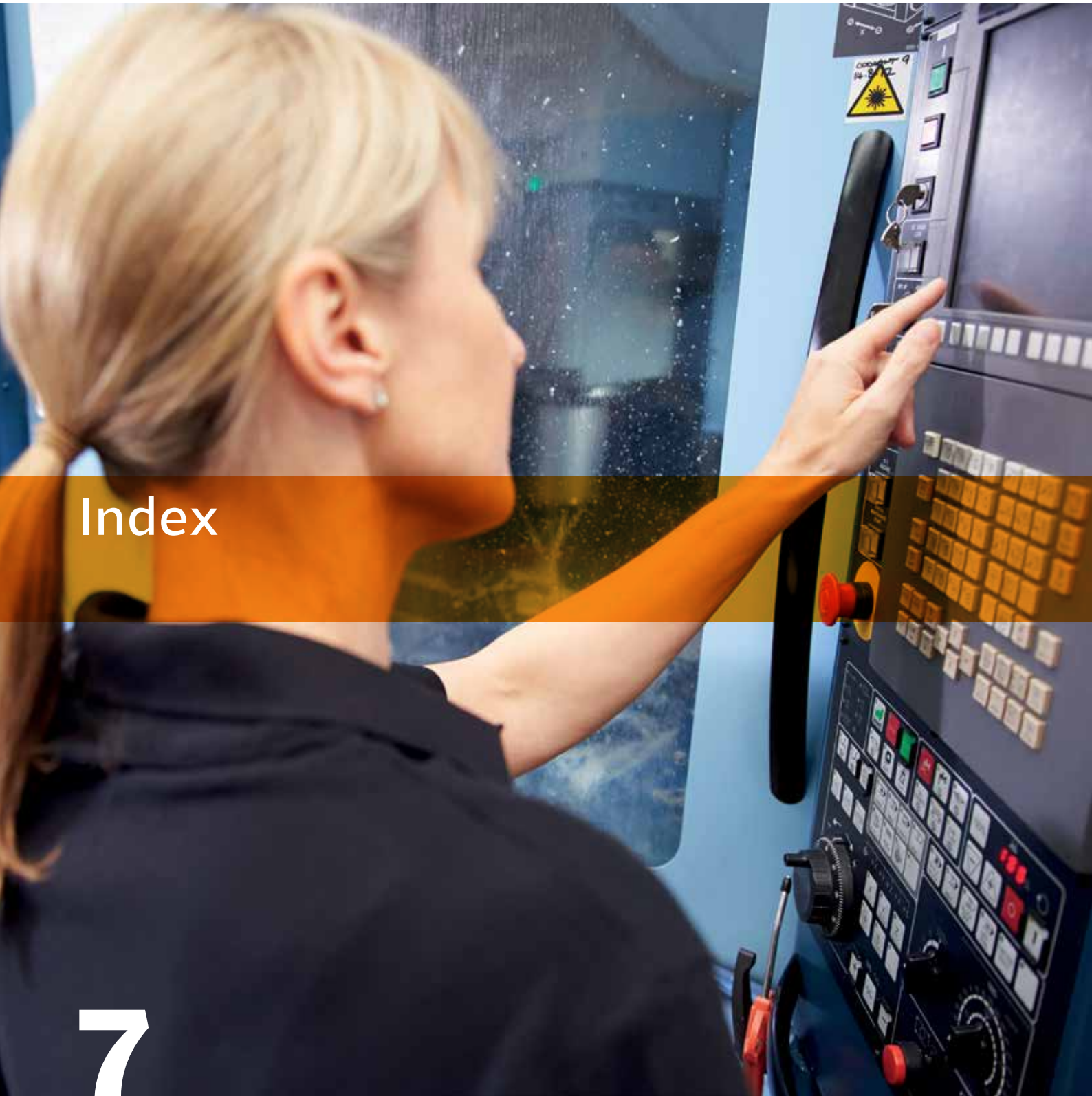
### ■ Chambers, guilds, associations

Chambers, guilds and associations also offer a variety of support services to help companies recruit trainees.

- Vacant positions can be advertised in free training-position listings. Companies can use these listings to find qualified trainees.
- SMEs receive assistance in the preparation of qualification profiles, tapping new target groups and targeted applicant selection. There are even referral services that place applicants who are a perfect fit for businesses.
- Companies can receive support during the period of training, by applying for training assistance (abH), for instance.
- Companies can register for programs that target university drop-outs and make contact with qualified applicants.
- Companies receive advice and support for the introduction of part-time vocational training.
- Companies can get help recruiting interns by listing internship vacancies in internship listings. You can also advertise opportunities for foreign internships on these services.
- Chambers support partnerships between schools and businesses. They mediate, monitor, and support partnerships, and encourage the exchange of experience.
- Chambers also help companies participate in programs such as the qualification training.
- Training consultants are also available for personal consultations, to include recruiting concerns.
- In addition, Chambers offer companies the opportunity to participate in numerous events for recruiting and integrating trainees – for instance, girls' and boys' days, vocational training days, last-minute training exchanges, trainee speed dating, and welcome days for trainees at the beginning of the training year.

### ■ Other partners

- For assistance in the recruitment of young people with an immigrant background, companies can turn to one of the service centers of the Coordinating Office for Training in Foreign Companies (KAUSA).



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