

Contest around Professional Trainees is already in full Swing

According to the apprenticeship statistics of the Agentur fuer Arbeit (Agency for Employment) it has not been possible until September 2007 to staff 22 training positions in the textile industry in Baden-Wuerttemberg. In contrast, only three applicants have been unprovided. "We rate this as evidence that the competition for the professional recruits is already well under way," declared Dr. Markus H. Ostrup, managing director of Suedwesttextil e.V. (South-west textile association) (www.suedwesttextil.de), Stuttgart, towards Textination. The textile companies are increasingly competing for the best graduates with other apprenticing companies in their respective regions. Creativity and resourcefulness are necessary to get young people interested for a job in the textile- and clothing industry. Suedwesttextil is supporting the companies with its recruiting promotion campaign "Stoff, da geht was" (Fabric, that's hot!) for 6 years now. Furthermore, the federation encourages their member companies with the initiative "proazubi200 plus", to do more for the subject education, to not be overtaken by the shortage of skilled staff. For that reason, Suedwesttextil gives a monthly training subvention of 300 EUR to the companies for each additionally created trainee space. For this reason they have been able, from 2004 until today, to promote the establishment of about 190 additional training spaces in Baden-Wuerttemberg. "We worry that as yet not all companies have acknowledged the necessity to concern themselves with own trainees. Many of them will sooner or later face an unpleasant surprise when realizing that they cannot get qualified staff easily on the job market anymore. Hence, they should rather invest ,the

sooner the better, into their own training of their future skilled workers."

Besides the federation initiative Suedwesttextil supports GATEX (www.textilausbildung.de), the industry-wide company trainingscenter of the textile industry in Bad Saeckingen. There they have now modernized their spinning technical school. On December 13th, 2007, Dipl.-Ing. Hermann Selker, marketing director of the Truetzschler company, presented a new production line for the spinning preparation to the training center. Also there is in Schopfheim, South Baden, the job college textile technology, which is able to give trainees a solid base for a successful career in the textile industry. Dr. Peter Werkstaetter, managing director of the Verbandes der Nord-Ostdeutschen Textil- und Bekleidungsindustrie e.V./vti (Federation of North-East-German textile and clothing industry) (www.vti-online.de) in Chemnitz, told Textination that they are very much alarmed by the insufficient number of trained technicians, masters and engineers. Especially masters in textile finishing are currently urgently needed. Reasons are on the one hand the lacking motivation of young people to turn to technical careers, on the other hand has this East-German industrial branch after the "blood-letting" until the middle of the 90`s still an image problem.

In 2006 the number of offered trainee positions went up in the region to 360 compared to 357 in 2005. The admitted trainees numbered 354 (344). The trainees will usually be taken over by their training firms. In July 2007 the "Ausbildungsinitiative Nordost Textil" (ANO.tex) (Educational Initiative North-East Textile) was started. Initiators are the vti and the

Bildungswerk der Saechsischen Wirtschaft/BSW (Educational Institute of the Saxon Industry) (www.bsw-ggmbh.de). Events in schools are also part of it. Additional training spaces have been made available so that also in 2007 an increase in job education has been achieved. The branch is going to provide 60 to 70 trainee positions more in the upcoming 2 years in Saxony and Thuringia. Currently there are around 1,000 young people here in job training. Matthias Krueger (m.krueger@kvp-ku.eu) from the management consultancy Krueger, Vaeth & Partner in Kulmbach told Textination that as a counsellor with focus on all steps of the textile industry it is clearly noticeable to him that the offer in qualified professionals and engineers is meager and going to be even worse and lead to a bottleneck, which will affect the companies considerable in their development. "The branch has done nothing for its image for a long time, there was more talk about problems than about opportunities and they have, following the cost pressure, failed to build up reserves." The development and the access of "non-textile" branches (automotive industry) or congeneric branches (chemistry) to textile professional workers (oftentimes with better income opportunities) has led to a considerable

migration process into these areas, which cannot be covered by a respective "more" of engineers. The opposite was and is the case:

The professional colleges and universities have problems to fill the already reduced study courses or technician classes. The offensive advertisement for the textile branch does (in his view) not take place. Still critical considerations and comments predominate the picture in general public (threat through Asia, Turkey etc, environmental problematics, pay). How, then, can an interest for this branch be developed amongst the young people? – asks Krueger. In this middle-class oriented industry the insight only slowly wins through that well-trained employees are a scarce item and not replaceable at short notice. The decentralization of the branch does the rest. The problem is not only due to the market development but also home-made. It is the highest time to establish a real initiative movement – a marketing offensive pro textile, as Krueger emphasized.

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