

Sustainability in vocational education and training in commercial occupations – why exactly?

Commercial occupational activity takes place in an extremely **dynamic environment**. Those involved in the commercial sector must be able to rapidly respond to technological innovations, changing consumer demands and new social requirements to ensure their competitiveness. In professional work, one cannot react to external changes, but must be proactive by anticipating new trends and discovering new methods to accommodate them.

The **specialist work** they perform plays a crucial part in determining how we will live in future. How can customer needs best be met? How should products be brought to the market, whose production consumes fewest resources and complies with societal standards? How will products reach their destination via the most energy-efficient means of transport? To find sustainable solutions, specific **professionals skills** are required, which may be fostered by continuous vocational education and training.

A number of sustainability trends and required skills for selected commercial occupations are listed below. The information presented is based on the results of pilot projects carried out within the scope of the funding focus **“Vocational education and training for sustainable development 2015–2019”** (Funding Line I) and its scientific supervision (University of Hamburg, Institute for Vocational and Business Education).

BBNE at BIBB:

- Division 4.2
“Innovative Further Education, Permeability, Pilot Projects”
Barbara Hemkes
Christian Srbeny
Dr Verónica Fernández Caruncho
Christa Tengler
Ülkü Gülkaya
Julia Bazoune
Telephone: +49 (0)228 107-2543, E-mail: srbeny@bibb.de

Scientific supervision:

- University of Hamburg, Institute for Vocational and Business Education
Professor Werner Kuhlmeier, PhD
Professor Thomas Vollmer, PhD
Sören Schütt-Sayed
Marc Casper
Telephone: +49 (0)40 42838-3733,
E-mail: soeren.schuettt@uni-hamburg.de

Latest information on vocational education and training for sustainable development:

www.bbne.de

Sustainability in training practice:

www.foraus.de/bbne

The pilot projects are financed by BIBB using funding provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

June 2018

Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training
Robert-Schuman-Platz 3
53175 Bonn

Telephone: +49 (0)228 107-0
Fax: +49 (0)228 107-2976/-2977

E-mail: zentrale@bibb.de
www.bibb.de



Sustainability in commercial occupations

Trends and competencies



Picture sources (title page): Fotolia



Retail



Customers want less packaging waste

Develop strategies to minimise packaging

Evaluate different packaging solutions with regard to recyclability

Be aware of alternatives to plastic packaging and offer them in a targeted way



The number of quality and sustainability labels is rapidly increasing

Know the criteria used to award different labelling

Assess and compare labels in terms of quality and credibility

When providing customer advice, steer them to high quality and sustainable labelling



Demand for fair trade products is rising

Obtain and evaluate information about the conditions under which products are manufactured

Consider fair trade criteria when developing product range

Advise customers on the social and ecological standards of products

Wholesale and foreign trade



The ecological and economic costs of freight transport are increasing

Contribute to the conservation of resources by optimising route planning

Take into account the economic and ecological aspects in supply chain management

Deploy reusable transport containers

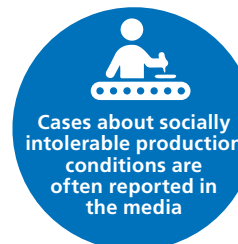


Expectations for companies to assume corporate social responsibility (CSR) with the knowledge that sustainability reporting is rising

Be aware of the criteria contained in CSR guidelines and of sustainability reporting

Explain societal responsibility of your company

Develop sustainable guiding principles for the company and commit to their implementation



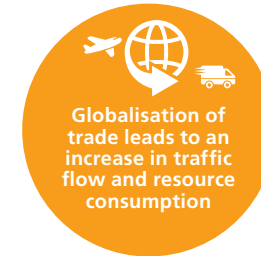
Cases about socially intolerable production conditions are often reported in the media

Ensure producers comply with social and environmental standards

Include ecological and social guidelines on balance sheets

Conclude agreements with suppliers stating the ecological and social impact of goods ordered

Forwarding and logistics services



Globalisation of trade leads to an increase in traffic flow and resource consumption

Evaluate different means of transport with consideration of their resource consumption

Take into account the economic and ecological impact by combining different means of transport such as aeroplanes, ships, rail, lorries, carrier bicycles, etc.

Check opportunities and encourage cooperation with other companies to streamline the storage and distribution of goods



Environmental zones are being established in an increasing number of city centres

Compare means of transport with regard to noise generation and pollutant emissions

Minimise pollution by selecting low-emission sources of transport

Seek to identify (more) sustainable options, e.g. for the "last mile"



New time- and resource-saving technologies are being tested in the transport sector

Be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of innovative transport technologies (e.g. autonomous vehicles)

Investigate the use of robots in warehouse logistics procedures

Find out about current trial methods for goods delivery (e.g. via drone)

Trends towards sustainability are becoming increasingly visible, particularly in commercial occupations, requiring new competencies from all employees. The areas of potential, which already exist within respective occupations, may be used during the process. Related professions may provide further ideas. For more detailed information, please visit www.bbne.de