**Integrated strategy Initiative for Strengthening the supply of APPrenticeships in TEXtile sector**

**TEXAPP- WP3.3& WP3.4**

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| **TASK** | **3.3 – Piloting of the Company Assessment Tool**  **3.4 – Report on piloting of the Company Assessment Tool** |

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| **Work Package:** | WP3.3 – 3.4 |
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**The pilot phase of the Company Assessment Tool**

Following the development of the ‘Standard’, during December 2017 and January 2018 we worked with 10 companies to pilot the Company Assessment Tool (CAT) – 5 of the companies are new to apprenticeship training.

Our CAT - based on the ‘Standard’ provided by TCoE, is designed to allow companies to self-assess their needs and priorities and help them identify any areas where development is required, and apprenticeships will be the key to address these developments.

**Report on piloting of the Company Assessment Tool**

**Aim of the CAT:**

* To gain a better understanding of the needs and priorities of ΜSMEs who are interested in, or currently involved with apprenticeship training.
* To gain a better understanding on how apprenticeships and a Standard will contribute to meet these needs and priorities.

**Sample group:**

Ten MSMEs were interviewed. Five have little or no recent experience on apprenticeship training and five have prior experience.

**Methodology:**

We used a combination of face to face interviews, telephone calls and email correspondences to plan and implement properly and on time the survey assessment task. The majority of the questionnaires (8/10) were collected during the Athens Fashion Trade Show in January 2018, and 2 interviews took place in HCIA premises in Athens. From the respondents, 7 had prior experience with apprenticeships.

**Main findings and action points:**

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| **Assessment Tool**  **Survey Questions** | **Main Findings** | | **Action Points and Impact** | |
| Q1.Do you have to meet any legal requirements to ensure a safe working environment for your employees? | * Only six companies replied yes to this (5 of them with prior experience in apprenticeships). There are specific employment laws that require companies to have key arrangements in place to secure the safety, and wellbeing of their employees. The extent to which they follow these is questionable. * The 4 that replied ‘no’ are smaller companies | | * To ensure that companies meet the 1st key principle of the ‘Standard’ HCIA’s personnel will continue to monitor in order for these arrangements to be met by all companies before an apprenticeship starts their learning programme | |
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| Q2. Do you respond quickly to recruit the right person when a job vacancy occurs? | * The answers were split in half, with the majority of “yes” for the companies with prior experience in apprenticeships (4 out of 7). Their reasons for the “no” replies were lack of staff and no vacancies during the past few years. | | * The Standard requires all companies to demonstrate a timely response time to agreed vacancy and new learner recruitment and all employers will have to sign up to this commitment as a feature of the Standard. | |
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| Q3. Do you have a company succession plan to ensure you have the right person in the right job role? | * Four of the ten companies said no to this. This was either due to the fact that they were quite new companies, or they are family-owned companies, which means that the most probable succession plan will be related to the family future situation. Also, some comments showed anxiety regarding the prospects of the future of the companies, making it hard to think about possible succession in the future. | | * The Standard requires that all companies plan for progression and succession within the company for their apprentices. This feature of the standard will be influential in building this capacity and will help companies to focus on this as a feature of the apprenticeship training programme | |
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| Q4. Is there a plan to attract new young people into the company moving forward? | * This question was answered negatively for 6 companies since they feel that their abilities to recruit and attract the right young people into the Textile sector is still a challenge. | | * One feature of a company meeting the requirements and commitments of the standard is that they receive the support to recruit new staff. HCIA works closely with schools and training centers in order to promote and attract more informed and interested young people into this sector. * Lately, there is a lot of new fashion designers beginning their operations in Greece, which might lead to a change of attitude towards the sector as a whole. | |
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| Q5. Would your company benefit from the supply of trained young people? | * 100% positive responses to this question – with some comments around the needs to meet their business growth plans being critically linked to the supply of trained staff | | * The standard commits all registered employers to establish effective arrangements to train and develop their staff and the apprenticeship programmes are proving to be the most effective way to build this capacity with companies | |
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| Q6. Do you have people in your company who can provide training and prepare a training programme? | * Most said yes to this question, but still the smaller ones replied “no”. Some companies have managers or family members who undertake the role of on-the-job training of new employees. | | * The standard has clear guidance for supervisors and senior staff mentors to ensure that supervisors / trainers / apprentices have sufficient time built into both their job description and their working week to provide well supported training and development * The standard also requires the companies to prepare a Company Learning Plan that is a separate set of teaching aims and learning objective from any external qualifications of awards being taken as part of the apprenticeship | |
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| Q7. Do you have an induction programme for new employees? | * Six companies said no (all companies without apprenticeship experience and another 3 from the ones with some experience). Only four have induction arrangements, and these vary from very basic employment considerations to full training programmes with objectives etc. | | * The implementation of the standard encourages and requires all companies to have a structured induction and follow up Company Learning Plan in place, which is an essential feature of good apprenticeship recruitment and training. | |
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| Q8. Do you have priority areas in your company?   * Production management * Commercial technician * Financial technician * Human resources technician * Hygiene and safety technician * Manager * Operational technician:   a) Seamstress  b) Stamping technician  c) Winding Technician | | The 3 most important areas are:   * Production management * Commercial technician * Seamstress   The areas with no or very limited responses were:   * Hygiene and safety technician * Manager * Stamping technician * Winding Technician   And in the middle range:   * Financial technician * Human resources technician | | * Focus should be placed in the important areas, which received 6 or 7 positive replies. * The financial and HR areas appeared more important to larger and older companies. |
| Q9. Do you have priority training areas?   * Leadership * Production management * Selling and trading techniques * Quality * Behavioural skills * Business | Marketing * Financial analysis and management * Strategic management of human resources * Tools for continuous improvement * Health and safety at work * Management * Market research and selection * Organization and professional effectiveness * Commercial management and sales * Logistics * Maintenance * Accounting * International negotiation * Foreign Language * Instruments to support international trade * Market studies * Coaching * Environment | Energy * Project management * Office productivity * Data base * CAD * Graphic design * Multimedia and web design * Law (Commercial, Labour, Quality, Environment ...) * Audit * Electricity * Secretariat * Systems Administration * Software Engineering and Programming * Internet * Electronics * Electromechanical | | The most important training areas in descending order are:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Training area** | **‘+’ replies** | | * **Business | Marketing** | **8** | | * **Management** | **8** | | * **Commercial management and sales** | **8** | | * **CAD** | **8** | | * **Quality** | **8** | | * **Production management** | **7** | | * **Organization and professional effectiveness** | **7** | | * **Logistics** | **7** | | * **Instruments to support international trade** | **7** | | * **Internet** | **7** | | * Selling and trading techniques | 6 | | * Market research and selection | 6 | | * Market studies | 6 | | * Multimedia and web design | 6 | | * Software Engineering and Programming | 5 | | * Leadership | 3 | | * Financial analysis and management | 3 | | * Strategic management of human resources | 3 | | * Coaching | 3 | | * Graphic design | 3 | | * Behavioural skills | 2 | | * Tools for continuous improvement | 2 | | * International negotiation | 2 | | * Office productivity | 2 | | * Data base | 2 | | * Maintenance | 1 | | * Accounting | 1 | | * Foreign Language | 1 | | * Environment | Energy | 1 | | * Project management | 1 | | * Audit | 1 | | * Secretariat | 1 | | * Systems Administration | 1 | | * Health and safety at work | 0 | | * Law (Commercial, Labour, Quality, Environment ...) | 0 | | * Electricity | 0 | | * Electronics | 0 | | * Electromechanical | 0 |   From the responses received, it is clear that the focus of the responses are into more ”soft” managerial issues and not into the more technical aspects. | | |
| Q10. Do you have training plans in place for;   1. Managers? 2. Production staff? 3. Others? | * No company responded ‘managers’, and 6 out of 10 responded ‘production staff’ and ‘others’. * The production staff was mentioned by all companies with prior apprenticeship experience. * The ‘other’ category focused more on sales / marketing personnel. | | * The Standard requires all companies to have a succession and personal training plan for each apprentice. Also information about ‘whole company’ training is requested. | |
| Q11. Is there a strong company commitment to training and skills development? | * Generally, the answer to this was positive for most companies, but there were also 3 companies that do not have a strong commitment. | | * The standard revisits this commitment and the apprenticeship programmes are a good catalyst for this type of activity to be secured | |
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| Q12. Are the company training needs and priorities for skilled staff being met currently? | * Only three companies with prior experience in apprenticeship training programmes mentioned that the training needs are covered. | | * The Standard is helping companies (through the training – support and registration process) focus more on this area, including future planning, skills mapping etc. | |
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| Q13. Do you plan for time off work to allow for training and skills development? | * This question provided mostly a positive response (8/10). Only one company from each category replied “no”. | |  | |
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| Q14. Do you have people in the company that could support a new apprentice? For example, a supervisor/ charge-hand/mentor? | * Most companies (7/10) said “yes” to this question. Almost all companies (with the exception of one large company) will have a supervisor. The large company can also identify a mentor role to support the supervisor. | | * The Standard needs to ensure that all participating companies must provide at least a supervisor who must be trained and is responsible for the day to day support and monitoring of the apprentice. | |
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| Q15. Would your company benefit from having staff trained to support apprentices to be successful? | * 90% the responses said yes to this. This included all the companies who, at this moment, do not have apprentices in learning and have not attended the company training course. | | * This response suggests a strong awareness of the need for training staff to support the apprenticeship role. | |
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| Q16. Would your company benefit from having a ‘Standard’ / Framework that would provide a structure for an apprenticeship training plan? | * All companies said yes to this question. | | * The Standard is clearly an important initial stage for designing and monitoring an apprenticeship programme in any company. | |
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| Q17. Are you acquainted with the legal stipulations regulating the provision of apprenticeships? | * Most responses were positive, which means that they are aware of the regulations that are valid regarding the provision of apprenticeships. It is interesting to note that 2 out of 7 companies with prior experience in apprenticeships appear not to be aware about there. | | * There needs to be some support in the initial stages of implementing the Standard in order to inform the participating companies about the existing rules and regulations. | |
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| Q18. Do you possess the necessary facilities and equipment to provide adequate training? | * All companies mentioned that they have the necessary facilities and equipment | | * This demonstrates that they are ready for being involved in a pilot testing phase. | |
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| **Summary of main findings:**  **Risk ratings:**  **Low – requires little or further support or attention**  **Medium – some support needed to help improve consistency or structure**  **High – important need for intervention and/or additional advice and support to improve**   * Only a few are aware of their legal obligations for safety and welfare (**Medium** risk) * Only half are quick to respond when an apprenticeship vacancy arises (**Medium** to medium risk) * Half companies have some form of succession plan in place and some have a plan to attract young people into the sector (**Medium** risk some support is advisable) * All companies agreed that they would benefit from a supply of young people (**Low** risk area) * Nearly all said that they have people who can train but the Standard helps to add structure to this role (**Low** risk area) * Most of the apprentice training companies have induction arrangements in place (**Medium** risk area) however, the non-app’s companies need some support and the standard can help this. (**High** risk for non-app’s companies – support through the standard needed) * There is a strong commitment to company training by most respondents, but there are some areas of staff training that needs more planning (**Medium** risk some support is advisable) * For only a few apprenticeship training companies their current training needs and priorities for staff are being met. Moreover, for non-apprenticeship training companies this was an issue for them (**High** risk for all companies – support through the standard needed) * Nearly all companies show a strong commitment to allowing time off work for training and skills development where needed (**Low** risk area) * Most companies could identify a member of staff to support a new apprentice (**Medium** risk area) * Most companies said they would benefit from having staff trained to support apprentices to be successful (**Low** risk area) * All ten companies said they would benefit form having a Standard/Framework to help them structure an apprenticeship programme at work (**Low** risk area) |