



***Phase 2:  
Interviews / responses***

HR: Human Resource(s)  
HRD: Human Resource Development  
Multiple answers in (#)

[German answers](#)

[Spanish answers](#)

[Slovenia answers](#)

[Italian answers](#)

**Open questions**

**FOR EMPLOYEES**

This impression that emerges here, that employees no longer pay primary attention to financial aspects when choosing an employer, is reinforced in the evaluation of the employee surveys. Employees always attach the lowest percentage importance to a high salary compared to a good working environment or a good compatibility with their private life. When choosing the right employer, they are also significantly guided by the company's image. This is also consistent with the self-image of employers who are aware of the importance of their external perception.

However, one deviation is particularly striking: all employees surveyed consult internet job portals when looking for new job offers. This is not entirely consistent with the self-perception of the employers surveyed, who attach far less importance to the classic formal way of advertising a job.

1. How important would it be for you to have a good work/life balance in your (future) profession?
2. What aspects should an employer/occupation have in store for you in order to be attractive in the future?
3. **What do you think are the advantages of working in a small or medium-sized company instead of in a large company?**
  - Family-like, because all know each other (3)
  - Better working atmosphere/environment (2)
  - More personal (4)
  - Better career opportunities in SMEs because staff is well known and will be promoted; career opportunities based on own performance

- Flat hierarchy
  - Opportunity take over responsibility quicker (2)
  - Easier to address problems
  - Faster decision making
  - Many different tasks and not just one field of work
  - Advantages that go hand in hand with such a job can be concentrated in key words: Flat hierarchies and the resulting effect of flexibility, both from a personal and an official point of view.
  - The relationship or link that we establish with the employer, we are not so much a number as in the big companies. (3)
  - That you have more flexibility and more contact with colleagues, more closeness and more facilities for work-life balance
  - The relationship with colleagues is closer and with the boss as well.
  - That we all know each other, more trust, more personal everything.
  - In smaller companies the atmosphere and the relationships among the employees and the management is better because they all know each other. They have a wide range of work assignments and thus the opportunity to learn a lot and spread the knowledge in several areas in the company. The communication is faster and easier, and the problems can be resolved on an ongoing basis.
  - You are not „a number“ but more considered as a person (3)
  - Get experience in different tasks (2)
  - Work in a more familiar and friendly environment (2)
4. Which point/s is/are crucial for you as employee as regards confidence building related to any employer?
5. Which expectation do own followers and subscribers of social media have?
6. What is the recognition factor? (as regards content, visual, auditive)
7. Which added value does arise from social media channels for branding?
8. **List three things in order that are most important when looking for a (new) job!**
- Chances to be taken over into regular working contract after having finished apprenticeship
  - Perspectives for personal development (2)
  - Appropriate salary (4, 1)
  - Being close to the place of residence (3, 3)
  - Image
  - Preference for smaller sized companies (2)
  - Working atmosphere in company (experienced through internship prior to job application) (4)
  - Attractive benefits
  - Job advertisement written in an appealing way → shows that the company is making an effort
  - Fun at work
  - Values
  - Working times / free division of tasks
  - The most frequently mentioned criteria are professional. This means that it is mainly about the job as such and the match with personal preferences, which can also include opportunities for further training or promotion. In addition, the accessibility of the workplace and the financial aspect are also given importance. Even if salary alone is

probably not a causal factor in the choice of employer in most cases, it is still a decisive factor.

- Duration of the contract
- Time and flexibility, salary and job position and opportunities
- That I like the job, that it suits my qualifications, the salary, the working hours, family-friendly conditions, good holidays.
- The most answers are related to pleasant atmosphere and good relationships in the company. Salary is important for five from six asked persons but was not listed in the first place. Good work conditions are important as well and that the company has a developed strategy.
- Economic stability, career perspective, working environment
- Salary, benefits, working hours, per week
- high salary, good relationships with bosses and colleagues, benefits
- economic stability, career perspective, stimulating working environment
- economic stability, reputation of the company, flexible working hours
- good balance between working hours and salary, career perspective, distance from home

**9. Where do you find information about the company before you become an employee of that company?**

- Company's website (3)
- Newspapers
- Peer groups / friends (5, 2)
- Internet → testimonials (1, 2, 4)
- Google reviews (1, )
- Social media presence (4, 4)
- The relevance of a successful internet presence becomes apparent at the latest when analyzing the surveys. The employees surveyed primarily obtain company-relevant information via the company website and related social media. However, they also obtain information via company rating portals and surveys of (former) employees.
- All employees found the information about the company on the internet. Two of them through acquaintances as well.

**10. What was the reason for choosing the company you are working for?**

- During the job interview a good working atmosphere became apparent (3)
- Openness/friendliness of staff during job interview (2)
- Showing professional development perspectives (2, 2)
- Was the first yes on job applications
- Fields of activities of the company (3)
- Salary (3, 2)
- Good working concept (1, 1)
- Number of holidays
- The motives listed here are not identical. The reasons range from personal contacts to the qualification of the job as one in the public service. However, there is an increased focus on the proximity to the place of residence and the field of activity, so that here, too, a statement can be considered that the content-related match is significantly more important than the financial aspects.

- Because it gives me good stability and I do the work I like, as well as allowing me leisure time.
- Because in the current situation it was the one that best suited my needs, I did not have many other comparative options.
- Because it fulfils the need for proximity, which allows me the family connection and the salary.
- Because the job is what I liked, with professional development and personal growth. (2)
- The reasons for the decision to work for the company varied from employee to employee. A positive approach in interviews with the human resources department and the management was one of the answers. The main reason for one of the employee was that the company he/she works for is a promising company engaged in the development of a high-tech product. Further reason was good experience from professional practice during the study. Stability of employment, work and working conditions, salary were mentioned as well.
- Workplace near to my home

**11. What do you expect from an employer? What is important for you to decide for an employer?**

- Concessions
- Give-and-take attitude
- Openness
- Support (2)
- Respect and esteem (2)
- Relaxed work environment (2)
- Friendliness
- Balancing social levels (2)
- Career opportunities / job as a “long-term project” (4)
- Performance based remuneration (3)
- Communication:
  - o Good communication, good exchange
  - o Open and friendly interaction with each other
- Working conditions
  - o It is the working together → supervisor feels part of the team (working as equals)
  - o At eye level with the superior

Employees demand from their employer in particular personal appreciation and integration into a functioning, collegial and valued team structure. In addition, a consideration of professional components is also demanded, which above all also has personal further training opportunities as its object.

1. That he gives me stability, that he recognizes my work and allows me to grow professionally.
2. That he recognizes me professionally and allows me to grow professionally.
3. That we have bidirectionality in both directions, that we both give and receive.
4. To be sincere and approachable and to help me in my incorporation.
5. A good working atmosphere, a good understanding of the difference between personal and working life, good organization and management, and consideration for the employee. (2)

Respect and good attitude towards employees were mentioned in five from six interviews.

Respect of me as person and as professional (3)

Keep promises about my career development and wage increase (4)  
Reputation

12. What does your ideal working environment look like?
13. How would you recommend the company you are working for to job-seeking friends/acquaintances?

**FOR COMPANIES / MANAGERS**

14. What does Employer Branding mean to you?
15. Do you believe it would be useful to have a strategy to retain talents in your company? In your opinion, do large companies find it easier?
16. If your company had all the necessary resources, what strategy would you use to retain the talent of your employees?
17. What kind of activities/benefits do you offer to employees to balance work and life?
18. Do you think that your employees receive enough feedback and motivation to work at 100% of their potential?
19. If you need to hire a new employee, would you know where to look for "talent"? Do you prefer new media such as LinkedIn or do you prefer traditional ways such as recommendations from friends/colleagues?
20. What is the target as employer in terms of "employer branding"? (sharpening the brand, attention, sales or scope)
21. **How do you attract youngsters to work and retain staff in your company?**
  - For attracting apprentices: standard channels like German Labor Agency, social media, own homepage with job offers; for attracting regular staff: less social media, no newspaper ads, online job portals; differences between reaching workers or academics; for retaining staff: stressing daily incentives like free access to beverages (water, coffee, tea), regular monthly gratification of 40 € per staff in form of a (re-)filling of a credit card, additional assurances, less temporary work-contracts; for retaining apprentices (takeover after successful final exam): no general take-over but in case of proper grades early offer to stay in company with the perspective to work in an well-organized system with perspective for further training and thus career development.
  - For attracting apprentices: company is very present to the outside; participation in job casting events; school cooperation (sponsoring); specific company website only for attracting youngsters (advantages for youngsters in terms of career planning); for retaining staff: company applies at staff! A latent discontent should be avoided; a lot of opportunities to leave on the way with staff being in the company between 2 and 5 years; trying to achieve better well off position with avoidance of a too high frequency of changing work places and changing working times; company comes up with easy solutions for tool shortages or tool damages; middle management MUST do a proper job; company regards itself as service provider for staff in order make staff come up with a good performance.
  - Company admits still to weak activities to attract youngsters; branch difficult to explain (opening up by internships for pupils); youngsters do live in the "here and now" which makes it difficult to get career planning closer to them; staff will be retained by good communication

- Employment agency and website: a very clear job description with a detailed description of content and a clear description of tasks. Description of general conditions (these are important but not decisive for the choice)
  - o Internet portals for jobs
  - o Presence at job fairs
  - o Retaining staff:
    - Insurance for old-age provision (especially for young employees)
    - Friendliness: it's a down-to-earth company
    - We offer a safe job through permanent employment contracts and long-term employment
- In terms of recruitment, two different - common - recruitment mechanisms can be distinguished, although they are more clearly different in the perception of employers: Informal and formal recruitment channels. Recruitment through the original channels such as a job advertisement is no longer as valued as it was not long ago. Rather, informal channels such as referral marketing via customers, employees and training institutions are used as relevant platforms. Visibility via social media platforms is also mentioned as a valid mechanism.
- With incentives and good salary and professional growth, within what each category allows.
- Nowadays, everyone is based on wages; few of those who work are looking for something else. (3)
- With good working conditions, allowing flexibility and adjusting the salary to their expectations. to their expectations, as well as having contact with them.
- With professional growth, it is very difficult to get qualified workers now, so we offer them growth and a good salary.
- Respect and good attitude towards employees were mentioned in five from six interviews.
- Good salary (6)
- Career perspectives (4)

22. Which priorities do come along with these targets? (short, middle or long-term targets?)

23. Which resources are available? (team/budget...)

24. Which group is targeted? (mass or class?)

25. Which requirements has the target group as regards content?

26. What is the strategy and the *Low Hanging Fruit* of the company?

27. Do you pursue a long-term and structured strategy to attract and/or retain staff? Any details about this? If not, why?

28. Are you / is your HR-staff formally qualified for an HR-strategy? Or do you / do they act intuitively? How old is this staff? Do you think there is a common understanding cross-generations about job expectations?

29. **What do you think is the reason for the difficulties to find suitable apprentices/employees? (Respectively: What do you think is the reason that you do not have problems to find suitable apprentices/employees)**

- Reasons not to attract: currently economic boom in construction – cannot compete with high salaries; Reason to attract: recommendation in peer groups
- Company has to be different from competitors e.g. by applying different communication; less people available for apprenticeship or regular work at all (demographic change); image problem (schools are important to also advertise construction as an attractive branch); many craft (not only construction) companies are regarded as not being capable to formerly train youngsters; demonstrating career paths

- Short term thinking
- There are trainees/employees who are looking for us, but we can't find them. And we don't find the people we are looking for. Our problem is how to overcome this barrier. It is necessary to build up a network, e.g. contact with schools. But there is no time for that
- The salary: The SME has two large groups nearby that offer their employees a higher salary. They try to compensate for this disadvantage with advantages such as development opportunities for the individual employee and - if possible - flexibility of working time.
- Apprentices:
  - o VET is notorious because many believe that you have to work a lot but only earn a poor income (Car dealer company)
  - o No job fairs were held through Corona, so fewer trainees applied.
  - o Career guidance in schools has become worse. As a result, job applications have become worse.
- Here, too, the perception of a lack of consensus prevails. Employers differ considerably in their answers. For didactic purposes, a distinction should be made between employer- and employee-related causes. For example, insufficient profiling by the employer, a lack of presence on the market and too high expectations are cited as obstacles in the employer sphere. Equivalent to this, however, are causes that fall within the employee sphere. Namely, these are the general dissatisfaction with the job profile, independent of the specific employer, e.g. generated by critical general media reporting. A change of era can also be observed: while employers used to determine the conditions, nowadays it is increasingly the employees who can negotiate financial conditions in their favour.
- Construction industry has a bad image and no one wants to do physical work anymore (3)
- In certain positions we can't afford to have interns and we can't have them because of risk, but if we offer good conditions and a permanent contract it is easier to find them and keep them.
- Because in the end they are looking for a salary in relation to their experience, and if you want good workers we have to pay them accordingly.
- We do not hire trainees, and nowadays it is difficult to find good workers in this sector, most of them enter as apprentices and with a fairly high salary, otherwise they do not want to work.
- Because we offer them a good learning environment.
- There are more recruitment problems because workers are inexperienced and demand higher wages.
- We do have problems recruiting workers, it's a tough sector and not everyone wants to work in it, plus they ask for salaries that are not commensurate with their experience.
- Two companies pointed out that young people are not interested in construction and building material industry. Four of the companies listed that the main reason for the difficulties in finding a suitable workforce is mainly the lack of staff in the labor market. This is due to a significant decline in enrollment in vocational schools in the technical field. As a result, not enough suitable staff is trained in the environment to meet the needs of employers. Of course, the so-called globalization of the labor market also poses many problems, as mainly skilled labor goes abroad, where wage conditions are significantly better, and domestic employers cannot compete with them (at least not in larger systems - companies).
- Manual work is not what young people is searching nowadays (6)
- Bad social image of manual works (particularly construction) (4)

**30. What are you doing to be attractive as an employer (e.g. salary, working environment, career opportunity etc.)?**

- Being more offensive with HR invest (more permanent instead of limited contracts after probations); additional positions created; better anticipation of HR needs; well-thought perspectives per position
- Not successful with single actions rather a mix will be the solution; salary is not the only factor (nevertheless has to be in the upper third of the specter); atmosphere in the company must be ok on all levels (management, teams, equipment, perspectives)
- Offering perspectives; security to receive salary monthly at the same time (not usual); company being close to staff “family”
- Working conditions:
  - o The employee should feel comfortable at the workplace: good workplace equipment
  - o Work process description
  - o Induction plan
  - o Integration of new employees: mentor/contact person for everyone who is new
  - o Continuing education/training
  - o Good working atmosphere
  - o Short decision-making paths
- Respectful interaction / Responding to the needs of employees:
  - o Good communication among each other: equal respect for all
  - o Appreciation of the individual, personality is perceived
  - o Employees should feel at ease
  - o If possible: Family friendliness
- In contrast to questions 1 and 2, the range of deviations within question 3 is not so wide. The entrepreneurs use almost identical criteria. According to this, the attractiveness of employers depends first of all on financial aspects such as performance-related pay, but also on accessory remuneration components such as a job ticket or company vehicle (bicycle, car). But also non-pecuniary circumstances such as a positive basic mood in the company, which integrates the personal well-being of the employee, are cited.
- Salary, work environment, career opportunities and tolerance and understanding of the weaknesses they bring from school/home
- Salary and working environment (2)
- We try to give them a good working environment, flexibility within what each position allows and a salary according to the offer.
- A good salary and trying to make them happy in their day to day life, also if they need anything I listen to them and we try to see the best option for everyone.
- Good relationship with employees and occasional leisure activities per year.
- As I said before, good working conditions, good working environment, flexibility, growth, salary with your expectations.
- Salary and working hours and having holidays and long weekends.
- We try to give them professional growth, as well as a good working environment, salary and overtime.
- Most of companies are aware that the employees are the ones who make a company successful. To be attractive as an employer the SMEs encourage employees in development through professional training and education, especially in demanding jobs. By attending to these training, the employees get promotion and better earnings. The companies provide competitive wage conditions (compared to companies in the industry) and bonuses and benefits outside the framework of labor law. Above all they try to provide good working

conditions (working hours, work equipment, premises, equipment) and a positive environment.

- Good salary (6)
- Career perspectives (4)

31. Let's say you are an employee in your company. How would you recommend the company to job-seeking friends/acquaintances?

32. **What do you think is decisive for the choice of an employer?**

- Mix of perspectives, degree of scope for design, salary
- Company climate, pool of vehicles
- Company image; local access (city, neighbouring municipalities)
- Remuneration (4):
  - o Remuneration an important issue: this has changed, In the past it was less important
  - o Benefits: Company car, company flat (in regions with high rents)
- Working conditions
  - o Interesting tasks, versatility in the job: the monetary aspect is not the most important reason
  - o Working conditions
  - o Good working atmosphere
  - o The employee feels at ease
- Personnel Development
  - o Encourage development of the employee
- Company
  - o Image of the company
  - o Type of business: in this case it is a family business, a down-to-earth company
- The content of question 4 is more closely related to that of question 3. While the content of question 3 focused primarily on financial aspects, this impression is put into perspective in question 4. According to the employers' perception, it is not only financial aspects that matter, but also non-financial aspects such as the work-life balance, the feel-good factor and the collegiality.
- Identification with the company (3)
- I need to see you motivated and eager to work, as well as responsible and willing to learn.
- Who want to work and accept responsibility, I can't be on top of them every day, so I need people I can trust.
- Willing to work and that he wants to get involved in his job, and to be responsible.
- Motivation to learn and be involved in his job and in the growth of the company. (2)
- He/she wants to grow in the company, he/she is willing to work and to help the company grow, as this will help him/her to grow as well.
- The SMEs agree that the content of the work, the relationships, and the culture of the company are decisive for the choice of an employer. For young workers who are just starting their careers, the first factor is salary, while for workers who already have some work experience (at least 3 years) the decisive factors for choosing are working conditions, employer relations, the possibility of promotion and more responsible work, and only then pay conditions. Employees who have many years of experience behind them are looking for a calm and stable work environment, the employer's confidence in the employee's abilities and the feeling that their work contributes constructively to the employer's results.
- Motivation (6)
- Flexibility in meeting company / work needs (3)

- Age
- Technical competences (3)

## Closed questions

### FOR EMPLOYEES

**1. What is more important to you personally when doing your job, that the job suits you as a person or a good salary?**

- That the job suits a person: 8, 5, 3
- A good salary: 1, 1, 3

2. Would you work in a company where only money counts and matters?
3. Which contribution do you consider more important in your (future) job, to contribute to society or to develop yourself individually?
4. Would it be important to you that your future employer offers internships abroad as part of your training or work?
5. Do you think that your company has its values well defined and that you fit in with them?
6. **What percentage of importance do you give to the following factors when choosing a job?**

**- A good working environment:**

- 90 %
- 50 %
- 60 %
- 40 %
- 33 %
- 60 % - 80 % (3)
- 80 %
- 25 %
- 30 %
- 35 % (2)
- 40 %
- 50 %

**- A high salary:**

- 60 %
- 20 % (3)
- 33 %
- 60 % - 100 % (2)
- 75 %
- 40 % (2)
- 50 % (2)
- 35 % (2)

**- Good balance with your personal life:**

- 70 %
- 30 %
- 20 %
- 80 % - 100 % (2)
- 40 % (2)
- 33 %
- 87 %
- 35 %
- 20 % (2)
- 30 % (2)
- 0 %

7. Do you have the possibility of promotion in your company? Do you think that you receive the necessary motivation and training?
8. Do you consider that you work in the construction sector due to necessity or because you like it? If you were given a higher remuneration in another sector, would you change your job?
9. Do you think that influencers (in social media) will empower an employer's branding?
10. Do you get sufficient information about small companies as to consider them a good employer? (website, social media)

**11. Where do you search for new job opportunities?**

- **Local newspapers:** 5
- **Regional/nationwide newspapers:** 3
- **Job fairs:** 3, 2
- **Social media – if so, which one/s?** 4, 2
  - Not at all
  - Facebook, Instagram
  - 6 Facebook – 4 LinkedIn
- **Friend, family, peer groups, school contacts:** 5, 2, 4
- **Internet job portals:** 7, 6, 6
- **Any other?**
  - German Labor Agency (2)
  - When the company is interesting: website of the company, search for job offers
  - Searching via Google for companies in the interviewees field of work. When the company is interesting → unsolicited application

12. Would you attend additional training once a year if the company you work for offered you?

13. Is it easier to find a job today than in the past?

**14. Is the image of a company important for you to apply there?**

- **Yes:** 8, 5, 6
- **No:** 1, 1

15. Do you think that a good employer image is important for choosing an employer?

16. Do you know what your company stands for?

## FOR COMPANIES / MANAGERS

17. Do you regard companies as the pre-dominant player in HR?
18. Do you address job ads indifferent of the age of applicants?
19. Do you live any company values? Only theoretical, because you have them or factual every day?

**20. Do you communicate structured and frequently with your staff? Or only occasionally?**

- Structured: 9, 4, 6
- Occasionally: 2
- Remarks:
  - o There is an openness for unregular but structured communication with staff based on a situative, case-related and demand-related approach
  - o 4 times per year with team leaders (6-8 workers per team) and individuals – topics are delegation, technique/training; once a year appraisal interview per staff
  - o Structured means “unregularly-regularly”, i.e. case based (getting a feeling for the mood of people by a frequent communication; those who are already longer in company know about the communication structure); crafts will be rated better in communication than industry

The companies are aware that the communication is key to employee well-being. A personal approach is one that means a lot to employees. Some companies have several channels of communication with employees from workers' assemblies, internal newsletters, notices on bulletin boards, periodic meetings with individual groups. In some companies the management also visits the production processes at least once a week, during which it talks to the workers.

21. In case not yet, would you consider a separate yearly HR budget, when there is a structure how to make the best out of it?
22. Would you send people into training related to HR?

**23. Do you know what Employer Branding is?**

Yes: 7, 1, 4  
No: 2, 5, 2, 6

24. Is it easy for you to find apprentices / employees?

**25. Do employees today demand more from their employer than in the past?**

- Yes: 8, 1, 5, 6
- No: 1, 5, 1
- Remarks:
  - o No comment, since 80 % of staff is generated by own former apprentices, who have been taken over after exams

**26. Do you know or have an idea how your company is perceived by applicants? / Do you know how your company is perceived by your apprentices/employees?**

- Yes: 5, 5, 6
- No: 1, 1
- Partially: 3
- Remarks:
  - most pupils do not have a focus on construction; most workers know the construction market, hence no initiative job applications rather than more mouth-to-mouth propaganda
  - Most of the asked SMEs know how they are perceived by applicants. They think that they are perceived as a successful, reputable, orderly, trustworthy, well positioned company.

27. Do you know what your company stands for?

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