

## **Kick-Off with Vocational Training**

### **Repeated Increase in Training Contracts**

**4,000 new trainees have recently started their training in the area of IHK Rhein-Neckar alone; including in the “Training forge” Gigaton in Heddesheim, as Axel Gutensohn, Managing Director likes to call his company in jest.**

This year, the companies within the area of the IHK (Chamber of Industry and Commerce) Rhein-Neckar are focusing on dual vocational training in order to attract the urgently needed young talents. By the beginning of the training period on September 1, 2019, IHK recorded a slight year-on-year increase of 0.3 percent in the newly concluded training contracts.

Many companies, however, would like to welcome even more trainees as many trainee positions are vacant. Within the area of IHK Rhein-Neckar alone, employment agencies recorded 1,508 vacancies.

IHK President Manfred Schnabel draws a clear conclusion: "The companies are willing to train, but there are no applicants. With regard to the shortage of skilled labour, successful trainees have excellent career prospects.

### **“Training forge” in Heddesheim**

At Gigaton GmbH, vocation training forms an important pillar of the company strategy. The provider for standardized warehouse management systems with special focus on logistics service providers offers trainings to qualify for IT specialist (application development) and IT systems management assistant jobs. Furthermore, Gigaton offers dual courses of studies in information technology. This year, managing director Axel Gutensohn welcomed six new talents to his team at the headquarter in Heddesheim. “We have been relying on company vocational training since the company was founded in 1996. Five to eight trainees are now provided with training in the various divisions of the company each year, which means that young people are moving up every year, shifting the average age to less than 30 years” explains Gutensohn.

“In retrospect, we can speak of a true success story, as former trainees still have a decisive influence on the company. Actually, I consider my company as a “training forge””.

## **Companies Willing to Train – Lack of Applicants**

The entrepreneur with longstanding expertise considers the concept of vocational training as “proven absolutely sustainable, as the training and the hiring of trainees having completed their training in comparison to external onboardings in terms of time offers advantages”, Gutensohn continues. “We can influence our specific needs and have our trainees work on specific tasks according to their individual strengths. Also, as a middle-sized business in the Rhine-Neckar region, it is hard to find qualified and affordable staff”, explains the managing director. An insight which also confirms Manfred Schnabel, IHK president: “According to the annual training survey by the IHK organization, about one third of the training companies were not able to fill all the vacant training positions”. At the same time, the skilled labor study conducted by IHK of Baden-Württemberg predicts a shortage of 50,000 academically and professionally qualified staff in the area of IHK Rhein-Neckar by 2030. “The region offers best employment opportunities to anyone who starts training now, and who would complete further training in the ideal case” says Schnabel.

## **Training Alliance 2019 – 2021**

The success model of dual education will be further strengthened by Federal Government, the Federal Employment Agency, the trade associations, trade unions and federal states, including DIHK. In this context, the new agreement “Allianz für Aus- und Weiterbildung 2019 – 2021” (Alliance for Education and Training 2019 – 2021) was signed at the end of August. By signing the declaration, the signatories commit to a strong vocational education and training and realign the fields of action and concrete measures. Founded at the end of 2014, the alliance is committed to further strengthen attraction, quality and performance as well as integrational strength of vocational education. Dr. Eric Schweitzer, DIHK presidents, elaborates: “Our joint alliance has done a successful job over the past four years. Despite the decline in student numbers and the trend toward studying, companies were able to stop the decrease in training contracts for the time being.

In the IHK area of Rhein-Neckar, the training volume has now risen for the third year in a row. With 3,906 training contracts, at the beginning of September, the previous year's result could be increased by another 10 training contracts even before the end of the onboarding phase for this year's start of training.

At the same time last year, an increase of 1.2 percent had been achieved, in the previous year it had been 1.7 percent. For the IHK president, the figures set an optimistic tone for the overall result of the 2019 training year, as experience has shown that in September, a large

number of new contracts will be submitted to IHK for registration. "In commercial training, we see an increase of 2.5 percent, and in industrial-technical trainings a decrease of 3.8 percent had been registered. In absolute terms, with 62 contracts, the commercial professions are more ahead of the curve in the development than in the previous year compared to the industrial and technical ones (52 fewer contracts)," explains IHK President Schnabel.

### **Clear Rise in Modernized Trainings**

The increasing attraction of vocational education and training also contributes to the fact that the professional profiles quickly adapt to changes in the economy. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research plans to include IT skills in the standard vocational training positions of the training regulations as of now when reorganizing occupations, committing all trainees in all positions to learn the basics of information technology, which means that each professionally qualified staff have basic knowledge, skills and capabilities to work in the age of a digitized workplace.

Last year, the key issue "IT security" was added to the IT professions contents. A major reorganization is expected to take place in the next two years. In the area of the IHK Rhein-Neckar, the systems integration IT specialist is particularly popular. Here, the IHK recorded an increase of around 40 percent in the newly registered training contracts compared to the previous year. "The fact that the professional profile of the IT specialist is now ranked among the most popular training occupations among the male trainees at the very top, and that it is gaining in importance among female trainees, shows that this profession is already appealing to many applicants. For the companies, it offers a tailored qualification profile in a highly competitive skilled workforce segment," says Schnabel.

At Gigaton, the entire second management level of Gigaton is now constituted by former trainees. As Gutensohn explains, this has a very motivating effect for new trainees, since career opportunities in the company are obvious and the trainees consider themselves as "one of them". "If the present trend continues, the trainees will soon take over completely," laughs Gutensohn.