

# Report with the results of research on training needs and innovative learning methods in Austria

*English Version*

**Nowa**

**WK Steiermark**

**ÖGB/GPA-djp**

## 1. Overview of the Research

**120 questionnaires, online and hard copy, were disseminated.**

Employees: 50

Employers: 50

VETs - trainers, executives: 10

Political actors/stakeholders: 10

The distribution of the questionnaires was organized in close cooperation between the partners according to their areas of responsibility:

Employers – WK Styria, nowa

Employees – ÖGB, GPA-djp, nowa

Stakeholders/political actors – WK Styria, ÖGB, GPA-djp, nowa

VETs - nowa

All questionnaires were entered and analyzed on Google Drive.

**3 focus group interviews took place.**

1 interview with 6 employers, 18.11.2015, nowa

1 interview with 7 employees, 16.10.2015, ÖGB

1 interview with 4 VET trainers, 13.10.2015, nowa

*(attendance lists available)*

The interviews were conducted from nowa with support of WK Styria and ÖGB, GPA-djp.

**9 individual interviews with stakeholders/political actors completed the research.**

The list of stakeholders/political actors was created in close cooperation of all partners.

Martina Moser, Employment Service Styria

Bernadette Pöcheim, Chamber of Labour

Barbara Hainzl, Province School Board for vocational schools

Michaela Marterer, Peter Härtel, StVG (VET)

Walter Christian, Regional Secretary, GPA-djp

Johann Seitinger, Work Council, GPA djp

Manfred Wolf, interest group for people in sales and commercial, GPA-djp

Gerhard Seitinger, Director, Vocational School/retail sale

Dieter Frei, CEO LFI (VET)

*(attendance lists available)*

## 2. Target Groups

63,2 % of employed persons in Austria work in the retail sector, 74% are women. This number is also reflected in the target group selected by us (72% retail, 68,8 % women). The majority of respondent employees came from the age group of 30-49-year-olds, which also corresponds to the national average (see report WP 2). 41,7% of respondents have an apprenticeship, a very high proportion (37,5%) only completed compulsory schooling without further qualification.

Only 4,3% work on IT-workplaces.

A high number of respondents works in companies with more than 250 employees (55,1%) and in the food sector, what reflects the current situation on the Austrian labour market especially in the sector of retail.

70,2 % of the respondent employers were men which also reflects the situation in Austria.

Regarding the size there is a wide spread from companies with 1-4 employees up to companies with more than 250 employees.

The qualification level of the employers is higher; the breakdown by retail and wholesale trade corresponds to that of employees and mainly the Austrian average.

### 2.1. Proportion of women and men, age-structure

Employees		Employers	
women	men	women	men
68,80%	31,20%	29,80%	70,20%

#### Age-structure

Age	Employees	Employers
20-29	18%	0%
30-39	24%	24%
40-49	36%	26%
50-59	10%	34%
60-65	2%	10%
not specified	10%	6%

### 2.2. Qualification level

	Employees		Employers		
Level 1	22,90%	<b>37,50%</b>	<b>Compulsory school</b>	6,30%	16,80%
Level 2	14,60%			6,30%	
Level 3				4,20%	
Level 4		<b>41,70%</b>	<b>apprenticeship</b>	18,80%	
Level 5		12,50%	Matura	27,10%	
Level 6				31,30%	
Level 7				35,40%	
Level 8				10,40%	

### 2.3. IT-workplace

non IT Workplace	95,70%
IT-workplace	4,30%

### 2.4. Wholesale/retail , size of company

Employees		Employers		
Retail	72%	mainly sector food, hard and convenience goods	76%	good mix
Wholesale	26%	ICT und food	24%	

#### Size of company employees

no employees	0	0,00%
1 -4 employees	0	0,00%
5 -9employees	0	0,00%
10 - 19 employees	4	8,20%
20 - 49 employees	8	16,30%
50 - 99 employees	4	8,20%
100 - 250 employees	7	14,30%
More than 250 employees	27	55,10%

#### Size of company employers

no employees	3	6,10%
1 - 4 employees	8	16,30%
5 - 9employees	4	8,20%
10 - 19 employees	4	8,20%
20 - 49 employees	8	16,30%
50 - 99 employees	5	10,20%
100 - 250 employees	4	8,20%
More than 250 employees	13	26,50%

### 3. Qualifications

#### 3.1. What training-offers are available for the target group, to what extend?

70% of employees surveyed said that trainings in “General computer literacy skills” are available, about 40-50% know trainings in the fields “Working with New Technological Applications”, “Training Concerning the behavior of digital users”, “New working Techniques” and “Training concerning foreign language and intercultural skills. Training offers in topics for classical e-commerce are available only to a small group (27 down to 7,9%).

#### Training offers available for the target group

##### Employees

<b>Digital and technological skills</b>	
General computer literacy skills	70,00%
Working with new technological applications	48,70%
Training concerning the behaviour of digital users	46,20%
New working techniques	44,70%
Training concerning foreign language and intercultural skills	43,20%
Using social media to communicate with clients	27,00%
General e-commerce skills	23,70%
Training concerning role and function of e-commerce	21,60%
Training concerning digital purchase processes	17,90%
Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing	16,20%
Using e-commerce and social media as a mean to increase sales	10,80%
Training concerning dynamic digital management	7,90%

<b>Soft Skills</b>	
Teamwork	87,50%
Leadership	67,50%
Self-Motivation	66,70%
Communication skills	64,90%
Planning skills - focus on targets an results	60,00%
Problem-solving skills	59,50%
Stress management	55,30%
Creative thinking skills	47,20%
Gender Mainstreaming, Diversity, collaboration in change	22,90%

### 3.2. What training-offers are required/important for the target group, to what extend?

A large number of interviewed employees did not even know the offers in e-commerce (see table 3.2.), 40 – 50 % missed training offers in the classic e-commerce topics, which were on the other hand considered as very important/important by employers.

E.g. “Using e-commerce and social media as a mean to increase sales” - employees: 51,4% miss, 37,8% don’t know – employers: 81,3% see it as very important/important.

All mentioned digital and technological skills were rated as important by stakeholders/political actor (50% up); the demand determined by VETs is significantly lower than these estimates. E.g. 60% of interviewed VETs have no offers in “General e-commerce skills”.

Most of the topics in the fields of soft skills are available sufficiently (around 50% and more), except Gender Mainstreaming, diversity and collaboration in change (22,9%). 45,7% of employees did not know the topic, it was not considered important by employers, 50% of VETs have no offers.

	Employees		Employers		
	miss	don't know	very imp. + imp.	very imp.	not relevant
<b>Digital and technological skills</b>					
Using e-commerce and social media as a mean to increase sales	51,40%	<b>37,80%</b>	81,30%	25,00%	0,00%
General e-commerce skills	50,00%	26,30%	74,00%	16,00%	6,00%
Training concerning digital purchase processes	43,60%	<b>38,50%</b>	65,30%	28,60%	2,00%
Training concerning role and function of e-commerce	43,20%	<b>35,10%</b>	83,70%	20,40%	2,00%
Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing	40,50%	<b>43,20%</b>	77,10%	31,30%	2,10%
Training concerning foreign language and intercultural skills	40,50%	16,20%	47,90%	14,60%	4,20%
Using social media to communicate with clients	40,50%	<b>32,40%</b>	76,10%	19,60%	0,00%
Training concerning dynamic digital management	39,50%	<b>52,60%</b>	50,00%	16,70%	4,20%
New working techniques	39,50%	15,80%	67,40%	24,50%	6,10%
Training concerning the behaviour of digital users	38,50%	15,40%	75,50%	16,30%	4,10%
Working with new technological applications	33,30%	17,90%	70,80%	25,00%	2,10%
General computer literacy skills	27,50%	2,50%	59,50%	25,50%	14,90%

Soft Skills		
Gender Mainstreaming, Diversity, collaboration in change	31,40%	<b>45,70%</b>
Stress management	28,90%	15,80%
Creative thinking skills	27,80%	25,00%
Problem-solving skills	27,00%	13,50%
Self-Motivation	23,10%	10,30%
Leadership	22,50%	10,00%
Planning skills - focus on targets an results	20,00%	20,00%
Communication skills	16,20%	18,90%
Teamwork	10,00%	2,50%

<b>30,40%</b>	4,30%	21,70%
<b>67,30%</b>	26,50%	0,00%
<b>67,30%</b>	22,40%	0,00%
<b>81,30%</b>	18,80%	0,00%
<b>65,30%</b>	34,70%	2,00%
<b>62,50%</b>	27,10%	10,40%
<b>66,00%</b>	27,70%	2,10%
<b>81,60%</b>	26,50%	0,00%
<b>63,20%</b>	22,40%	8,20%

	Stakeholders	VETs		
	important	demand high + medium	demand high	no offer
<b>Digital and technological skills</b>				
Working with new technological applications	90,00%	44,40%	0,00%	33,30%
Training concerning digital purchase processes	90,00%	33,30%	0,00%	44,40%
General computer literacy skills	77,80%	55,50%	11,10%	22,20%
Training concerning role and function of e-commerce	77,80%	22,20%	0,00%	<b>44,40%</b>
General e-commerce skills	70,00%	30,00%	0,00%	<b>60,00%</b>
Training concerning the behaviour of digital users	70,00%	77,80%	11,10%	11,10%
Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing	70,00%	25,00%	0,00%	<b>62,50%</b>
Using e-commerce and social media as a mean to increase sales	70,00%			
Using social media to communicate with clients	70,00%			
Training concerning foreign language and intercultural skills	66,70%	55,50%	22,20%	33,30%
Training concerning dynamic digital management	50,00%	0,00%	0,00%	75,00%
<b>Soft Skills</b>				
Communication skills	80,00%	75,00%	25,00%	25,00%
Problem-solving skills	80,00%	33,30%	0,00%	33,30%
Planning skills - focus on targets an results	80,00%	33,30%	0,00%	33,30%
Creative thinking skills	80,00%	37,50%	0,00%	25,00%
Stress management	75,00%	50,00%	12,50%	25,00%
Teamwork	70,00%	50,00%	0,00%	25,00%
Leadership	70,00%	25,00%	0,00%	62,50%
Self-Motivation	50,00%	37,50%	12,50%	25,00%
Gender Mainstreaming, Diversity, collaboration in change	60,00%	12,50%	12,50%	<b>50,00%</b>

### 3.3. What kind of professional trainings regarding e-commerce are used in companies, to what extend?

“Internal trainers” were named from both groups (employees and employers) as being the common type of professional training. For all other offers the estimates diverge, employees saw fewer offers in all areas than employers. It is also striking that in both groups a high proportion (23,8% or 21,7%) indicated to have any offers.

	Employees	Employers	
Internal trainers	45,20%	54,20%	
Training on the job	26,20%	56,30%	
None	23,80%	20,80%	
Employees go to a training center (paid by company)	21,40%	33,30%	
In-house by external trainers	19,00%	35,40%	
Don't know	19,00%	6,30%	Others

### 3.4. Who required offers in e-commerce-trainings?

VETs indicated that 70% of requests come from individuals, 40% from companies and no requests from Employment Service which is a major client of VETs in other vocational areas. 20% indicated to have no requests in the field of e-commerce.

individuals	70%
companies	40%
no requires	20%
AMS	0%

### 3.5. Are there any differences concerning age, sex, qualification-level, regarding motivation and willingness to learn e-commerce skills?

Young people grow up with e-commerce; elderly have to "re-train" this issue → benefit for younger employees.

Most of the employers think that it is more difficult for elder people, but it is also a fact of interest and motivation.

### 3.6. What could be done to attract more people to take part in vocational training in the field of e-commerce?

#### General

Trainings have to be up to date and deal with current topics - retailers' life is constantly changing, not only on the product level.

Vets need to develop branch-specific offers in cooperation with companies.

The company has to be seen as a learning place by employers and employees.

Companies have to pay for trainings of their employees and have to be aware of the added value.

Online-learning as an opportunity to try out new techniques in e-commerce in a "protected space", without causing any damage.

"Home-jobs" are possible - online seminars can give access for people in rural areas or to those with part-time requirements.

#### Contents

- Basic information in public and free information sessions
- New apprenticeship occupations – e-commerce merchant,...
- Low threshold, practical, empathetic, target group-oriented training offers
- Application-oriented, functional level based, workplace-based trainings
- Different training opportunities depending on existing previous knowledge
- Latest e-commerce technologies should be available for trainings
- Professionalization of e-commerce in enterprises
- Online-Shop-management, SEA, SEO, Online Marketing Management
- Online stores: sales strategies, marketing, social media, maintenance, returns management

It is important that acquired skills and the new knowledge can be used practically and are implemented in the daily work routine. - Learning by doing!

Before the seminar begins, it should be defined, how the practical transfer of knowledge looks like – more concrete practical guidelines.

#### Requirements: knowledge, status, ...

- Sales knowledge, PC knowledge, interest
- Basic computer- and internet-knowledge
- None, none but technophile
- Building up on basic skills

#### Expected level of qualification

- Depends on previous knowledge - beginners to advanced
- Top-Seller
- User
- Being „State of the art“ in the field of e-commerce
- Has to be defined clearly
- Expertise, training with certificate



## Methods

- Method-mix: presence and online
- Combination of seminars, project work and learning platform
- Virtual Learning, learning platforms
- Team-work, groups, workshops
- Practical examples
- Expert-blogs for further training
- Support for in-house trainings by providing coaches

## Duration

- Short
- 2 hours - max 4 hours
- 1-3 days, 3-day-moduls
- Max. 2 day-seminars
- 1 week
- Max. 3 months
- Qualifications between 3 months und 2 years
- In-service trainings
- Current entry, depending on available time

## Framework: time, place

- The possibility to combine work and vocational training
- During work-time
- Training hours: take into account care-responsibilities, working times
- Evening courses, weekend courses
- Near work-place, easy access
- Offer of different locations – not only in big cities, all over Austria

## Costs

- Economical
- Tax free educational and training costs
- Sponsoring
- Financial support for employees when they attend trainings

## Others

- Educational leave
- Apprenticeships with focus e-commerce

### 3.7. “ Which qualifications are necessary to be successful in the field of e-commerce?”

*Results of the focus group interview with VETs*

*Results employers and employees see report WP 2*

#### **Which contents were named?**

- Soft skills
- Products - know how
- Marketing/Advertisement
- Transport costs
- Technical skills
- Customer service - know how
- Business - know how
- IT-know how

#### **Who was named as responsible to gain/offer qualifications?**

- Responsibility of companies
- Apprenticeship has to be expanded

#### **Was there an agreement/disagreement on the central issues?**

##### Agreements

- E-commerce has to be part of job profiles
- Job profiles have to be changed to make them more interesting for well qualified young persons
- Digital competences for apprentices, IT qualifications for all employees
- Continuing qualification is required
- Generation gap
- Customers are more self-confident and well informed
- To combine both is an advantage for companies and customers
- Increase in value: technical know-how, marketing, IT, web-shop-know how

#### ***Beside contents the following aspects were observed:***

##### **Which attitudes are visible?**

- E-commerce is not good and destroys jobs – danger
- Unrealistic estimates, irrational fears concerning terms and conditions, complaint processing,....
- “Old fashioned” picture of face to face shopping: know you personally with your preferences,....
- 2 job profiles: e-commerce vs shop assistance (mainly female)
- Image “Verkäuferin” in Austria very poor – no link to e-commerce
- No concept, idea and knowledge of e-commerce
- Polarization: technophile young experts vs poorly qualified female shop assistants
- Female shop assistants – no idea how to extend their qualification concerning e-commerce

##### **Where is the energy, where resignation?**

- High level of resignation/high emotions: less skilled workers in retail stores, well qualified are dismissed → fault of e-commerce
- Negative emotions concerning the topic - dissatisfaction
- Positive energy was not observable

**Which values are noticeable?**

- Retail shop = good, e-commerce = bad

**How is the participation of each individual?**

- person 1 – female: points out gender aspects and responsibility of trainers
- person 2 - male: likes lectures, speaks in phrases, high presence, strong gestures, leaves room for a while
- person 3 – female: argues objectively, puts arguments in a nutshell, more active
- person 4 – male: younger, more open to e-commerce, more active

**How is the discussion structured?**

Main presence of 1 person (male), others complete and add their opinions

**Which parts of the system are represented how?**

- Active trainers in commerce and e-commerce had a very limited view on the topic and there was a lack of innovative ideas.

**3.8. “How has training to be designed and offered, so that everybody will be pleased to acquire this knowledge?”**

*Results of the focus group interviews*

**What kind of trainings were mentioned (methods, content, circumstances, ...)?**

***Employees***

- Individual, slowly, with patience and continuity - considering the situation of elderly
- Continuity, not only ½ day for learning
- Practice frequently and keep in mind the things needed every day
- Learn the use of CBT first
- Problems with English designations, abbreviations, apps
- Face to face trainings for all technical resources (smartphones, cashier systems, PC,...)

***Employers***

- It was mainly a discussion about “further education”
- No contents concerning e-commerce have been mentioned, most contents covered daily work issues like new cashier systems, changing tires, new products ....
- Online-learning is a central theme, but seems to be difficult in practice. The questions have been: At what time? At home during free-time? How to handle access?
- Motivation of employees was a theme:
  - Training has to be obligatory
  - To make clear that it is the precondition to keep the job
  - Small portions and packages necessary
  - To make them proud of being the “New Generation” of retail sellers
  - Incentives - not all happy with financial benefits, it was mentioned that better educated staff wants higher salary

### **VETs**

- IT - knowledge (content management) has high importance
- Equipment has to be provided in VETs: hardware, software, content management,....
- Vocational schools have to provide trainings
- Training for women after re-entry
- Awareness raising – customers can handle online-shopping, shop assistants have to be aware that they are greatly affected
- Practical training very important, concrete tasks – not only theory in classrooms but lively experience
- System of VETs is very inflexible – less opportunities for personal experience
- Combine e-commerce and marketing
- New additional competences like creative skills, graphic skills, creating texts, presentation techniques... are required and have to be trained

### **Did they talk about differences between several groups of learners?**

#### ***Employees***

- Staff in SME is not represented by work councils and has less e-commerce in work
- Young people have different approach, not only in method and pace, also in attitude
- Retail sale is excluded and disadvantaged regarding trainings because of work-time-structures

#### ***Employers***

- It was mentioned that “high potentials” are more willing to learn at home.
- Learning in context of IT is easier for younger employees, but “Gadget fever” does not always increase the willingness to learn in professional contexts.

### **VETs**

- Several approaches depending on the target group: knowledge, personal skills, motivation,...
- Mainly women
- Differences between man and women concerning branches, positions – men, DIY-store, sports, women, supermarkets, men, leading positions!

### **Who was named as responsible for activating the process of lifelong learning?**

#### ***Employees***

- Company has to pay
- During work-time - discussion that it is very difficult because working times in retail sale are from Mo-Sat 06 – 22
- Work councils are important for starting processes in LLL

#### ***Employers***

- Employers take responsibility, but more as regulator than as motivator.
- Few ideas how to motivate beside structures (regulation, obligatory education plan, ..)

### **VETs**

not mentioned

- GPA, WK responsible for job profile

## **Is there an agreement/disagreement on the central issues?**

### **Employees**

Conclusion:

Training + appropriate wage + continuity + paid by company .....

### **Employers**

- e-learning is an accepted method of learning and a matter of course
- One person tends mainly to identification, personal motivation, emotional connection, internal communication and transparency

### **VETs**

- “generalists” vs specialists, higher demands in smaller companies
- module for e-commerce has to be part of all commerce qualifications

## **Beside contents of the discussion the following aspects were observed:**

### **Which attitudes are visible?**

#### **Employees**

- Elder tend to exploitation
- Younger are more oriented on work-life-balance
- “You don’t have to know everything if you know where to research” – problem: don’t know how to research (designations, abbreviations, apps,...)

#### **Employers**

- Employers show a positive attitude towards e-commerce
- Training of employees is closely related with burden and costs for companies

#### **VETs**

- Training has to include pleasure and fun
- See e-commerce training as addition not as danger
- Search for solution to obtain retail sale
- question of age – employees over 55 will not be able to get into the topic

## **Where is the energy, where is resignation?**

### **Employees**

- Emotional discussion regarding separation of younger and older in trainings, group-learning vs individual learning  
Conclusion: method depends on knowledge level and way of learning (e.g. differences between apprentices and elder staff)
- Discussion regarding evaluation of qualification level and demand

Suggestion: individual interviews – no agreement – fear of rejection and prejudices

#### **Positive emotion – lively discussion:**

- You keep in mind things which you are interested in
- Being proud and happy having learned new things

#### **Resignation:**

- Management does not consider if you are slower, “the quick ones stay”
- Elder are more expensive, only costs are important not persons
- Big groups of companies, individuals are not seen, only numbers

### **Employers**

- Low status of profession, fact of less time,

### **VETs**

- Everything is very difficult
- Topic is full of fear (losing job, cash registers, women from east Europe with technical qualifications gain jobs,..)

### **Which values are noticeably?**

#### **Employees**

- Retail sale is excluded and disadvantaged regarding trainings - work-time-structures
- Resentments against development in economy in general

#### **Employers**

- Bad image of jobs does not correspond with the real requirements of the profession

### **VETs**

- e-commerce = bad, no solutions and qualifications

### **How is the participation of each individual?**

#### **Employees**

- 4 women and 3 men, 1 men not so active, 2 man active, 3 (elder) women active

#### **Employers**

- Small companies spoke less often

### **VETs**

- person 1– female: points out gender aspects and responsibility of trainers
- person 2 - male: likes lectures, speaks in phrases, high presence, strong gestures, leaves room for a while
- person 3 – female: argues objectively, puts arguments in a nutshell, more active
- person 4 – male: younger, more open to e-commerce, more active

### **How is the discussion structured?**

#### **Employees**

- Fear of job loss and dissatisfaction which makes it difficult for them to get into the topic of LLL and qualifications
- Always try to get back – conclusion in the end which is confirmed by everybody

### **VETs**

- Discussion more balanced (person 2 left room for a while)

### **Which parts of the system are represented how?**

#### **Employees**

- All members of work councils,

#### **Employers**

- Owner and management level

### **VETs**

- Responsibility as a trainer is not perceived,
- Individual and institutional framework for action is not used
- Responsibility and steering is given to other political actors (WK, GPA)

## 4. Innovative Learning Methods

### 4.1. What “innovative learning methods” are known, to what extend?

Learning platforms are the best known innovative learning methods followed by virtual learning. Learning with social media is known by app. 1/3 of employees and employers. In the group of employees all other methods are known from a very small group, 20% know no innovative learning method. In the group of employers virtual classroom are known quite well (47,9%), about 1/3 of employers know learning communities and content sharing, 8,3 % know no innovative learning method.

Stakeholders/political actors are very well informed on this topic and know all mentioned innovative learning methods to a high extend.

Learning method	Employees	Employers	Stakeholders
Learning platform	72,70%	72,90%	100,00%
Virtual learning	54,40%	72,90%	100,00%
Learning with social media	36,40%	31,30%	70,00%
None	20,50%	8,30%	0,00%
Virtual classroom	13,60%	47,90%	80,00%
Learning Communities	11,40%	31,30%	70,00%
Content Sharing	9,10%	31,30%	30,00%
Blended learning	2,30%	18,80%	70,00%
Collaborative Learning	2,30%	12,50%	50,00%
Others	0,00%	6,30%	60,00%

### 4.2. What “innovative learning methods” are required, to what extend?

Learning platforms are required to extend of over 50% by both groups; employers prefer virtual learning which is required by employees on 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

About ¼ of employees and employers ask for learning with social media, 27% of employees required “none”. 27,3 % of employers asked for virtual classrooms, all other methods are asked to a small or no extend.

Learning method	Employees	Employers
Learning platform	62,20%	52,30%
Virtual learning	32,40%	63,60%
Learning with social media	21,60%	25,00%
None	27,00%	11,40%
Virtual classroom	10,80%	27,30%
Learning Communities	2,70%	18,20%
Content Sharing	2,70%	18,20%
Blended learning	0,00%	15,90%
Collaborative Learning	0,00%	11,40%
Others	0,00%	6,80%

### 4.3. What “innovative learning methods” are used, to what extend?

In accordance with the demands of employees and employers (see 4.2.) learning platforms, virtual learning and learning with social media are used to a quite high extend (3 or 4 out of 10), additionally 4 out of 10 VETs use blended learning and collaborative learning. 3 out of 10 use any of the mentioned innovative learning methods.

Learning method		VETs
Learning platform	36,40%	4 out of 10
Virtual learning	27,30%	3 out of 10
Learning with social media	36,40%	4 out of 10
None	27,30%	<b>3 out of 10</b>
Virtual classroom	0,00%	
Learning Communities	9,10%	1 out of 10
Content Sharing	0,00%	
Blended learning	36,40%	4 out of 10
Collaborative Learning	36,40%	4 out of 10
Others	9,10%	1 out of 10

### 4.4. Which “innovative learning methods” fit to which participants?

#### Age

- Younger participants are often experienced in using computers or have more media competences.
- Young people online-exercises, elder need presence-inputs and practical examples: The young generation uses mobile phones, tablets,... to get information very quickly, “babyboomers” prefer to learn from papers. In trainings for elder people (60+) the offer of digital learning methods is not very high; the participants prefer presence-trainings.
- With increasing age, the willingness to engage in innovative forms of learning, decreases.

#### Gender

- No difference
- Examples, demos, exercises have to take into account different lifestyles and interests of women and men. It is important to consider the gender-perspective in teaching and learning processes with gender-sensitive guidance through teaching process managers.



### Level of qualification

- Contents, objectives and methods have to be implemented with focus on the previous educational level.
- Easier approach depends on economic and technical knowledge and practical experience.
- Higher qualified participants have often had experience with different forms of learning, e.g. university, trainings. The higher the qualification level, the more frequently the use of new media is lived in everyday life, the easier is the use of innovative learning methods.

### Other differences

- Regardless of age and skill level, the more the participants use new media, the more open they are for various forms of learning.
- Approach to e-learning also depends on different learning styles.
- Method, examples, exercises have to be selected in accordance with the specifics of the various countries of origin (difference in values, behaviors and expectations towards work and learning).

## 5. Overall conclusion

### Challenges in E-Commerce

<b>Stakeholders</b>	
Internet changing production and consumption patterns (e-business; etc.)	100%
Different forms of communication because of multi-channel consumers	100%
Technological innovations equipment	90%
Changes in occupations/ jobs profiles	90%
Changes in consumer's needs and behaviours	80%
Introduction of tools to automate business processes	80%
More use of e-business apps	80%
Introduction of tools to manage relationships with customers and suppliers	70%
Internationalization process	70%
More use of social media and e-business apps	60%
Introduction of tools to analyse performance	50%
More use of promotional and marketing campaigns	50%
More competitiveness	50%

<b>Employers</b>	
Changes in consumer's needs and behaviours	80%
More competitiveness	64%
Introduction of tools to manage relationships with customers and suppliers	64%
Internet changing production and consumption patterns (e-business; etc.)	62%
Different forms of communication because of multi-channel consumers	60%
Technological innovations equipment	60%
More use of social media and e-business apps	58%
More use of e-business apps	54%
Internationalization process	54%
Changes in occupations/ jobs profiles	52%
Introduction of tools to automate business processes	66%
Introduction of tools to analyse performance	44%
More use of promotional and marketing campaigns	30%

## Trainings

### **Which trainings related to e-commerce have to be offered/ developed in your country?**

Both, employers and stakeholders/political actors have a strong reference to classic e-commerce trainings as “general e-commerce skills” and “role and function of e-commerce”. This corresponds with the feedback from the employees, more than 3/4 of the respondents miss trainings in these areas or do not know them.

60% of the surveyed VETs do not offer trainings in “general e-commerce skills”, 45% not in “role and function of e-commerce”.

Trainings in the field of “new technological applications” are also mentioned as necessary by employers and stakeholders/political actors. Stakeholders valued this content as most important.

Faced with the challenge of changed behavior and needs of customers, trainings concerning online consumers, their behavior and motivation, purchase, marketing and communication via social media, are highly required training contents from the perspective of employers (70% - 80%) and stakeholders (70%). From the perspective of employees these trainings are missed or not known up to 85%,

62,5% of the surveyed VETs do not offer trainings with these contents.

All groups reported that skills concerning the “use of e-commerce and social media to increase sales” are of high importance, employees miss trainings with these contents to a high extend or do not know it (almost 90%).

### **What has to be done to increase motivation for people to improve their competencies on e-commerce?**

Reduce anxiety of this “new” field of work and technology. - “Sell” the benefits of training!

The motivation to take part in vocational trainings is higher if employees see career-chances (66% in retail think that there are no chances) - reference to career-opportunities, incentives and earning gains. People have to see better qualification as a possibility for job retention. Job-profiles have to be changed or expanded; the image of the profession has to be increased including all conditions like salary, working times, etc.

Employees have to recognise the opportunities in www and make use of it getting their own experience with online shops through private use of e-commerce.

Training offers must be based on existing previous knowledge-levels of employees. They have to be low threshold, application-oriented and workplace-based with high practical relevance.

### **What are suggestions for optimizing the training offers in your country?**

Trainings have to be up to date and deal with current topics; VETs need to develop branch-specific offers in cooperation with companies.

The company has to be seen as a learning place by employers and employees.

Companies have to provide good trainings conditions (worktime, financial issues,...) to their employees and have to be aware of the added value.

## **Innovative Learning Methods**

### **How did the target groups define “innovative” learning methods?**

Based on the specifications provided in the questionnaires “innovative” was mostly defined as learning with the support of ICT in various ways.

But it was also pointed out that a mix of methods, with several approaches depending on different target groups is of high importance (especially VETs).

Individual ways of learning, especially with regard to knowledge level and working hours in retail are required (employees).

### **Which innovative learning methods fitting to employees (with their various needs) have to be provided?**

Important concerning appropriate forms of learning is the individual learning potential.

If any diversity is known, the trainers can work with the participants in a differentiated way and choose appropriate forms.

A good and result-oriented mix has to be prepared for the entire group or individuals.

Methods, examples, exercises have to be selected in accordance with the specifics of the target groups.

Regardless of age and skill level, the more the participants use new media, the more open they are for various forms of learning.

In principle it can be determined that younger have more media literacy.

The higher the qualification level, the higher the experience with innovative learning methods.

Differences are also depending on the type of learner and country of origin/culture.

The research showed that not many e-learning methods are known, 20% of the respondents of employees did not even know one method. There were reservations regarding e-learning on the side of employees, only learning platforms are well known and required to a high extent (62%).

Information and awareness raising needs to be improved, obstacles have to be removed.

### **What has to be done to motivate employees (with their various needs) to use innovative learning methods?**

Depending on the target group and the level of knowledge and experience regarding e-learning approaches on different levels/stages are required and have to be considered.

The pedagogical approach must not be ranked behind the technical approach.

In Austria we face the situation that a high percentage of employees especially in retail come with a quite low qualification level. This means that (life-long) learning in general has no central position in their life concepts and/or many of them are not used to learn. Additionally their media literacy - beside smartphones - is low.

If this is not taken into account, no connection can be found, and e-learning will not be accepted and used.

⊕ Gilly Salmon's 5 stage model for planning online learning

