

INVESTIGATION RESEARCH REPORT

IO1 - Investigation Research: Needs and requirements of SMEs in the field of Talent Management and analytics as bridge between business and VET system realities



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1	Introduction	4
1.1	What is Talent Management and why do companies need it?	5
2	Methodology	7
3	Results	9
3.1	Section 1 - “Basic Data”	9
3.1.1	In which of the following countries do you work/operate?.....	9
3.1.2	What is your position in your company?.....	10
3.1.3	How would you evaluate your company’s capacity in Talent Management?	11
3.1.4	Is Talent Management an integral part of your HR strategy?	12
3.1.5	Who is responsible for the Talent Management in your company?	14
3.1.6	Which of the following pillars of Talent Management do you think your company should improve?	15
3.1.7	In which situation do you think engaging in Talent Management is possible?	17
3.2	Section 2 - “Which Talents?”	19
3.2.1	Social Skills	19
3.2.2	Motivation	20
3.2.3	Leadership	22
3.2.4	Technical Skills	23
3.2.5	Adaptability	24
3.2.6	Specialization	25
3.2.7	Professional Skills	27
3.2.8	Business Domain Knowledge	28
3.2.9	Comparison of Results	29
3.2.10	Are there any competences that you miss?	30
3.3	Section 3 - “Implementing Talent Management”	31
3.3.1	Which personnel development measure do you find most important?.....	31
3.3.2	Willingness to dedicate time and effort in promoting Talent Management in your company?	32
3.3.3	How much time are you willing to dedicate to enhance your knowledge in Talent Management implementation per month?	34
3.3.4	What type of “training” do you believe will best help you to enhance your knowledge of Talent Management?.....	35
3.4	Section 4 - “External Resources”	37
3.4.1	Are you collaborating with external associates?	37
3.4.2	If yes, which kind of external associates do you have that are valuable in your working context? 38	
3.4.3	How often are you in contact with these external resources?	39
3.5	Section 5 - “Future of Talent Management”	41

3.5.1	Do you see any challenges and/or opportunities in terms of Talent Management in your company?	41
3.5.1.1	Challenges.....	41
3.5.1.2	Opportunities	42
3.5.2	How would you use Talent Management processes in your company in the future?	42
3.5.3	Which new knowledge and relevant tools for implementing Talent Management in your company would you see as beneficial?	43
4	Good Practises/ Tools	44
5	Conclusion Summary.....	52
5.1	Responsibility.....	52
5.2	Willingness and Time	53
5.3	HR and Talent Management	53
5.4	Pillars of Talent Management	53
5.5	Challenges	54
5.6	Skills	54
5.7	Settings.....	55
5.8	Tools	55
5.8.1	Cornerstone on Demand	55
5.8.2	VISMA - Commenius	56
5.8.3	HR Portal	56
5.8.4	LinkedIn E-Courses: Talent Management.....	56
5.8.5	Sparkling Grey project.....	56
5.8.6	Hoopla.....	56
5.9	To summarize:	57
6	Sources.....	58

Table of Figures

FIGURE 1: IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES DO YOU WORK/OPERATE?	9
FIGURE 2: POSITION IN THE COMPANY	10
FIGURE 3: CAPACITY IN TALENT MANAGEMENT	11
FIGURE 4: TALENT MANAGEMENT AS INTEGRAL PART OF HR STRATEGY	13
FIGURE 5: RESPONSIBILITY OF TALENT MANAGEMENT	14
FIGURE 6: WHICH PILLARS OF TALENT MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE IMPROVED?	15
FIGURE 7: POSSIBILITIES OF ENGAGING IN TALENT MANAGEMENT	17
FIGURE 8: TALENT COMPETENCIES – SOCIAL SKILLS	19
FIGURE 9: TALENT COMPETENCIES – MOTIVATION	20
FIGURE 10: TALENT COMPETENCIES – LEADERSHIP	22
FIGURE 11: TALENT COMPETENCIES – TECHNICAL SKILLS	23
FIGURE 12: TALENT COMPETENCIES – ADAPTABILITY	24
FIGURE 13: TALENT COMPETENCIES – SPECIALIZATION	26
FIGURE 14: TALENT COMPETENCIES – PROFESSIONAL SKILLS	27
FIGURE 15: TALENT COMPETENCIES – BUSINESS DOMAIN KNOWLEDGE	28
FIGURE 16: PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT MEASURE	31
FIGURE 17: WILLINGNESS IN PROMOTING TALENT MANAGEMENT	33
FIGURE 18: WILLINGNESS OF TIME DEDICATION PER MONTH TO TALENT MANAGEMENT	34
FIGURE 19: TRAINING OPTIONS TO ENHANCE TALENT MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE	35
FIGURE 20: COLLABORATION WITH EXTERNAL ASSOCIATES	37
FIGURE 21: KINDS OF EXTERNAL ASSOCIATES	38
FIGURE 22: CONTACT TO EXTERNAL RESOURCES	39

Table Directory

TABLE 1: PARTICIPANTS PER COUNTRY	9
TABLE 2: POSITION IN THE COMPANY	10
TABLE 3: COMPANY'S CAPACITY IN TALENT MANAGEMENT PER COUNTRY	11
TABLE 4: TALENT MANAGEMENT AS INTEGRAL PART OF THE HR STRATEGY PER COUNTRY	13
TABLE 5: PILLARS OF TALENT MANAGEMENT TO BE IMPROVED PER COUNTRY	16
TABLE 6: POSSIBILITIES OF ENGAGING IN TALENT MANAGEMENT PER COUNTRY	18
TABLE 7: VALUE ATTRIBUTED TO "TALENTS" COMPETENCIES – SOCIAL SKILLS - PER COUNTRY	20
TABLE 8: VALUE ATTRIBUTED TO "TALENTS" COMPETENCIES – MOTIVATION - PER COUNTRY	21
TABLE 9: VALUE ATTRIBUTED TO "TALENTS" COMPETENCIES – LEADERSHIP - PER COUNTRY	22
TABLE 10: VALUE ATTRIBUTED TO "TALENTS" COMPETENCIES – TECHNICAL SKILLS - PER COUNTRY	24
TABLE 11: VALUE ATTRIBUTED TO "TALENTS" COMPETENCIES – ADAPTABILITY - PER COUNTRY	25
TABLE 12: VALUE ATTRIBUTED TO "TALENTS" COMPETENCIES – SPECIALIZATION - PER COUNTRY	26
TABLE 13: VALUE ATTRIBUTED TO "TALENTS" COMPETENCIES – PROFESSIONAL SKILLS - PER COUNTRY	27
TABLE 14: VALUE ATTRIBUTED TO "TALENTS" COMPETENCIES – BUSINESS DOMAIN KNOWLEDGE - PER COUNTRY	28
TABLE 15: COMPARISON OF "TALENTS" COMPETENCIES	29
TABLE 16: RANKING OF "TALENTS" COMPETENCIES ACCORDING TO "VERY IMPORTANT"	29
TABLE 17: RANKING OF "TALENTS" COMPETENCIES ACCORDING TO "IMPORTANT"	29
TABLE 18: RANKING OF "TALENTS" COMPETENCIES ACCORDING TO "PARAMOUNT"	30
TABLE 19: RANKING OF "TALENTS" COMPETENCIES ACCORDING TO "TRIVIAL"	30
TABLE 20: PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT MEASURES - PER COUNTRY	32
TABLE 21: WILLINGNESS IN PROMOTING TALENT MANAGEMENT - PER COUNTRY	33
TABLE 22: TIME WILLING TO DEDICATE TO TALENT MANAGEMENT - PER COUNTRY	35
TABLE 23: TRAINING OPTIONS TO ENHANCE TALENT MANAGEMENT - PER COUNTRY	36
TABLE 24: TRAINING OPTIONS TO ENHANCE TALENT MANAGEMENT - RANKING - PER COUNTRY	37
TABLE 25: COLLABORATION WITH EXTERNAL ASSOCIATES - PER COUNTRY	38
TABLE 26: KINDS OF EXTERNAL ASSOCIATES - PER COUNTRY	39
TABLE 27: CONTACT TO EXTERNAL RESOURCES - PER COUNTRY	40

1 Introduction

The goal of this investigation research report is to compile and investigate the needs and requirements of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the partner countries Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Sweden and Cyprus, in the field of talent management.

By analysis of the results from the individual national reports, desk research and key findings it is aimed to answer how talent management can function as a bridge between business and VET system realities.

The results of this investigation research report should further inform the development of the other intellectual outputs of the Talent 4.0 Project - the toolbox and the training programme.

Talent Management in the context of the Talent 4.0 project can be understood as “the strategy, the process and the actions of a company in attracting skilled employees, developing the skills of existing employees, giving them attractive pay, working conditions, etc.” as defined by the Cambridge Dictionary. Furthermore, the attributes “attractive pay, working conditions, development opportunities, etc.” are summarized as retaining the employees in the company as well as motivating the employees for their designated work.

As mentioned above, the research was conducted in seven different countries and it was the defined goal of each project member to reach at least 30 responses from SMEs from their respective country in order to generate an overview over the European situation of Talent Management in small and medium sized enterprises.

Each of the partners created a national report, which was based on a conducted survey where the questionnaire was developed in cooperation of all partners. Furthermore, a desk research was integrated into the national reports. These reports were created by following institutions and organisations:

- Future in Perspective Limited - Ireland
- IHK Projektgesellschaft mbH - Germany
- Tiber Umbria Comett Education Programme - Italy
- SMEBOX AB - Sweden
- Centre for Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology LTD - Cyprus
- Federacion Vizcaina de Empresas del Metal - Spain
- Wirtschaftskammer Steiermark - Talentcenter - Austria

The survey was conducted by approaching business owners, CEOs, HR managers, accountants, educators and employees in various positions of SMEs who are responsible for recruitment as well as Talent Management in SMEs and micro enterprises in the respective countries. The contacted participants filled out an online survey, which was made available in all national languages.

1.1 What is Talent Management and why do companies need it?

“Trust in Talent”, a recent study conducted by Kienbaum, revealed that only every second European company seems to have their own talent strategy and over 80 % of HR responsables see a strong need for effective talent management (Kienbaum Institut@ISM 2018). These numbers give a first hint that there might be a variety of needs for further training and consultancy offers for SMEs.

Talent Management is further defined as an organization’s strategic approach in attracting, hiring, managing and retaining employees that possess talents¹ that are needed to achieve and sustain success. Organizations, big or small, depend on their employees’ used talent to achieve their goals and vision. Thus, to head in the right direction, it is imperative that organizations do not only have objectives, but also a clearly defined Talent Management Philosophy. It is this Talent Management Philosophy, which should be guiding principle dictating how organizations strategically hire, manage and retain their talent and how all important ‘talent-related’ decisions are made (Fessas: 2016).

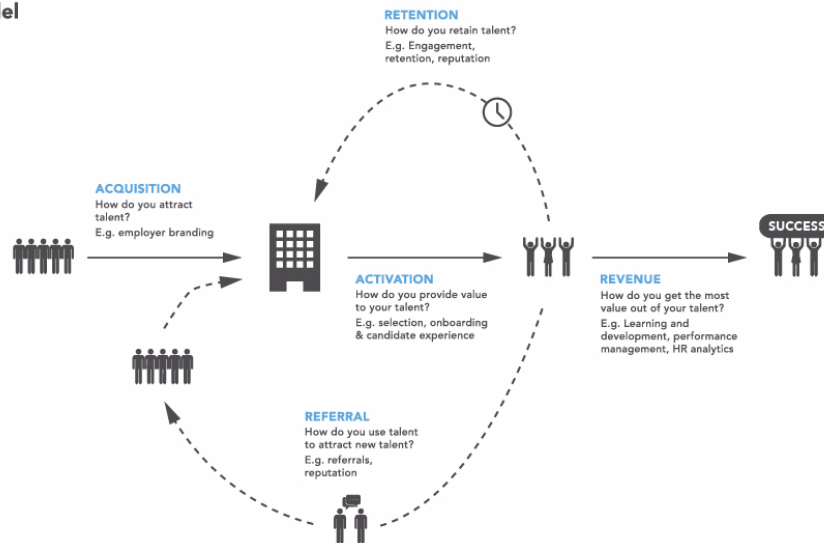
This is especially important in the case of SMEs which are more reliant-dependent, compared to bigger corporations, on their staff and personnel and may find it harder to replace productive and experienced personnel. Thus, studies in the field highlight that for SMEs to increase their chances for success, they need to work towards enhancing their capabilities in the fields of human resources, skills development and talent management.

As such, the concept of Talent Management involves a holistic and continuous process in managing the abilities and competencies of employees within an organization; one that is not restricted to recruiting the right candidate but extends to exploring their qualities and investing in further developing them (Management Study Guide). A practice whose importance is continuously rising due to the shifting trends in business and employment that regularly demand from workers new, specialized, skills as well as adaptability to new roles and positions. “Great talent management is like raising kids—it’s all about how you spend your time.” (Bhalla, Caye, Lovich, Tollman:2018)

As illustrated by the Talent Management Model (below), developed by the DigitalHRTech.com, this process starts by the approach a company takes to attract and recruit new employees and continues as they are treated when working there. Common talent management practices include hiring and selection, learning and development, engagement and culture building, and succession planning.

¹ Understood as potentials, skills and competences that can be of actual or future use for success of an organisation.

HR Talent Management Model



www.digitalhrtech.com

This model expertly demonstrates the effect of an effective talent management process. As part of this process, talent is attracted through the right selection criteria and is continuously ‘cultivate’ ensuring both a minimal turnover of valuable staff and positive referrals for a company that will aid it to attract new talent. Ultimately, it is a process that will help an organization to be more efficient and profitable.

Apart from the immediate and direct gains for companies, in terms of their effectiveness and profitability, it is also important to highlight the positive impact Talent Management can have on the labour market, the economy and the society in general.

First and foremost, Talent Management processes can help SMEs evolve and boost their endurance and adaptability to cope with and take advantage of shifts and changes in the economy as well as technological advances. Moreover, it helps employees to enhance their competencies, developing practical and specialized skills that are aligned and suited to the needs of the labour market and changes technological advances and digitization bring. Conclusively, this will contribute to the economic performance of the economy and society in general, help them become better positioned to address developments and the impact of Digital Transformation; thus making them more sustainable in the long run.

2 Methodology

The survey about Talent Management was conducted online via the web tool “limesurvey”. It was performed in seven different countries of which all are members of the European Union. The task was to reach at least 30 different SMEs in each of the following countries:

- Austria
- Germany
- Cyprus
- Italy
- Spain
- Sweden
- Ireland

A total number of 331 SMEs took part in the survey. The questionnaire was designed, discussed and approved by all involved project partners and then translated into all the national languages in order to facilitate the participation of the different countries involved.

NOTE: *The values diverge between the results covering all participants and the individual country results, as not every SME chose a country in the first section. Thereby, their answers could only be included in the analysis of all participants and not in the individual country statistics. Furthermore, not all SMEs answered all questions, thus most of the time in the survey less than 331 SMEs took part.*

The questionnaire was divided in 5 different sections, which covered the following topics:

Section 1 - “Basic Data”: This section or rather the questions of this section were designed in a way to, firstly, get to know the participants and to generate demographic data (e.g. which country, which position, etc.) and to evaluate if the individual participants and their SMEs have Talent Management already integrated in their companies. Another factor that was investigated, was which of five pillars of Talent Management the participants thought to be worthy of improvement in their own company. This question was designed in order to establish which competencies European SMEs think need to be improved. This section closes with a question about engagement in Talent Management. The question was asked in order to evaluate which possible and effective tools would be accepted by SMEs to engage into Talent Management.

Section 2 - “Which Talents”: This section consists of 10 questions about attributes or competencies in Talent Management. The participants were asked to assign a value to following competencies:

- Social Skills
- Motivation
- Leadership
- Technical Skills
- Adaptability
- Specialization
- Professional Skills
- Business Domain Knowledge

The last question asked the participants to list any competencies, which was not mentioned, but that they perceive as important in Talent Management.

The whole section was designed to evaluate the value SMEs attribute to pre-chosen competencies, often associated with Talent Management. This was done in order to be able to focus the remainder

of the project Talent 4.0 on the competencies the SMEs think are important in their company structure.

Section 3 - “Implementing Talent Management”: This section was designed in a way to investigate how many resources the SMEs spent on the current implementation of Talent Management in the respective countries. Moreover, questions about their estimations on personnel development within their own company were asked.

Section 4 - “External Resources”: This section deals with externalized or outsourced services of companies. The main goal was to find out why certain services are outsourced. This was done in order to find out, whether some of the external services might be able to be integrated within the company if certain personnel is available or certain talents of existing personnel could be fostered.

Section 5 - “Future of Talent Management”: This section was designed in order to find out what challenges and/or opportunities the participating companies see for future development of Talent Management in their company. This section was designed to get an overview of what the participating SMEs are expecting in the future regarding their own companies.

The following chapter “Results” will show the results from the survey. Most questions are depicted firstly by evaluating the total results and then by showing the individual country results. If any interesting divergences between the participating countries was found, assumption on why this is the case are made. The results are summarized in the chapter “Conclusion | Summary”. Furthermore, parts of individual country reports that each partner created were included in this report, where applicable.

3 Results

The questions will be analysed following the questionnaire structure. The results are summarised and short notes, evaluations or conclusions are added.

3.1 Section 1 - “Basic Data”

3.1.1 In which of the following countries do you work/operate?

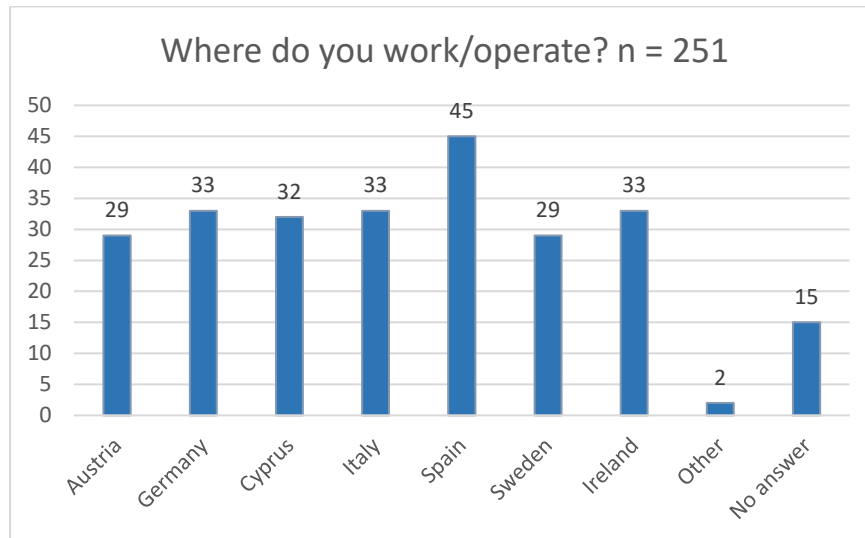


Figure 1: In which of the following countries do you work/operate?

Out of the total number of 251 participants, the highest number of respondents came from Spain with 45 participants, followed by Germany, Ireland and Italy with 33 responses and the other countries ranging around the agreed threshold, which was defined in cooperation, 30 SMEs. Two answers stated that they were not of one of the project member’s country while 15 respondents gave no answer. The exact numbers of SMEs per country and percentages in relation to all participants, ranked according to highest number of participation, can be seen in Table 1.

Country	Count	Sample share in %
Spain	45	17.93 %
Germany	33	13.15 %
Ireland	33	13.15 %
Italy	33	13.15 %
Cyprus	32	12.75 %
Sweden	29	11.55 %
Austria	29	11.55 %
No Answer	15	5.98 %
Other	2	0.80 %

Table 1: Participants per country

3.1.2 What is your position in your company?

This question is important, as for further analysis of the data, it is important to the project consortium to know, who or rather in which position the person answering this survey holds in the participating SME.

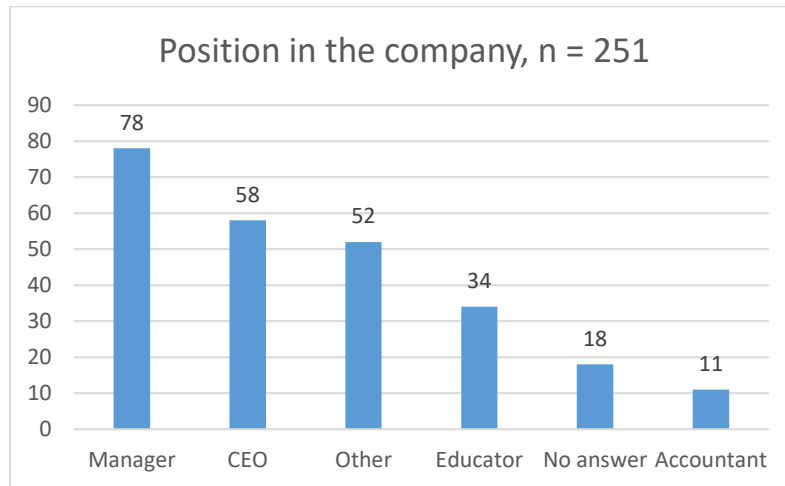


Figure 2: Position in the company

As shown in Figure 2, the majority of participants were managers of SMEs. This is followed by CEOs and the response category “Other”. A list with amount of answers and percentage compared to all participants can be seen in Table 2.

Position	Count	Percentage
Manager	78	31,08%
CEO	58	23,11%
Other	52	20,72%
Educator	34	13,55%
No answer	18	7,17%
Accountant	11	4,38%

Table 2: Position in the company

It has to be taken into account that in some countries the owner and CEO are the same thing. This is also valid for Manager and owner. Furthermore, in Sweden, e.g. the term “Accountant” does not necessarily mean an accountant, but rather a person tasked with all kinds of office work. The responses given in the field “other” were Office Manager, Owner, Consultant and In-house Trainer and Supervisors. It can be assumed that Managers, CEOs and Owners and associated positions have direct influence on the company’s personnel development and therefore have influence on all aspects regarding implementation of Talent Management.

There were also quite a few responses in “other” stating that they are directly connected to HR, e.g. “Capital Humano”, “Hiring & Recruiting”, “HR”, “Human Resource Technician” etc. Therefore, this group also has influence on Talent Management. The answers not connected to HR or Management/Ownership were less frequent, e.g. three times “Employee”.

These facts are important, because therefore the survey and its answers to the questions directly mirror the opinion of people in charge or with decision-making power about Talent Management.

3.1.3 How would you evaluate your company's capacity in Talent Management?

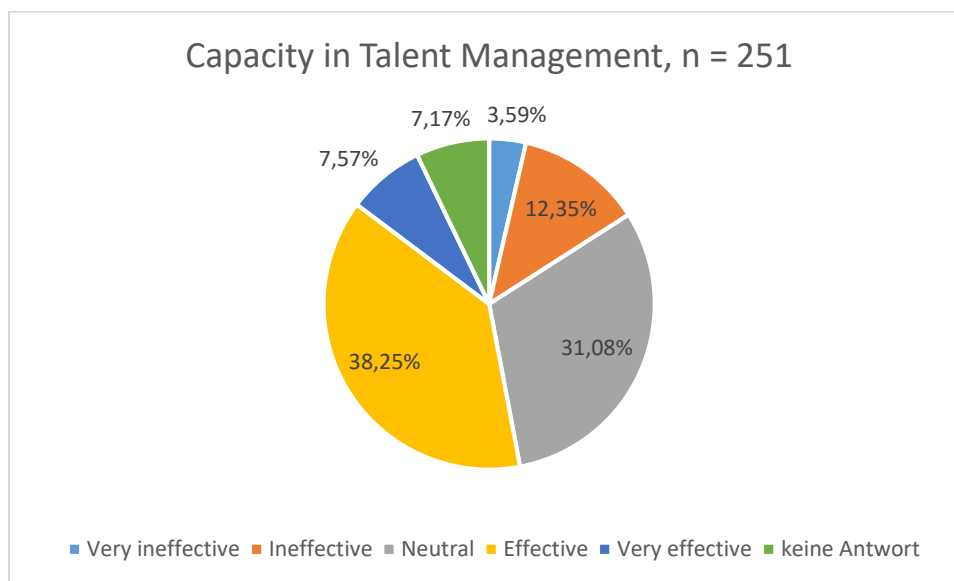


Figure 3: Capacity in Talent Management

This question was asked in order to find out, how the participants self-assess their companies capacity regarding Talent Management. While 38.5 % rated their own company's capacity in Talent Management as effective, a large portion, i.e. 31.08 % answered this question with "neutral". When "very ineffective", "ineffective" and "neutral" are added up it comes to 47.01 %. This shows that close to half of the SMEs have a lot of room for improvement concerning talent management implementation at their own company. In the following, the individual country results are examined more closely, to investigate if there are any differences between the countries.

How would you evaluate your company's capacity in Talent Management?						
Country	Very ineffective	Ineffective	Neutral	Effective	Very Effective	No Answer
Spain (n = 45)	0 %	17.78 %	46.67 %	28.89 %	4.44 %	2.22 %
Germany (n = 33)	6.06 %	15.15%	30.30 %	39.39 %	3.03 %	6.06 %
Ireland (n = 33)	6.06 %	6.06 %	18.18 %	51.52 %	18.18 %	0 %
Italy (n = 33)	0 %	3.03 %	39.39 %	51.52 %	6.06 %	0 %
Cyprus (n = 32)	6.25 %	28.13 %	12.5 %	53.13 %	0 %	0 %
Sweden (n = 29)	3.45 %	13.79 %	41.38 %	37.93 %	3.45 %	0 %
Austria (n = 29)	6.9 %	3.45 %	41.38 %	27.59 %	20.69 %	0 %
Total (n = 234)	3.85 %	12.82 %	33.33 %	41.03 %	7.69 %	1.28 %

Table 3: Company's Capacity in Talent Management per Country

As can be seen in Table 3 the majority of each country, except for Spain and Sweden, chose that their company's capacity to Talent Management is effective. In Spain and Sweden, the option "Neutral" was picked the most, which can have several reasons. Either the company's capacity for Talent Management is neutral or the respondents did not know the capacity their companies have.

Both options need to be considered in future project work, as this question also reflects the resources available for any Talent Management to be implemented.

The distribution of percentages shows a somewhat similar distribution for all participating countries, suggesting that SMEs from Spain, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, Sweden and Austria are in similar situations regarding their capacities, or rather their understanding of capacities, for Talent Management. Interestingly, in Spain and Italy none of the respondents chose that their capacities were very ineffective, therefore, implying that some capacities for Talent Management are spent in each of the participating small and medium sized enterprises. On the other side, in Cyprus no one chose that their capacities are very effective. This leads to the assumptions that especially in Cyprus there is room for improvement regarding the capacities for Talent Management. As only 7.57 % of the total number of participants chose that their company's capacity is very effective, the previous statement can also be applied for all participating countries.

The partner from Cyprus stated that survey responses are certainly deemed as both positive and encouraging for Talent 4.0, its scope and its implementation in Cyprus. However, it is important to note that 34.49 % of the respondents evaluated their company as ineffective or very ineffective while none of the respondents said that she/he considers his/her company as very effective in Talent Management. Furthermore, 10.34 % took no stand on the issue at all. Thus, it can be deduced that actions and steps are needed to further promote Talent Management and steps towards its effective implementation among Cypriot SMEs. Thereby underlining the assumptions made above.

The partner from Sweden stated that they assume that their country results indicate an uncertainty on Talent Management as the key word. This provides the Swedish partner with less reflection on the actual status. In combination with other responses further down in the survey the Swedish partner considers that as an indicator on not using Talent Management specifically, but integrated in other functions/processes in the businesses.

3.1.4 Is Talent Management an integral part of your HR strategy?

If Talent Management already is part of the HR strategy is important, because if the results demonstrate that a large amount of participating SMEs do not already have Talent Management available within their companies, the main question would shift to: why not? This question was answered in total by 231 participants, while 20 SMEs gave no answer. 124 SMEs (49.40 %) chose the answer "Yes", 63 (25.10 %) said "No" and 44 (17.53 %) the option "I don't not know" (see Figure 4). Therefore, close to half of the participants already included Talent Management within in their company.

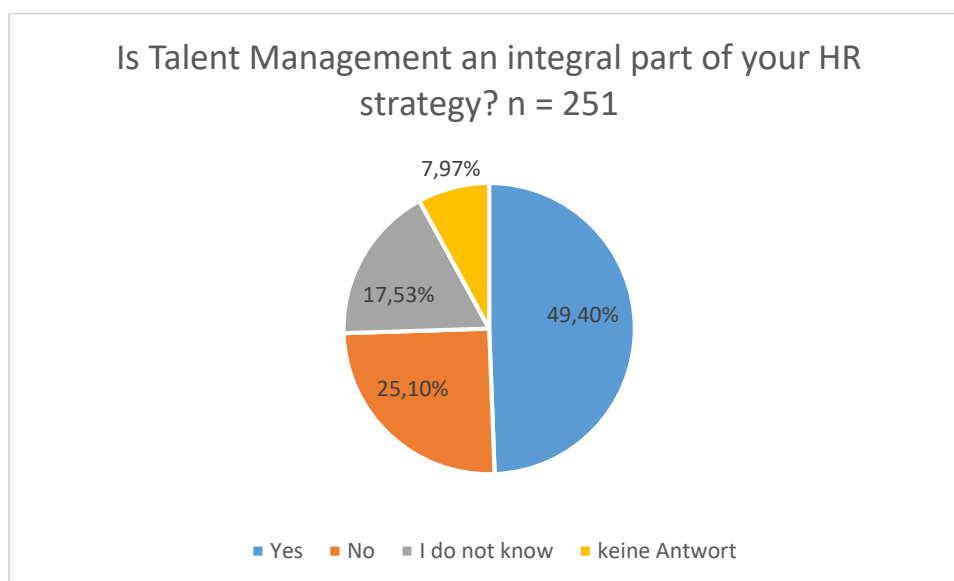


Figure 4: Talent Management as integral part of HR strategy

This question is also examined according to each country (see Table 4), as the difference whether or not Talent Management is an integral part of the HR strategy can be helpful for the further development of the project and its outcomes, if significant differences between countries exist.

Is Talent Management an integral part of your HR strategy?				
Country	Yes	No	I do not know	No Answer
Spain (n = 45)	69.89 %	17.78 %	8.89 %	4.44 %
Germany (n = 33)	42.42 %	21.21 %	27.27%	9.09 %
Ireland (n = 33)	54.55 %	36.36 %	9.09 %	0.00 %
Italy (n = 33)	51.52 %	42.42 %	6.06 %	0.00 %
Cyprus (n = 32)	59.38 %	37.50 %	3.13 %	0.00 %
Sweden (n = 29)	44.83 %	31.03 %	24.14 %	0.00 %
Austria (n = 29)	34.48 %	3.45 %	62.07 %	0.00 %
Total (n = 234)	52.14 %	26.92 %	18.80 %	2.14 %

Table 4: Talent Management as integral part of the HR strategy per Country

Taking a closer look at the individual country results, supports some of the assumptions made in question 2.1.3. 17.53 % of all participants chose that they did not know if Talent Management is an integral part of the HR strategy of their respective company. There are also some deviations when it comes to the countries themselves.

While in Cyprus, only one participant said that he did not know, in Austria more than 60 %, which equals 18 participants, were unsure if Talent Management was part of their HR. In this context, the numbers of Germany are also interesting. While five countries had no single “No Answer”, in Germany 9.09 % chose this option as well as 27.27 % saying that they did not know.

These numbers suggest that the answer “Neutral” from question 2.1.3 about the company’s capacities might be correlated to the answers of this question, namely that the answering employee did not know if Talent Management is implemented or not in their respective companies and could therefore not say, how much capacities are spent on Talent Management. The project partner from Sweden mentioned that for their individual country result one has to keep in mind the size of the responding companies; one can find a lack of clear and defined HR-strategies. 29.63 % said that Talent Management is not an integrated part of HR-strategy and almost as many, 25.93 % stated that they did not know. In their dialogue with some of the respondents, they found that in the small businesses there is a lot of undefined areas like HR, Talent Management etc... The work is done, one way or another, but not addressed as clearly as in the bigger organizations that demands a much more segmented definition of roles and tasks.

If these assumptions are correct, it is a useful fact to know, because if Talent Management is already implemented within these companies and the employees do not realise this, then it is not well communicated among the employees. This point should be addressed in the further course of the project.

3.1.5 Who is responsible for the Talent Management in your company?

More than one third of the respondents (34.66 %) stated that the responsibility of Talent Management lies with the HR-Manager. 27.89 % stated that it is the responsibility of the CEO to foster Talent Management. As small and medium sized enterprises were surveyed, this high number can be explained by the company size. As no actual company size numbers are available, it is assumed that some of the participating SMEs do not have their own HR department, thus all duties affiliated with HR are undergone by the CEO.

Furthermore, the answer “CEO” most likely also includes the owner of some of the SMEs. What is interesting is that 15.14 % chose the answer “Accountant” as the responsible person for Talent Management. This might be explained through different national definitions of the term and maybe, do to company size, as probably an accountant in a small company assumes several roles at once. What is also interesting is that the question was answered by 59 participants, stating that it was the responsibility of “other”.

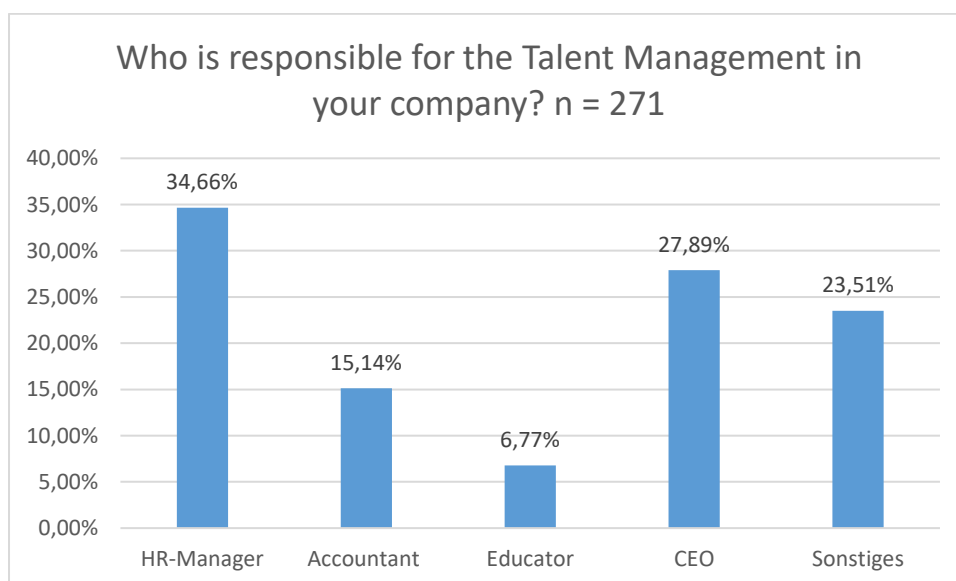


Figure 5: Responsibility of Talent Management

There were 59 participants that stated that someone else than the available options was responsible for Talent Management. Most of the participants stated that it is themselves, which is interpreted as owner of the company, or that no one responsible for Talent Management existed. Several answers also stated department head or manager respectively.

This demonstrates that a variety of people is already engaged in this task and that Talent Management is not only seen as the responsibility of an HR department or HR manager, but rather as dynamic function within companies, where the responsibility is often assigned to the highest position within a (sub-)hierarchy. The fact that out of these 59 answers, 20 SMEs stated that “no one” or “doesn’t exist” etc. was responsible, which is about 7.4 %, is also interesting.

Note: The last value was 20 SMEs choosing “no one” was analysed from the individual given statements and are not separately depicted in Figure 5.

The Swedish partner stated that this question is very interesting and important for the development of the tools in Talent 4.0. The view of Talent Management of either a passive administrative tool or an active/strategic management task. In the Swedish part it was found that 10 respondents pointed out administrative roles, accountants, for Talent Management and CEO and HR-manager collected 14 responses together. In the “other” alternatives, there are four respondents stating that there no one responsible for the Talent Management in the enterprise.

3.1.6 Which of the following pillars of Talent Management do you think your company should improve?

This is an important question of this survey as it indicates what Talent Management processes should be improved according to a self-assessment of the participating European SMEs. Four options, namely “Attract”, “Develop”, “Motivate” and “Retain” were given, as well as the option “other”. It is important to note that for the question multiple answers could be chosen, therefore the number of answers is much larger compared to single answer questions. The results are shown in Figure 6.

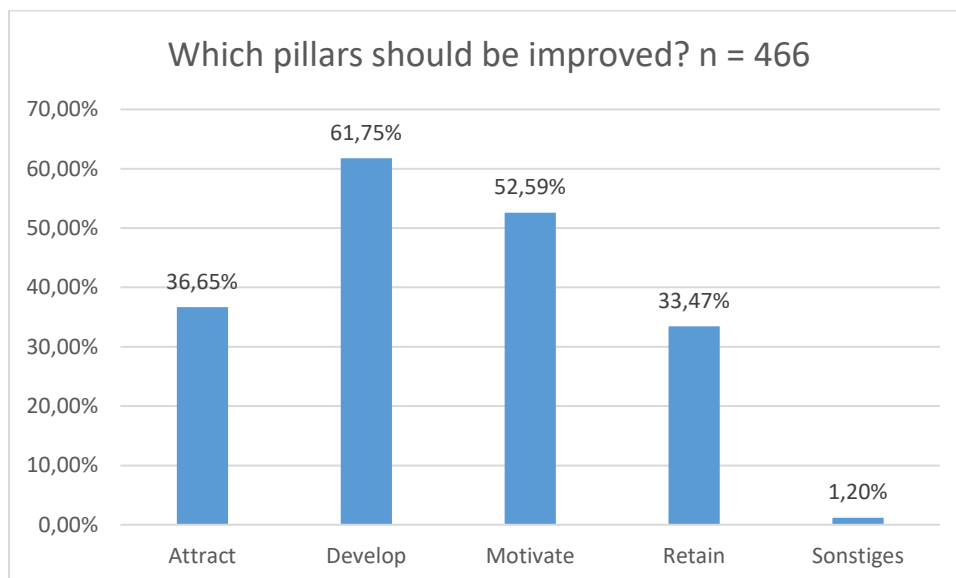


Figure 6: Which pillars of Talent Management should be improved?

As can be seen the pillar “development” was chosen the most by the participating SMEs. Development of employees in the scope of Talent Management is the most striven for part for SMEs. Improving “Development” is followed by the pillar “Motivate”.

These two popular pillars refer to HR processes that address employees already employed in a company. The two other pillars “Attract” and “Retain” are more connected with the notion of in-flow and out-flow of staff, which seems to be less of a problem for the surveyed participants than motivation and development within the companies themselves. However, it has to be said that if employees are motivated and have good development options, the retaining of staff would also be affected. The same applies for the attraction of new employees if a company is known to have good employee development.

It is fascinating to see that only 1.2 % chose “other” as answer. This might be connected with the way the question was designed, as the question was specifically addressing “which of the following pillars should be improved”.

In order to get a clearer picture, the individual country results are investigated in more detail. Table 5 provides a list of the individual countries and their answers. As multiple answer options were given, the percentage value shown in Table 5 refers to the total amount of answers given per country.

Which of the following pillars of Talent Management do you think your company should improve?					
Country	Attract	Develop	Motivate	Retain	Other
Spain (n = 92)	19.57 %	33.70 %	28.26 %	17.39 %	1.09 %
Germany (n = 65)	20.00 %	35.38 %	27.69 %	16.92 %	0.00 %
Ireland (n = 48)	14.58 %	37.50 %	29.17 %	18.75 %	0.00 %
Italy (n = 71)	22.54 %	29.58 %	32.39 %	15.49 %	0.00 %
Cyprus (n = 67)	16.42 %	28.36 %	34.33 %	20.90 %	0.00 %
Sweden (n = 55)	29.09 %	32.73 %	21.82 %	14.55 %	1.82 %
Austria (n = 63)	15.87 %	36.51 %	32.81 %	22.22 %	1.59 %
Total (n = 461)	19.74 %	33.19 %	28.42 %	18.00 %	0.65 %
%-Range Min to max	14.58 - 29.09	28.36 - 37.50	21.82 - 32.81	14.55 - 22.22	0.00 - 1.82
Mean Value	19.72 %	33.39 %	29.50 %	18.03 %	0.64 %

Table 5: Pillars of Talent Management to be improved per Country

When examining the different pillars to choose from, one can see that “Develop” and “Retain” are within a 10 % deviation considering the participating countries. The mean value for “Develop” is also quite high, indicating that not only are the small and medium sized enterprises jointly of the opinion that their respective companies should improve this pillar of Talent Management, but also with the highest mean of more than one third, 33.39 percent to be exact, the statistically adjusted most chosen pillar in every country.

The three answers given under the option “other” were “remuneration, compensation, bonding”, “don’t know” and “premiums”. It can be said that premiums, compensation and remuneration are part of the pillars “Motivate”, “Retain” as well as “Attract”, while bonding is closely connected to the pillars “Develop”, “Motivate” and “Retain”. Premiums in this context are a management strategy for motivation and retaining of employees.

The partner from Cyprus stated that the survey has given them an intriguing insight as to the pillars of Talent Management respondents believe their companies should be improving. The approaches varied with none of the pillars receiving the lion share of the responses. This is somewhat true for all participating countries. It is interesting to note that the ‘Attract’ pillar of Talent Management got the least amount of respondents in Cyprus. This may be considered as an indication that the Executives and Managers of Cypriot SMEs believe that they have this covered and are lacking or should be focusing more on their companies’ processes and actions to Motivate-Train-Retain their staff.

As seen in Table 5, for Sweden the development of existing staff and attraction of new employees are the top alternatives. As there is a quick change in several businesses and individuals need to continuously develop their existing and new skills development is in focus in most SMEs. The reason why "Attract" is a top score is the competition on competences in several sectors of the labour market. The alternative given "other" was a "don't know" response.

3.1.7 In which situation do you think engaging in Talent Management is possible?

The last question of this section is designed to find out what tools in the further development of this project should be aimed at, in order to reach the highest acceptance of future users. Furthermore, the question had the goal on assessing what type of tools are most accepted by SMEs when it comes to engaging in Talent Management.

It is important to note that multiple answers could be given. As seen in Figure 7, the majority of participants chose “In a team” as possibility to engage in Talent Management. This is hardly surprising; however, the fact that “online” received the lowest amount of answers, other than “Other”, is quite interesting. Especially taking into account that the option “Alone” was chosen by 15 more participants. Therefore, the assumption is made that engaging alone and in online resources are somewhat connected, as the possibility of online self-learning can be carried out without engagement of other people.

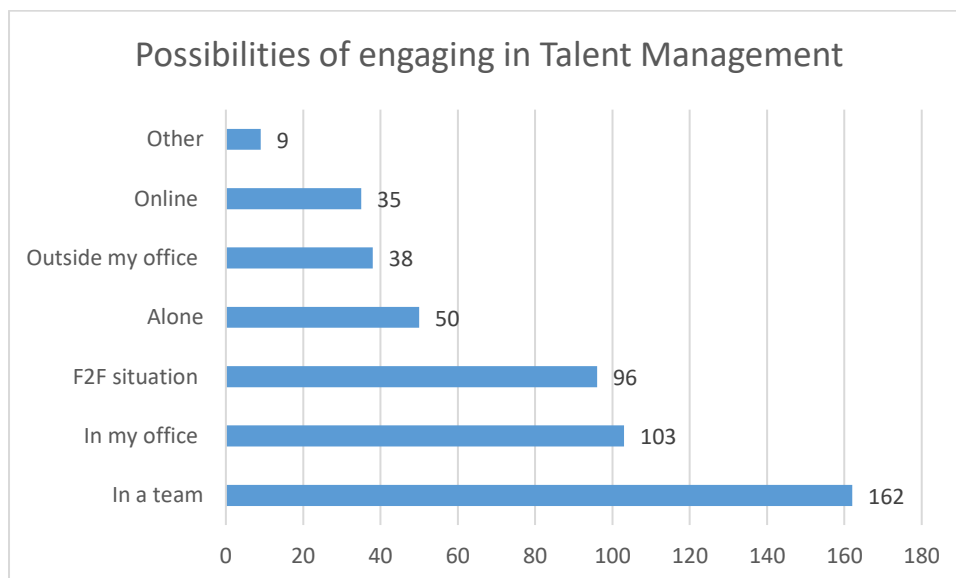


Figure 7: Possibilities of engaging in Talent Management

When comparing the total results it is also noticeable that the answer “in my office” was chosen close to three times more often than “outside my office”, indicating that Talent Management is considered part of an everyday job routine and not something special, like e.g. a field trip or in the free time of the employees. The answers given as “other” were “always when interacting with others”, “Meetings with Area leaders”, “none of the above”, “when challenges emerge”, “I don’t

know”, “while work”, “in everything regarding the personnel” and “in HR in combination with management and a restricted amount of participants”.

In order to investigate if there are any mayor differences between the countries, the individual results are shown in Table 6. As several answers were possible and the percentage is the more meaningful value when examining the individual countries, only the percentage values are displayed. They are in relation to all answers given by the respective country.

In which situation do you think engaging in Talent Management is possible?							
Country	Alone	In a team	F2F situations	Online	In my office	Outside my office	Other
Spain (n = 73)	5.48 %	42.47 %	26.03 %	5.48 %	12.33 %	8.22 %	0.00 %
Germany (n = 68)	2.94 %	27.94 %	29.41 %	4.41 %	29.41 %	5.88 %	0.00 %
Ireland (n = 56)	23.21 %	37.50 %	5.36 %	7.14 %	17.86 %	7.14 %	1.79 %
Italy (n = 77)	22.08 %	40.26 %	11.69 %	1.30 %	19.48 %	5.19 %	0.00 %
Cyprus (n = 86)	8.14 %	29.07 %	26.74 %	8.14 %	18.60 %	6.98 %	2.33 %
Sweden (n = 63)	6.35 %	26.98 %	11.11 %	12.70 %	20.63 %	14.29 %	7.94 %
Austria (n = 62)	3.23 %	25.81 %	20.97 %	11.29 %	30.65 %	6.45 %	1.61 %
%-Range Min to max	2.94 - 23.21	25.81 - 42.47	5.36 - 29.41	1.3 - 12.70	12.33 - 30.65	5.19 - 14.29	0.00 - 7.94
Mean	10.20 %	32.86 %	18.76 %	7.21 %	21.28 %	7.74 %	1.95 %

Table 6: Possibilities of Engaging in Talent Management per Country

As seen in the table above the ranges between the countries actually vary a lot. This should be considered in any further project work. As e.g., Germany had only 2.94 % of participants choosing the option of “Alone”, while in Ireland 23.21 % chose this option. The same takes place for “F2F situations” where e.g. 5.36 % in Ireland and 29.41 % in Germany chose this option. This could be due to cultural differences. However, the data available does not validate this assumption. Therefore, the deviation between the individual countries where the SMEs are located needs to be considered.

The statements given under the option “other” included “none of the above”, “in the HR department in combination with managers and targeted selection of talents”, “always when interacting with others”, “don’t know”, “at work” and “everything that has to do with personnel”.

3.2 Section 2 - “Which Talents?”

This part of the survey examines how the participants rate competences that are crucial for their company’s success and therefore form the basis of any Talent Management activities. Eight competences were preselected, while the last question was designed in order to find out what competences and attributes the participants think were missing in the context of Talent Management.

3.2.1 Social Skills

This question examines how the surveyed participants value a particular talent or rather which value they attribute to the “talents” competency. The possible answers range from “Very Unimportant” to “Very Important”. This question examines the competence “Social Skills”.

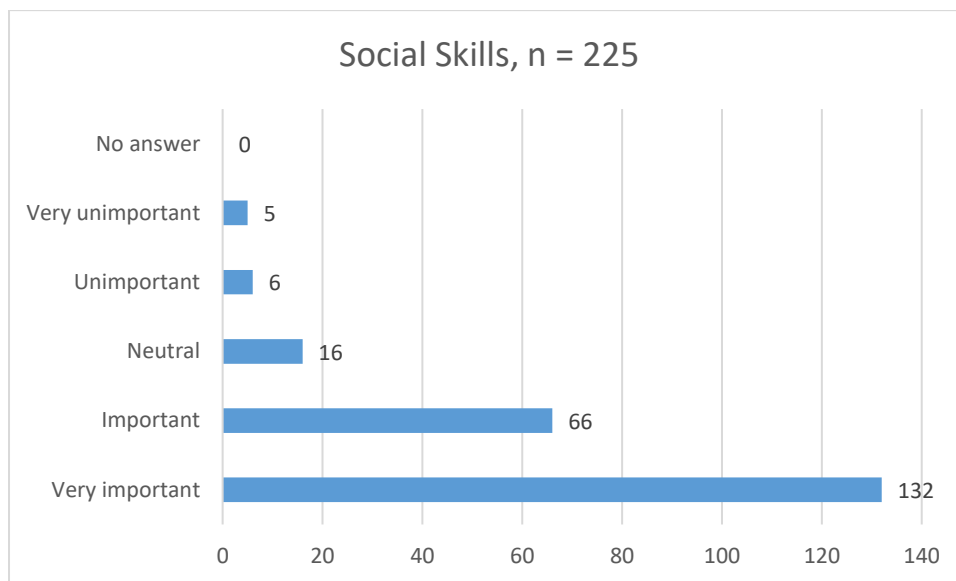


Figure 8: Talent Competencies - Social Skills

58.67 % of the participating small and medium sizes enterprises see “Social Skills” as a very important attribute, while only 2.22 % chose that it is very unimportant. This might be explained that very few jobs do not require social skills in order to be performed well. When taken into account that 29.33 % think that social skills are important, almost 90% of all respondents see social skills as essential and important features for talent. In order to see if there are any differences between the individual countries, the individual surveys were examined. This was done, in order to see if the allocation from “very important” to “unimportant” from the total statistic, as presented in Figure 8, reflect the opinions in each country as well.

In Table 7, the value attributed to “Social Skills” according to each country can be seen.

The value attributed to following “talents” competencies - Social Skills						
Country	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very unimportant	No answer
Spain (n = 41)	26.83 %	58.54 %	12.20 %	0.00 %	2.44 %	0.00 %
Germany (n = 30)	80.00 %	16.67 %	3.33 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Ireland (n = 33)	78.79 %	12.12 %	9.09 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Italy (n = 33)	36.36 %	54.55 %	9.09 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Cyprus (n = 31)	58.06 %	3.23 %	9.68 %	19.35 %	9.68 %	0.00 %
Sweden (n = 27)	59.26 %	37.04 %	3.70 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Austria (n = 28)	85.71 %	14.29 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Total (n = 223)	60.72 %	28.06 %	6.73 %	2.76 %	1.73 %	0.00 %

Table 7: Value attributed to “talents” competencies - Social Skills - per Country

As can be seen, only participants of two countries chose the option “Very unimportant”, and only participants from one country chose “Unimportant”. This suggests and underlines the previously made assumption that small and medium sized enterprises see “Social Skills” as something a “talented” employee should possess. When looking at the individual country results and coupling “very important” and “important” together, the lowest value is Cyprus with approximately 61 %, followed by Spain with 85 %. All other countries are above 91 %, with Austria reaching 100 %. This again is a clear indication that Social Skills are something desired for by SMEs.

3.2.2 Motivation

This question examines how the surveyed participants value a particular talent or rather which value they attribute to the “talents” competency. The possible answers range from “Very Unimportant” to “Very Important”. This question examines the competence “Motivation”.

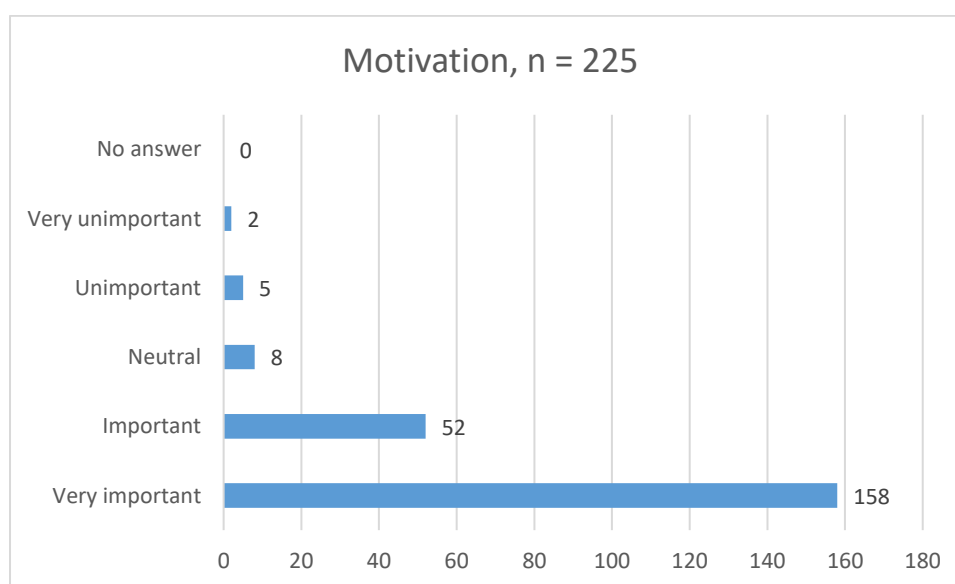


Figure 9: Talent Competencies - Motivation

70.22 % of the participating SMEs see “Motivation” as a very important attribute, while only 0.89 % chose that it is very unimportant. When considering that 23.11 % think that motivation is important, the total percentage for regarding this attribute as essential comes to 93.33 % of all participants. This aligns with question 2.1.6 where more than 50.00 % said that their company should improve on the Talent Management pillar motivation. Motivation is clearly seen as one of the most important aspects an employee should possess according to the surveyed small and medium sized enterprises.

The value attributed to following “talents” competencies - Motivation						
Country	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very unimportant	No answer
Spain (n = 41)	63.41 %	36.59 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Germany (n = 30)	76.67 %	23.33 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Ireland (n = 33)	63.64 %	27.27 %	9.09 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Italy (n = 33)	72.73 %	27.27 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Cyprus (n = 31)	54.48 %	9.68 %	16.13 %	16.13 %	3.23 %	0.00 %
Sweden (n = 27)	81.48 %	18.52 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Austria (n = 28)	89.29 %	10.71 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Total (n = 223)	71.67 %	21.91 %	3.60 %	2.30 %	0.46 %	0.00 %

Table 8: Value attributed to “talents” competencies - Motivation - per Country

When the individual countries are represented, one can see that the results are very similar between the individual countries. They are also quite similar to the competency of “Social Skills” (see chapter 2.2.1). Only in Cyprus did some participants choose “unimportant” or very “unimportant” as answers to the question, however, most participants in Cyprus still chose that the attribute motivation as “very important”.

3.2.3 Leadership

This question examines how the surveyed participants value a particular talent or rather which value they attribute to the “talents” competency. The possible answers range from “Very Unimportant” to “Very Important”. This question examines the competence “Leadership”.

In Figure 10 it can be seen that, same as for motivation and social skills, the attribute leadership was chosen by a majority of the participating SMEs as very important.

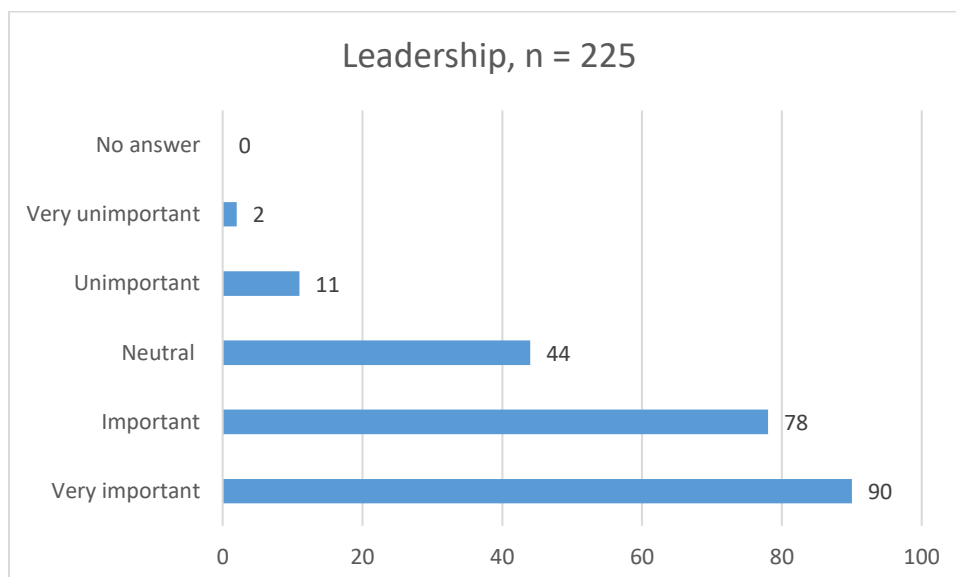


Figure 10: Talent Competencies - Leadership

While 40.00 % stated leadership is very important, 34.67 % said that it is important. Adding these two values together, 74.67 % see leadership as an essential attribute of employees. Only 0.89 % stated that leadership is very unimportant and 4.89 % see it as unimportant. It is interesting that when it comes to leadership, compared to the two previous competencies, 44 participants or 19.56 % chose the answer “neutral”, suggesting that leadership in their branch or business is not seen as such an essential attribute than motivation or social skills.

The value attributed to following “talents” competencies - Leadership						
Country	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very unimportant	No answer
Spain (n = 41)	48.78 %	46.34 %	4.88 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Germany (n = 30)	23.33 %	30.00 %	36.67 %	10.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Ireland (n = 33)	48.48 %	24.24 %	21.21 %	6.06 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Italy (n = 33)	45.45 %	45.45 %	9.09 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Cyprus (n = 31)	38.71 %	19.35 %	19.35 %	16.13 %	6.45 %	0.00 %
Sweden (n = 27)	14.81 %	51.85 %	29.63 %	3.70 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Austria (n = 28)	57.14 %	21.43 %	21.43 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Total (n = 223)	39.53 %	34.09 %	20.32 %	5.13 %	0.92 %	0.00 %

Table 9: Value attributed to “talents” competencies - Leadership - per Country

When comparing “Leadership” in the individual country results, it can be seen that participants from all countries chose “neutral”. This is different to the competency of “Motivation” in the previous question. It might suggest that some of the participants are rather small SMEs, where the CEO or owner makes most of the decisions, so when it comes to other personnel this attribute is not considered as important as other attributes. However, it has to be mentioned that except for Sweden, in all other countries, the highest number of responses were given to “Very important”. However, also in Sweden more than 50 % chose the option “important”.

3.2.4 Technical Skills

This question examines how the surveyed participants value a particular talent or rather which value they attribute to the “talents” competency. The possible answers range from “Very Unimportant” to “Very Important”. This question examines the competence “Technical Skills”.

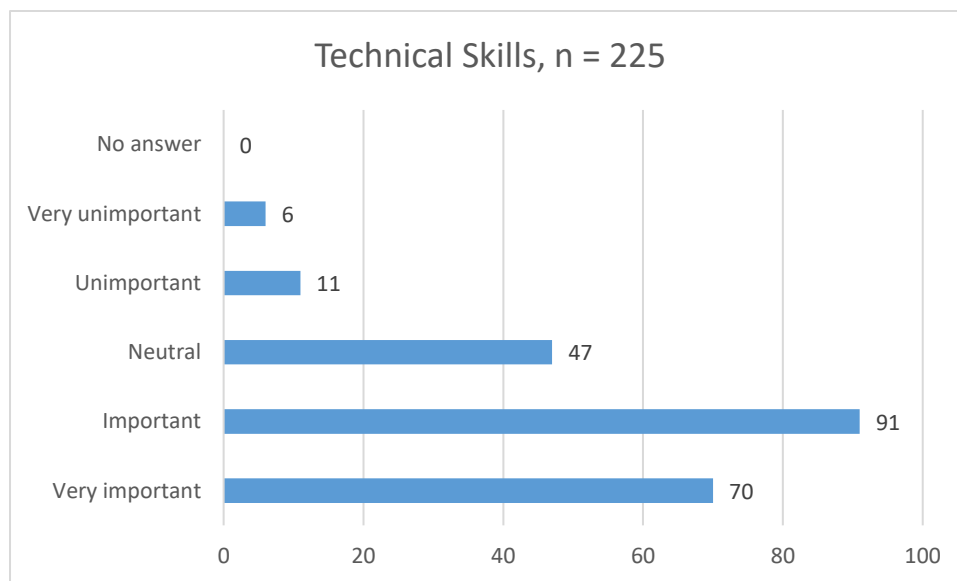


Figure 11: Talent Competencies - Technical Skills

Compared to the competences from above - social skills, motivation and leadership - the attribute technical skills is the first attribute where the majority did not choose very important. However, as can be seen in Figure 11 the majority, with 40.44 %, stated that technical skills are important. Very important was chosen by 31.11 % of the participants.

In addition, for this attribute, 47 participants or 20.89 % chose that they see it as neutral. Compared to social skills (11), motivation (7) and leadership (13), 17 people or 7.56 % chose the answers unimportant or very unimportant. This already gives a slight indication of which attributes are of the highest interest for small and medium sized enterprises in the European Union.

The value attributed to following “talents” competencies - Technical Skills						
Country	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very unimportant	No answer
Spain (n = 41)	31.71 %	56.10 %	12.20 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Germany (n = 30)	23.33 %	40.00 %	36.67 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Ireland (n = 33)	21.21 %	33.33 %	30.30 %	12.12 %	3.03 %	0.00 %
Italy (n = 33)	48.48 %	51.52 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Cyprus (n = 31)	22.58 %	25.81 %	22.58 %	16.13 %	12.90 %	0.00 %
Sweden (n = 27)	14.81 %	55.56 %	25.93 %	3.70 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Austria (n = 28)	53.57 %	17.86 %	21.43 %	3.57 %	3.57 %	0.00 %
Total (n = 223)	30.81 %	40.03 %	21.30 %	3.57 %	3.57 %	0.00 %

Table 10: Value attributed to “talents” competencies - Technical Skills - per Country

Investigating the individual countries, it can be observed that the trend from the questions above, where most countries chose “Very important”, “Important” and “neutral” does not continue, but rather that the competency “Technical skills” is considered not as essential as a talent competency like e.g. “Motivation”. Again, this might have something to do with the individual sectors in which the participants of the survey operate.

3.2.5 Adaptability

This question examines how the surveyed participants value a particular talent or rather which value they attribute to the “talents” competency. The possible answers range from “Very Unimportant” to “Very Important”. This question examines the competence “Adaptability”.

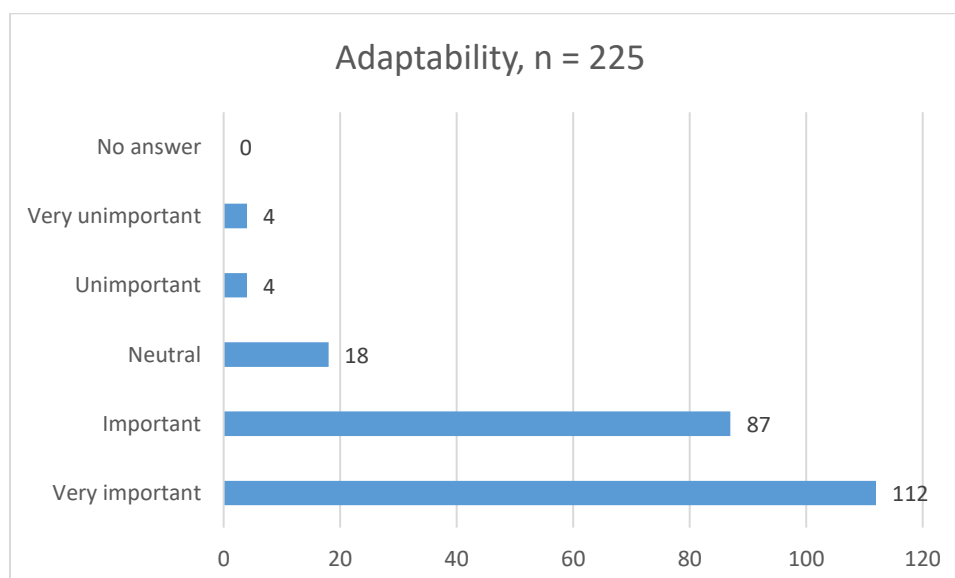


Figure 12: Talent Competencies - Adaptability

Adaptability was chosen by 112 participants or 49.78 % as very important. Only eight participants chose that the skill of adaptability was either unimportant or very unimportant. “Adaptability”, like the before mentioned competencies, seems to be a valuable asset within employees.

The value attributed to following “talents” competencies - Adaptability						
Country	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very unimportant	No answer
Spain (n = 41)	58.54 %	39.20 %	2.44 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Germany (n = 30)	26.67 %	60.00 %	13.33 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Ireland (n = 33)	48.48 %	36.36 %	9.09 %	3.03 %	3.03 %	0.00 %
Italy (n = 33)	54.55 %	39.39 %	6.06 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Cyprus (n = 31)	38.71 %	32.26 %	12.90 %	9.68 %	6.45 %	0.00 %
Sweden (n = 27)	55.56 %	40.74 %	3.70 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Austria (n = 28)	64.29 %	25.00 %	10.71 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Total (n = 223)	49.54 %	38.99 %	8.32 %	1.82 %	1.35 %	0.00 %

Table 11: Value attributed to “talents” competencies - Adaptability - per Country

The individual country results demonstrate a sort of uniformity concerning the conception of the attribute of “adaptability”. In general, it is seen as a “very important” feature that SMEs within Europe are looking for in their employees. Only in Germany, did more participating SMEs chose “important”.

3.2.6 Specialization

This question examines how the surveyed participants value a particular talent or rather which value they attribute to the “talents” competency. The possible answers range from “Very Unimportant” to “Very Important”. This question examines the competence “Specialization”. In contrast to the competencies asked in the preceding questions, “Specialisation” was not seen as a “very important” attribute regarding Talent Management. While most participants rated this particular skill as “important”, approximately 25 % of the participants rated the skill “specialisation” as neutral.

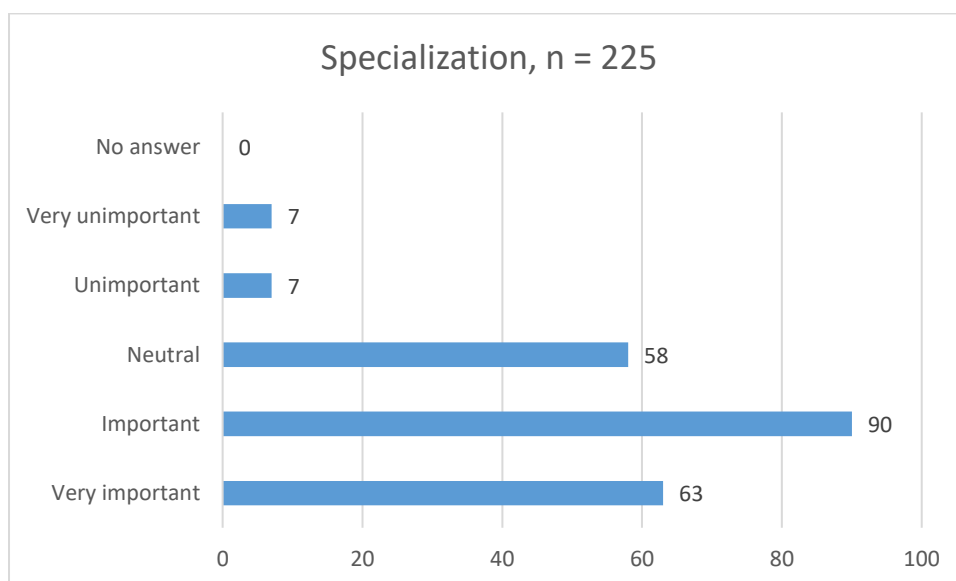


Figure 13: Talent Competencies - Specialization

When investigating the individual country results one can see that there are big variations regarding the value attributed to the competency “Specialisation”. While Austrian SMEs rated this particular skill with approximately 65 % as “Very Important”, only about 9.7 % of asked SMEs from Cyprus valued it at the same level.

The value attributed to following “talents” competencies - Specialization						
Country	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very unimportant	No answer
Spain (n = 41)	16.51 %	53.66 %	26.83 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Germany (n = 30)	26.67 %	30.00 %	40.00 %	3.33 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Ireland (n = 33)	36.36 %	18.18 %	27.27 %	9.09 %	9.09 %	0.00 %
Italy (n = 33)	33.33 %	63.64 %	3.03 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Cyprus (n = 31)	9.68 %	41.94 %	29.03 %	9.68 %	9.68 %	0.00 %
Sweden (n = 27)	25.93 %	33.33 %	40.74 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Austria (n = 28)	64.29 %	25.00 %	10.71 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Total (n = 223)	30.40 %	37.96 %	25.37 %	3.16 %	2.68 %	0.00 %

Table 12: Value attributed to “talents” competencies - Specialization - per Country

It can also be seen that especially SMEs of Ireland and Cyprus chose to value “very unimportant” to the skill of “specialization”. In both cases, close to 10 % of each country attributed this value. This is interesting as none of the other participating countries valued this competency as “very unimportant”. Therefore, for the future development of the project, this finding should be included.

3.2.7 Professional Skills

This question examines how the surveyed participants value a particular talent or rather which value they attribute to the “talents” competency. The possible answers range from “Very Unimportant” to “Very Important”. This question examines the competence “Professional Skills”.

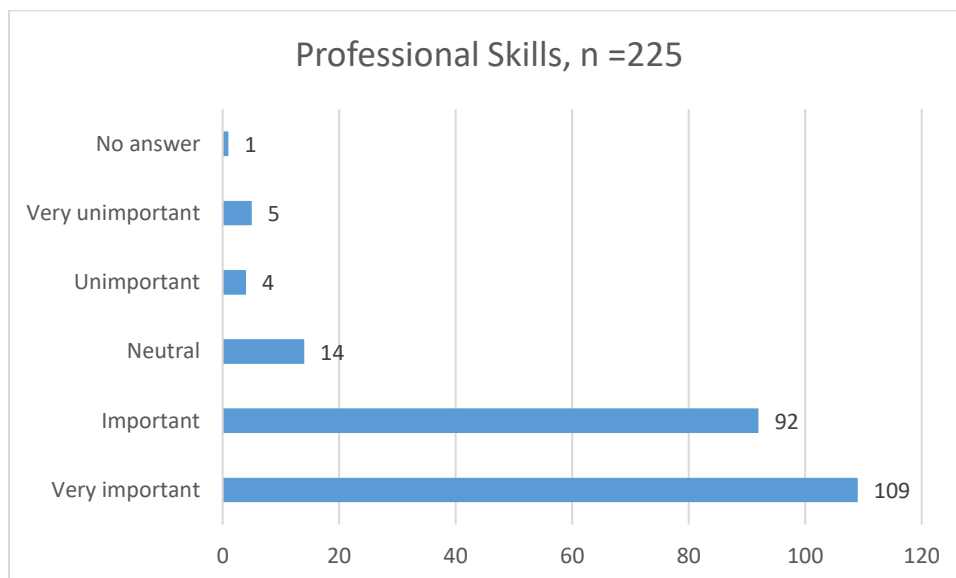


Figure 14: Talent Competencies - Professional Skills

Following the trend of the competencies before, also “Professional Skills” are considered “very important” or “important” by most participants. While 48.44 % chose, “very important” and 40.89 % chose “important”, only 2.22 % of the surveyed SMEs said it is very unimportant.

The value attributed to following “talents” competencies - Professional Skills						
Country	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very unimportant	No answer
Spain (n = 41)	21.95 %	68.29 %	9.76 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Germany (n = 30)	53.55 %	43.33 %	3.33 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Ireland (n = 33)	48.48 %	42.42 %	9.09 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Italy (n = 33)	57.58 %	42.42 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Cyprus (n = 31)	51.61 %	19.35 %	3.23 %	12.90 %	12.90 %	0.00 %
Sweden (n = 27)	33.33 %	48.15 %	14.81 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	3,70 %
Austria (n = 28)	50.00 %	32.14 %	17.86 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Total (n = 223)	45.21 %	42.30 %	8.30 %	1.84 %	1.84 %	0.53 %

Table 13: Value attributed to “talents” competencies - Professional Skills - per Country

The main difference between the countries for this skill can be seen in Spain and Sweden compared to the other countries. It is also, once again, the Cyprus SMEs that chose all available options, however, more than half still stated “Professions Skills” are “very important”.

3.2.8 Business Domain Knowledge

This question examines how the surveyed participants value a particular talent or rather which value they attribute to the “talents” competency. The possible answers range from “Very Unimportant” to “Very Important”. This question examines the competence “Business Domain Knowledge”.

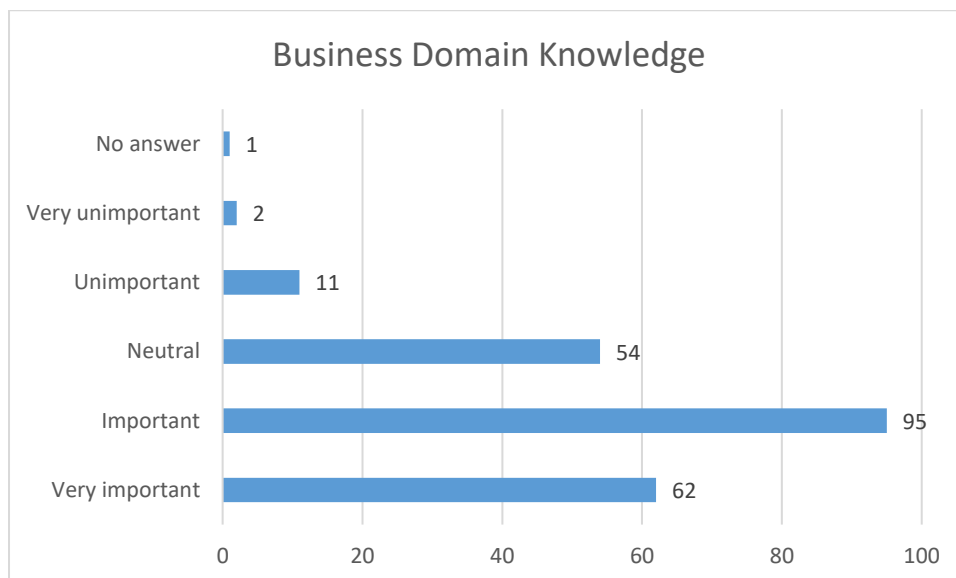


Figure 15: Talent Competencies - Business Domain Knowledge

The last skill asked was “Business Domain Knowledge”. While it is clear from Figure 15: Talent Competencies - Business Domain Knowledge that the majority thinks, it is either “important” (42.22 %) or “very important” (27.56 %), the main difference to the other surveyed skills lies with the huge amount (24.00 %) of answers picking the option “Neutral”.

The value attributed to following “talents” competencies - Business Domain Knowledge						
Country	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very unimportant	No answer
Spain (n = 41)	14.63 %	63.41 %	21.95 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Germany (n = 30)	40.00 %	46.67 %	10.00 %	3.33 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Ireland (n = 33)	39.39 %	30.30 %	21.21 %	6.06 %	3.03 %	0.00 %
Italy (n = 33)	9.09 %	45.45 %	39.39 %	6.06 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Cyprus (n = 31)	12.90 %	38.71 %	25.81 %	19.35 %	3.23 %	0.00 %
Sweden (n = 27)	7.41 %	48.15 %	40.74 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	3.70 %
Austria (n = 28)	82.14 %	14.29 %	3.57 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Total (n = 223)	29.37 %	41.00 %	23.24 %	4.97 %	0.89 %	0.53 %

Table 14: Value attributed to “talents” competencies - Business Domain Knowledge - per Country

3.2.9 Comparison of Results

Here the results from above (2.2.1 to 2.2.8) are compared in order to establish a ranking of importance for the different competencies according to the participating SMEs of this survey.

The individual skills are taken from the overall survey results, therefore, also including survey participants who did not choose a country, as the number of participants is higher and therefore more relevant for statistical purposes.

The value attributed to “talents” competencies - Comparison						
Talent (n = 225)	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very unimportant	No answer
Social Skills	58.67 %	29.33 %	7.11 %	2.67 %	2.22 %	0.00 %
Motivation	70.22 %	23.11 %	3.56 %	2.22 %	0.89 %	0.00 %
Leadership	40.00 %	34.67 %	19.56 %	4.89 %	0.89 %	0.00 %
Technical Skills	31.11 %	40.44 %	20.89 %	4.89 %	2.67 %	0.00 %
Adaptability	49.78 %	38.67 %	8.00 %	1.78 %	1.78 %	0.00 %
Specialisation	28.00 %	40.00 %	25.78 %	3.11 %	3.11 %	0.00 %
Professional Skills	48.44 %	40.89 %	6.22 %	1.78 %	2.22 %	0.44 %
Business Domain Knowledge	27.56 %	42.22 %	24.00 %	4.89 %	0.89 %	0.44 %

Table 15: Comparison of “talents” competencies

When the different competencies are ranked according to the option “Very Important”, it results in following ranking:

Rank	Competency	Percentage
1	Motivation	70.22 %
2	Social Skills	58.67 %
3	Adaptability	49.78 %
4	Professional Skills	48.44 %
5	Leadership	40.00 %
6	Technical Skills	31.11 %
7	Specialisation	28.00 %
8	Business Domain Knowledge	27.56 %

Table 16: Ranking of “talents” competencies according to “Very Important”

To see if the same ranking arises in the second positive attribute “important”, the next ranking undergone is according to the option “Important”:

Rank	Competency	Percentage
1	Technical Skills	40.44 %
2	Business Domain Knowledge	42.22 %
3	Professional Skills	40.89 %
4	Specialisation	40.00 %
5	Adaptability	38.67 %
6	Leadership	34.67 %
7	Social Skills	29.33 %
8	Motivation	23.11 %

Table 17: Ranking of “talents” competencies according to “Important”

Those two rankings are not comparable, however, it can be seen that e.g. “Social Skills” and “Motivation” are taking the last places, because they had the most votes with “Very Important”. However, in order to get a reasonable result, “important” and “very important” are combined into a new category “Paramount” and a new rating is generated:

Rank	Competency	Percentage
1	Motivation	93.33 %
2	Professional Skills	89.33 %
3	Adaptability	88.45 %
4	Social Skills	88.00 %
5	Leadership	74.67 %
6	Technical Skills	71.55 %
7	Business Domain Knowledge	69.78 %
8	Specialisation	68.00 %

Table 18: Ranking of “talents” competencies according to “Paramount”

From this list, it can be concluded that SMEs in Europe look for motivated people with good professional and social skills that are also adaptable. Although all other competencies have a score higher than 68 %, the project should focus on the top four competencies as they are all above 88 %.

It is also important to see, what happens when the ranking is done according to the combined option of “unimportant” and “very unimportant” called “Trivial”. In the following ranking, the first place is seen as the most trivial competency while place 8, with the lowest “unimportant score”, should be seen as the most important trivial competency:

Rank	Competency	Percentage
1	Technical Skills	7.56 %
2	Specialisation	6.22 %
3	Leadership/ Business Domain Knowledge	5.78 %
4	Leadership/ Business Domain Knowledge	5.78 %
5	Social Skills	4.89 %
6	Professional Skills	4.00 %
7	Adaptability	3.56 %
8	Motivation	3.11 %

Table 19: Ranking of “talents” competencies according to “Trivial”

When comparing both rankings it can be seen that the same four competencies (Motivation, Professional skills, Adaptability, Social Skills) have the highest important rankings as well the lowest unimportant rankings. Therefore, as mentioned above a focus should be on these four competencies.

3.2.10 Are there any competences that you miss?

This question gave the participants the option of choosing whether any important competences other than the attributes mentioned in 2.2.1 - 2.2.8 were missing. From 225 participants only 68 (30.22 %) gave an answer. Due to a language barrier (most participants answered in their own language and not all answers were translated), only a couple of the given statements are mentioned here, however they should be considered when continuing with this project:

- Creativity
- Flexibility
- Passion
- Legal Knowledge
- Ability to work in a team
- Project Management

3.3 Section 3 - “Implementing Talent Management”

This section of the questionnaire asked the participating companies to give estimations on their willingness of spending time and resources on implementing Talent Management within their companies.

3.3.1 Which personnel development measure do you find most important?

This question was aimed at the personal opinion of the persons surveyed on which measure regarding the development of staff they find most important. Several answers were possible. The option “Onboarding Coaching” was chosen the most by the participating SMEs, closely followed by “Trainee programs”. This gives a slight indication that “direct” and “on the job” training is favoured by the SMEs in Europe.

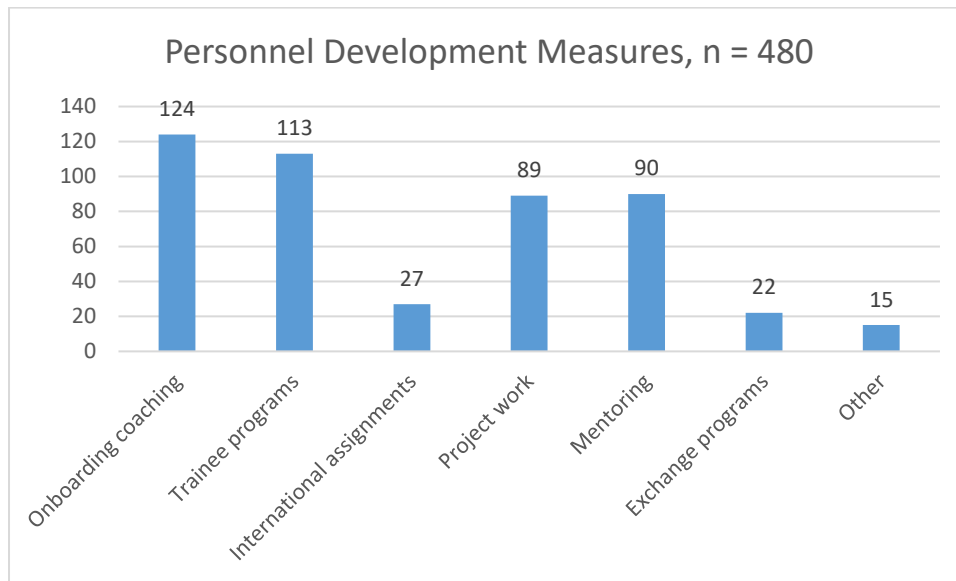


Figure 16: Personnel Development Measure

By far the biggest popularity with 25.83 % had “Onboarding Coaching”, which was followed by “trainee programs” with 23.54 %. “Project Work” and “Mentoring” closely enjoy the same attention with 18.75 % and 18.54 % respectively.

As “others” some statements were also given. Among others, the following:

- Further Education
- Task Forces
- Job Rotation
- Teamwork
- Practical Training
- Continuous qualification

In order to see if there are certain personnel development measures for a specific country, the individual countries were further investigated. It is important to mention that several options could be chosen.

Note: Due to a lack of space, following abbreviations are used in Table 20:

- Onboarding Coaching: OC
- Trainee Programms: TP
- International Assignment: IA
- Project Work: PW
- Mentoring: M
- Exchange Programs: EP
- Other: O

Personnel Development Measures							
Country	OC	TP	IA	PW	M	EP	O
Spain (n = 94)	21.28 %	28.72 %	6.38 %	25.53 %	11.70 %	5.32 %	1.06 %
Germany (n = 63)	39.68 %	14.29 %	0.00 %	20.63 %	11.11 %	11.11 %	3.17 %
Ireland (n = 49)	20.41 %	30.61 %	4.08 %	14.29 %	30.61 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Italy (n = 78)	29.49 %	35.90 %	2.56 %	11.54 %	15.38 %	2.56 %	2.56 %
Cyprus (n = 75)	14.67 %	24.00 %	10.67 %	16.00 %	32.00 %	2.67 %	0.00 %
Sweden (n = 52)	26.92 %	7.69 %	3.85 %	25.00 %	19.23 %	1.92 %	15.38 %
Austria (n = 62)	32.26 %	17.74 %	8.06 %	16.13 %	16.13 %	6.45 %	3.23 %

Table 20: Personnel Development Measures - per Country

When investigating the individual countries some deviations to the total score can be seen. For example, only Germany, Sweden and Austria rated “Onboarding Coaching” as their favourite choice regarding Personnel Development Measures. For Spain and Italy, it is “Trainee Programms” and for Cyprus, it is “Mentoring”. In Ireland, the two options “Trainee Program” and “Mentoring” had the same top score.

The lowest score for the total amount was “Exchange programs”, excluding the option “other”. Looking at the individual countries reveals that this also applies for the individual countries. However, 11.11 % of German SMEs chose this option and in Italy, it is ex aequo with 2.56 % with “International Assignment”.

3.3.2 Willingness to dedicate time and effort in promoting Talent Management in your company?

This and the next question are of high importance for this survey, as without resources, time and effort, and therefore the willingness, from the side of the European SMEs all other information does not really matter. This question deals with the willingness to dedicate time and effort in promoting Talent Management within the own company. The answer-options for this question were “not interested at all”, “slightly interested”, “moderately interested”, “very interested” and “extremely interested”. Furthermore, the option “no answer” was given, which was chosen by none of the participating SMEs.

When looking at Figure 17, one can see that a large portion of the SMEs stated that they are “very interested” in promoting Talent Management in their company. To be precise 51.83 % chose this option. This was followed by “moderately interested” which 28.44 % chose. Those two numbers indicate that more than 75 % are interested in investing time and effort in Talent Management. Seeing as the option “extremely interested” also received 10.09 %, the indication that European small and medium sized enterprises want to tackle and implement the challenge of Talent Management is given. This is furthermore underlined by the only 3.67 % who are not at all interested.

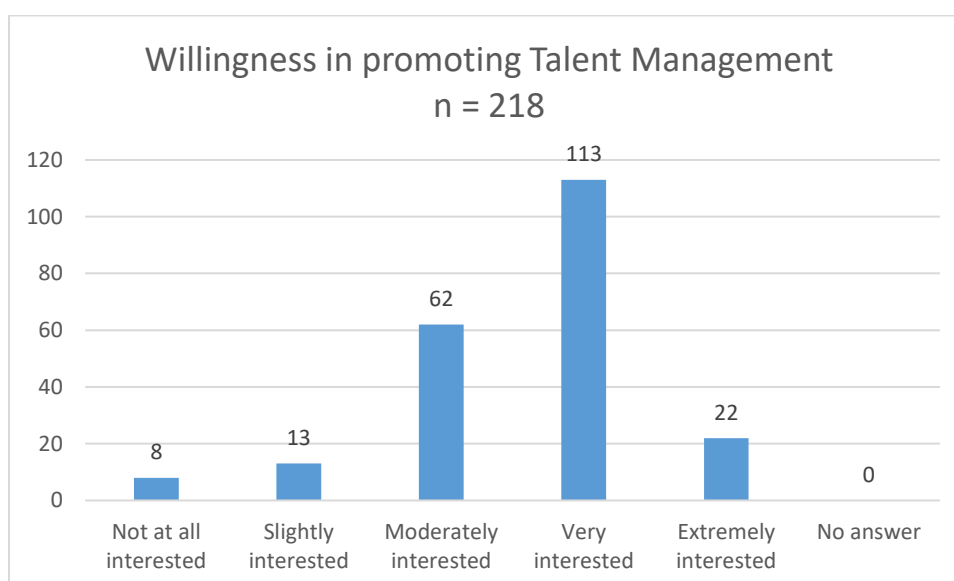


Figure 17: Willingness in promoting Talent Management

Although these results give a positive indication, not only for Talent Management, but also for the project as a whole, it is important to investigate whether all of the participating countries feel the same about this. For this reason, the individual country results are depicted in Table 21.

Willingness in Promoting Talent Management						
Country	Not at all interested	Slightly interested	Moderately interested	Very interested	Extremely interested	No answer
Spain (n = 38)	0.00 %	5.26 %	18.42 %	65.79 %	10.53 %	0.00 %
Germany (n = 30)	3.33 %	13.33 %	36.67 %	36.67 %	10.00 %	0.00 %
Ireland (n = 33)	18.18 %	6.06 %	39.39 %	36.36 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Italy (n = 33)	0.00 %	0.00 %	24.24 %	72.73 %	3.03 %	0.00 %
Cyprus (n = 29)	0.00 %	6.90 %	10.34 %	58.62 %	24.14 %	0.00 %
Sweden (n = 25)	4.00 %	8.00 %	36.00 %	44.00 %	8.00 %	0.00 %
Austria (n = 28)	0.00 %	3.57 %	39.29 %	42.86 %	14.29 %	0.00 %
Total (n = 216)	3.64 %	6.16 %	29.19 %	51.00 %	10.00 %	0.00 %

Table 21: Willingness in Promoting Talent Management - per Country

When investigating the individual countries, the only country where the participating SMEs did not choose “Very Interested” as the most chosen answer was Ireland and by some extent Germany. In the latter case, German SMEs chose “Very Interested” and “Moderately Interested” equally often. For Ireland, the option that was chosen more often was “Moderately Interested” which still indicates a general interest. Furthermore, it has to be said that only 3.03 % of Irish SMEs chose this option more often.

3.3.3 How much time are you willing to dedicate to enhance your knowledge in Talent Management implementation per month?

This question is a direct follow-up question the 2.3.2. As it was seen in that question, most of the participating SMEs have a willingness to promote Talent Management and are interested in doing it. Therefore, it is logical to ask them how much time they are willing to spend, or rather dedicate on educating themselves in this topic as well as to implement it in their companies.

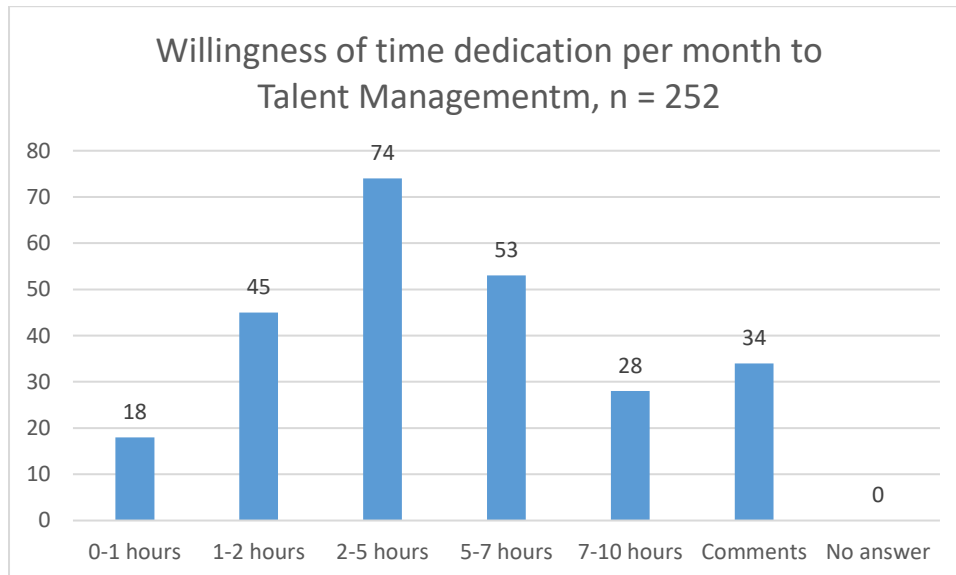


Figure 18: Willingness of time dedication per month to Talent Management

The results to this question are very interesting. As shown in Figure 18, about one third of SMEs in Europe, 33.94 % to be precise, are willing to dedicate between 2 to 5 hours per month to Talent Management. Taking into account the fact that SMEs are often facing the problem of not having time for any activity outside their core-business, this is a surprising result. It is also interesting to see that 12.84 % are willing to spend 7 to 10 hours a month.

There were also some comments given to this question. Again, there was a language barrier, but some selected comments are shown in the following:

- “I miss specialized technical skills very significantly”
- “I don't think I'd need more for the size of my business (1-2 hours)”
- “I can dedicate the appropriate time to one day per month without affecting the quality of my work.”
- “I consider it a strategic objective in my company.”
- “Whatever time is necessary is necessary for training in a particular task.”
- “One day a week”
- “Up to 12 hours a week”
- “3 times a year”
- “more than 10 hours”
- Etc.

The comments indicate a genuinely positive attitude, albeit reflecting that time is a critical resource for SMEs. However, most comments and the statistic above indicate that Talent Management seems to be an important topic to European SMEs.

Again, the individual countries are investigated in order to see, if there are any country-specifics that need to be taken into account.

How much time are you willing to dedicate to Talent Management per month?							
Country	0-1 h	1-2 h	2-5 h	5-7 h	7-10 h	Comments	No answer
Spain (n = 51)	00.00 %	15.79 %	39.47 %	26.32 %	18.42 %	34.21 %	0.00 %
Germany (n = 33)	10.00 %	26.67 %	30.00 %	23.33 %	10.00 %	10.00 %	0.00 %
Ireland (n = 39)	15.15 %	15.15 %	30.30 %	15.15 %	24.24 %	18.18 %	0.00 %
Italy (n = 35)	3.03 %	27.27 %	39.39 %	30.30 %	0.00 %	6.06 %	0.00 %
Cyprus (n = 29)	10.34 %	27.59 %	37.59 %	24.14 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %
Sweden (n = 33)	4.00 %	20.00 %	20.00 %	32.00 %	24.00 %	32.00 %	0.00 %
Austria (n = 30)	17.86 %	14.29 %	32.14 %	21.43 %	14.29 %	7.14 %	0.00 %
Total (n = 250)	8.63 %	20.97 %	32.70 %	24.67 %	12.99 %	15.37 %	0.00 %

Table 22: Time willing to dedicate to Talent Management - per Country

When looking at the individual countries, one can see that they mostly align with the overall results. Only in Sweden did more SMEs choose that they would spend 5 to 7 hours a month on Talent Management. However, most importantly the individual countries also show the European trend that there is an interest from the SMEs in fostering and implementing Talent Management.

3.3.4 What type of “training” do you believe will best help you to enhance your knowledge of Talent Management?

This question was chosen to figure out what the participating SMEs think would be the best approach to enhance their knowledge of Talent Management. This is important for the project Talent 4.0 as it helps in choosing the appropriate tools to comply with the wishes of the affected participants as well as to enhance the knowledge of Talent Management in the best and most accepted way possible. Several options were possible.

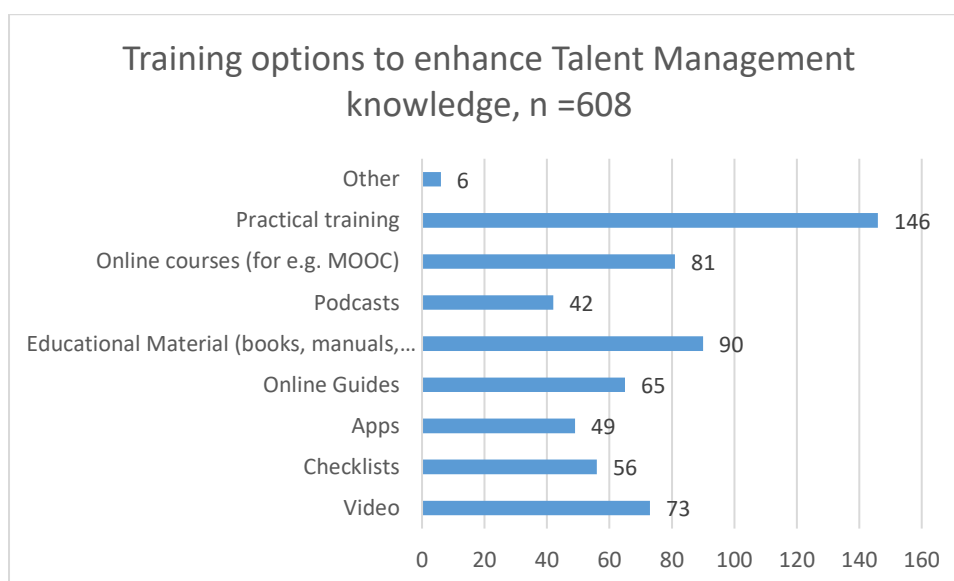


Figure 19: Training options to enhance Talent Management knowledge

As seen in Figure 19 most participants chose the option “Practical Training” with 24.01 %. This is followed by “Educational Material” with 14.80 % and “Online Courses” with 13.32 %. The next place was “Videos” with 12.01 % and “Online Guides” with 10.69 %. All other options were below 10 %, however, for the sake of completeness they are: “Checklists” with 9.21 %, “Applications/Apps” with 8.06 % and “Podcasts” with 6.91 %. Six comments were also given which are listed in the following:

- “Sharing experiences with peers in my sector.”
- “Mentoring”
- “Workshop, Seminars”
- “Peer to Peer”
- “Electric tools for human development.”
- “Stays and exchanges with companies with Good Practices.”

These statistics should be taken into account in the further development.

In order to see if the project should proceed with individual country solutions, in the following the answers of the individual countries are shown below.

Note: Compared to the other tables before, the axis have changed due to space reasons.

Training Options to enhance Talent Management							
Training type	Spain (n = 104)	Germany (n = 81)	Ireland (n = 64)	Italy (n = 103)	Cyprus (n = 91)	Sweden (n = 67)	Austria (n = 86)
Video	8.65 %	13.58 %	10.94 %	9.71 %	7.69 %	19.40 %	16.28 %
Checklist	1.92 %	18.52 %	4.69 %	3.88 %	13.19 %	11.94 %	12.79 %
Apps	6.73 %	9.88 %	1.56 %	3.88 %	10.99 %	5.97 %	16.28 %
Online Guides	8.65 %	14.81 %	3.13 %	11.65 %	14.29 %	13.43 %	6.98 %
Edu. Material	16.35 %	11.11 %	17.19 %	24.27 %	10.99 %	8.96 %	11.63 %
Podcasts	9.62 %	2.47 %	3.13 %	5.83 %	9.89 %	7.46 %	8.14 %
Online Courses	15.38 %	8.64 %	10.94 %	20.39 %	13.19 %	11.94 %	9.30 %
Practical Training	29.81 %	20.99 %	48.44 %	20.39 %	18.68 %	17.91 %	18.60 %
Other	2.78 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	1.10 %	2.99 %	0.00 %

Table 23: Training Options to enhance Talent Management - per Country

In order to gain a better overview of the preferred training types, this table is transcribed into Table 24 where the training types are ranked according to country.

Training Options to enhance Talent Management							
Rank	Spain	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Cyprus	Sweden	Austria
1	Practical Training	Practical Training	Practical Training	Education Material	Practical Training	Video	Practical Training
2	Education Material	Checklist	Education Material	Online Courses	Online Guides	Practical Training	Video
3	Online Courses	Online Guides	Video	Practical Training	Online Courses	Online Guides	Apps
4	Podcasts	Video	Online Courses	Online Guides	Checklist	Checklist	Checklist
5	Online Guides	Education Material	Checklist	Video	Apps	Online Courses	Education Material
6	Video	Apps	Online guides	Checklist	Education Material	Education Material	Online Courses
7	Apps	Online Courses	Podcasts	Apps	Podcasts	Podcasts	Podcasts
8	Checklist	Podcasts	Apps	Podcasts	Video	Apps	Online Guides
9	Other	Other	Other	Other	Other	Other	Other

Table 24: Training Options to enhance Talent Management - Ranking - per Country

It can be seen that a favoured type of training throughout Europe does not exist. Therefore, the tools should be chosen from a mix of the types of training stated above.

3.4 Section 4 - “External Resources”

This part of the survey investigated the usage and type of external associates from the participating SMEs. This was investigated, as a well-developed talent management can internalize some of the external collaborations and might not only help in increasing efficiency, but also in saving costs.

3.4.1 Are you collaborating with external associates?

The participating SMEs were asked this question as often services have to externalized, due to the fact that the competence is missing within the company.

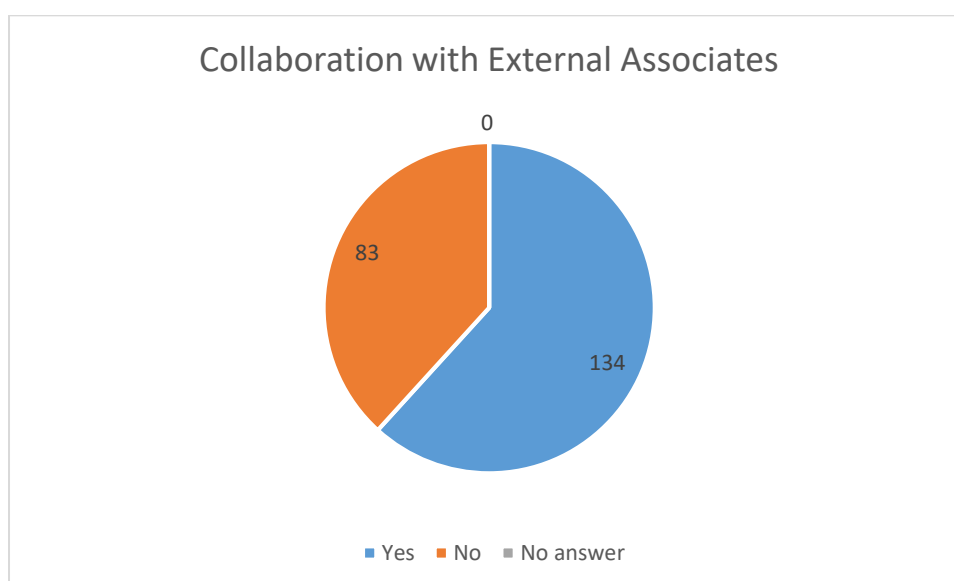


Figure 20: Collaboration with External Associates

As seen in Figure 20, 61.75 % of the participants have a collaboration with external associates. Investigating this question per country shows following picture:

Collaboration with External Associates							
Answer	Spain	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Cyprus	Sweden	Austria
Yes	63.53 %	76.67 %	30.30 %	51.52 %	93.10 %	64.00 %	59.26 %
No	39.47 %	23.33 %	69.70 %	48.48 %	6.90 %	36.00 %	40.74 %

Table 25: Collaboration with External Associates - per Country

The values vary between the individual countries; however, especially Cyprus sticks out, with more than 90 % saying they collaborate with external associates, followed by Germany with more than 75 %. Same as in question 2.3.4 this fact should be accounted for in the further project work.

3.4.2 If yes, which kind of external associates do you have that are valuable in your working context?

With this question, it was tried to find out which “typical” service is taken by the SMEs and on which type of competency they should focus in order to internalize some of the external associations.

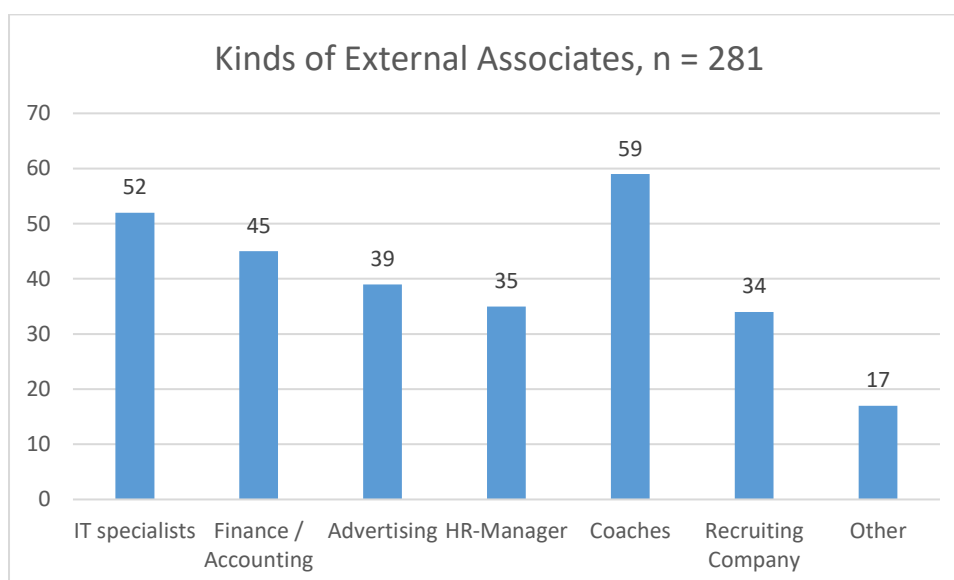


Figure 21: Kinds of External Associates

The total survey shows that especially “Coaches” were external associates. This is typical in some countries as often “Coaches” work as freelancers and cannot really be internalized. However, the second place is “IT specialists”. Due to the high degree of digitalization, this is a talent or competency of a talent that can be sought after actively.

Among others, following answers were given as “other”:

- Universities
- Cleaning companies
- Consulting

Kind of external Associates?							
Type	Spain (n = 64)	Germany (n = 52)	Ireland (n = 20)	Italy (n = 22)	Cyprus (n = 55)	Sweden (n = 32)	Austria (n = 32)
IT	9.38 %	23.08 %	10.00 %	22.73 %	21.82 %	25.00 %	21.88 %
Finance/ Accounting	14.06 %	19.23 %	35.00 %	13.64 %	14.55 %	12.50 %	9.38 %
Advertising	4.69 %	15.38 %	20.00 %	0.00 %	16.36 %	21.88 %	25.00 %
HR-Manager	17.19 %	11.54 %	10.00 %	9.09 %	12.73 %	6.25 %	15.63 %
Coaches	29.69 %	23.08 %	5.00 %	9.09 %	25.45 %	9.38 %	18.75 %
Recruiting	17.19 %	1.92 %	15.00 %	40.91 %	3.64 %	15.63 %	6.25 %
Other	7.81 %	5.77 %	5.00 %	4.55 %	5.45 %	9.38 %	3.13 %

Table 26: Kinds of External Associates - per Country

When the individual countries are examined more closely, it can be seen that in Ireland only 5.00 % are relying on external “Coaches”, however 35.00 % are relying on “Finance/ Accounting”.

3.4.3 How often are you in contact with these external resources?

In order to figure out, whether it makes sense to internalise a service, it has to be checked how often these external associates are contacted. This was examined with this question.

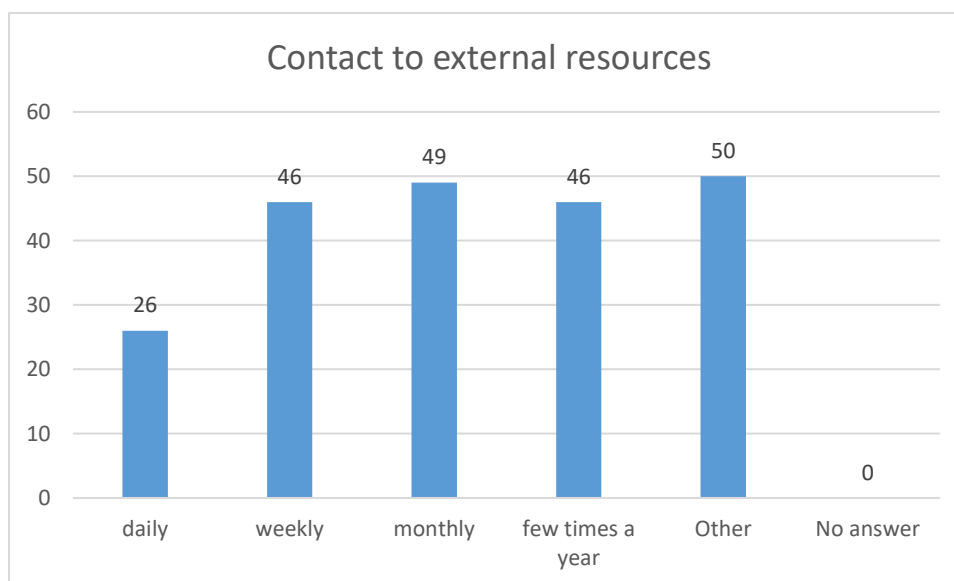


Figure 22: Contact to External Resources

While daily contact is less than 12 %, “weekly”, “monthly” and “few times a year” as well as “other” are holding the balance between 21.20 % and 23.04 %. However, most of the answer given under the option “other” were “never”.

Therefore it should be stated that if there is daily or weekly contact with a certain external associate, it makes sense to try to internalize that specific service.

For the sake of completeness, Table 27 shows the rate of contacts with external associates per country.

Contact to external Resources							
Rate	Spain (n = 38)	Germany (n = 30)	Ireland (n = 33)	Italy (n = 33)	Cyprus (n = 29)	Sweden (n = 25)	Austria (n = 27)
Daily	2.63 %	20.00 %	15.15 %	0.00 %	27.59 %	4.00 %	18.52
Weekly	23.68 %	20.00 %	12.12 %	12.12 %	31.03 %	32.00 %	22.22
Monthly	15.79 %	23.33 %	12.12 %	36.36 %	27.59 %	16.0 %	22.22
Few times a year	42.11 %	20.00 %	0.00 %	15.15 %	6.90 %	28.00 %	37.04
Other	15.79 %	16.67 %	60.61 %	36.36 %	6.90 %	20.00 %	0.00

Table 27: Contact to external Resources - per Country

An examination of the individual countries shows that there are slight differences. While in Spain only 2.63 % have daily contact to external resources, in Cyprus 27.59 %, maintain daily contact. A somewhat reverse situation exists for “a few times per year” as SMEs in Spain chose this option with 42.11 % and SMEs in Cyprus with 6.90 %. The 60.61 % of “other” for SMEs in Ireland are to a large amount answers regarding that they do not contact anyone.

It is assumed that most of the differences observed in Table 27 are due to cultural differences, which need to be taken into account when continuing the project.

3.5 Section 5 - “Future of Talent Management”

The last section of the survey explores what the participants think about the future of Talent Management. All questions asked in this section were so-called “open” questions, meaning the participants had to write an answer and could not choose between different options.

The main point of this section was to figure out whether the participating SMEs as representatives of European SMEs see general challenges and opportunities in Talent Management as well as what they think about the future of Talent Management in their own companies.

3.5.1 Do you see any challenges and/or opportunities in terms of Talent Management in your company?

63.46 %, or 132 out of 208, of the participant gave an answer to this question. As this is an open question, the some of the answers given are selected, clustered, and shown in the following. Furthermore, the question was designed in a way that some participants only answered to challenges or opportunities. Therefore, the most common answer per country for each of the two options are given and at the end, the most common themes mentioned are summarized:

3.5.1.1 Challenges

In Spain, many participants answered that motivation, or the increase thereof, as well as the fact that time and resources need to be increased and invested represent the most common challenges. Furthermore, age, knowledge and retaining professionals were also mentioned when it came to challenges. One participant also stated that getting staff to believe in and feel comfortable with Talent Management represents a big challenge.

In Germany, the stated challenges for Talent Management included positive working atmosphere, demographic/local needs, a lack of money, communication and motivation, understanding of the career.

In Ireland, following issues were highlighted by the respondents: location, too small of a business, the industry (competition), motivation, hard to attract people in this line of business (industry), chance of leaving (retaining), a lack of qualified people to start with. From an analysis of these questions, it can be deduced that the greatest challenges, which businesses who participated in the research study face, relate to the talent management pillars of attracting the right staff and retaining staff once they have been trained.

In Italy, the SMEs who participated raised some challenges concerning Talent Management. It requires a significant investment in terms of money and time, and there is barely any time available as it is. Furthermore, it is difficult to motivate and retain employees, and connected to that, many qualified and talented people immigrate to other countries.

For Cyprus, the identified challenges are mostly concerned with a lack of resources, especially time, and competition. Furthermore, recruitment, motivation, management, and retaining as well as a lack of specific skills, e.g. IT competencies, were stated as challenges.

The Swedish responses indicated that staying competitive - in relation to difficulties to finding competent staff is the biggest challenge to the respondents. In addition, the challenge between young people moving from rural areas to cities to study and work, thereby generating a lack of talents in rural areas was mentioned in Sweden.

Challenge identified in Austria was to “break old thinking”. The need for a university degree for certain jobs is not here, but many young people think it is.

3.5.1.2 Opportunities

In Spain, competition as well as improving motivation, and the general lack of HR or people management was mentioned. Furthermore, the improvement of commercial and technical skills through Talent Management was mentioned.

In Germany, following opportunities could be identified: Integration of employee feedback, new and interesting continuous education, clearer structures, records of individual competencies, staff appraisals and feedback, and motivation.

In Ireland, the respondents only listed challenges and/or barriers but no opportunities.

In Italy, the continuous improvement of skills in personnel management, motivation and teamwork as well as in the quality of work and competitiveness were identified as opportunities. In addition, the general development of employees and the opportunity for identifying new talents that match with job requirements were identified.

SMEs from Cyprus mostly saw the development of already existing staff as well as increasing motivation and retaining employees as opportunities.

Due to very little responses given by Swedish SMEs, no opportunities were stated for this question.

Austria SMEs stated that there were many opportunities to be found. Including the improvement of motivation as well as binding the employees to the company. Furthermore, the development and recognition of soft skills was stated.

To summarize the individual countries it can be said that the most common challenges relate to motivation and retaining employees. Furthermore, the location of the business (e.g. rural area) and the participation of employees was seen as challenges. Many participants also stated that a lack of resources, especially time and money, presented a barrier for Talent Management. This should be taken into account when developing further tools.

Interestingly, the opportunities identified had also largely to do with motivation and retaining employees. The improvement and development of motivation, people and skills, thereby fostering retaining employees, and the increase in competitiveness were stated the most.

3.5.2 How would you use Talent Management processes in your company in the future?

56.25 %, or 117 out of 208, of the participant gave an answer to this question. The most common answer given to the utilization of Talent Management processes in the companies of the participants was to increase the performance of the company as well as to motivate and retain people and to improve planning in human resources. Some companies also stated that they would use Talent Management in order to attract and train required personnel and simultaneously increase the personnel.

From the responses, it can also be deduced that the respondents need more training in the area of Talent Management. Although, many participants are aware about what Talent Management is, the training would help in understanding how to improve any already incorporated Talent Management strategies. Furthermore, it would facilitate in attracting required staff, motivate and retaining employees and increase competitiveness. It can further be seen that employers and managers understand why talent management is important, but that they need support to be able to tailor talent management processes to their own specific businesses and to be able to manage their talent effectively and grow their business going forward without investing too much time and money.

3.5.3 Which new knowledge and relevant tools for implementing Talent Management in your company would you see as beneficial?

53.85 %, or 112 out of 208, of the participant gave an answer to this question. This question is quite important, as the further development of the project “Talent 4.0” tries to develop tools according to the needs and requirements of the SMEs. Many answers were given in the individual countries and they can be summarized with following paragraphs.

Many participating SMEs stated that they would see new software, digital and online tools for the assessment of individual employees in their organisation as beneficial. These tools should be cheap (or free) and easy to use and should be able to make a distribution of work by specialty and time. Ideally, the tools should be able to track the process of employees over time and provide appropriate feedback. Especially, online tools were mentioned in various settings, not only for the before mentioned assessment.

Furthermore, it was stated that a digital Talent Management tool or platform that deals with all aspects of the Talent Management Life Cycle and really shows the benefits of Talent Management. A tool that facilitates the collaboration between different companies was also stated. Mainly the answers revolved about tools that help in attracting, motivating and retaining employees as well as to understand the whole process of Talent Management, or at least the basics of it, so that the individual small and medium sized enterprises can implement it without external expertise. This needs to be considered in the remainder of the project.

Following statements were also given to the question that should also be considered for the knowledge as well as tools that SMEs hope to gain:

- Good practises of Talent Management & Educational material relevant to specific industries
- Clear structured processes of Talent Management for different sectors
- Knowledge about Communication, transparency, regular appraisals, advertisement, participation and affiliation and training support & Coaching activities
- Development of personnel strategies, communication with and in between staff
- Identification, development, motivation, recruiting and retaining and enhancing talents
- A combination of different personalized tools at a reasonable cost
 - Should be combinable with internal and external persons as well as communication between different departments
- Tools for the assessment of individual talents of employees
- Hands-on training materials
- Innovative tools for the recruitment of external staff - continuous training for internal staff
- IT tools that can support the HR in the development of employees’ skills and to assess the skills of the people to be hired.
- Seminars, Workshops, Guides with practical tools and methods related to: 1) Talent Set, 2) Talent Evaluation and Measurement, 3) Talent Management and Maintenance;
- Basic knowledge of how the process is run most efficiently
- Knowledge, guides, checklists, videos, mapping tools, analysis models, dialogue tools manager / co-workers
- To understand the balance between "elite" development and "average" staff
- New tools for contact / dialogue with both prospective and current employees
- How to attract and keep experienced co-workers so that they can be part of training new younger ones
- Understanding the younger generation of employees / prospective employees
 - How to mix teams with age ranges;
 - Insight into how young individuals think and prioritize;

4 Good Practises/ Tools

The individual participating project partners were asked to find tools, based on what is needed from the analysis of the current state and indicated needs. A threshold of six tools (e.g. books, websites, training programmes, etc.) was agreed upon. Furthermore, the partners were asked to give explanations to the selected tools. Moreover, the partners had to explain why the tools are useful in the context of this project and state whether the tools need modifications. In the following a list of these tools is given, followed by short explanations about each tool.

Note: *As some countries chose the same tools, not all individual tools per country are listed.*

Identified tools according to their listing in this document:

- Neris Type explorer®
- LEGO SERIOUS PLAY/S-Play project
- WINGS4Success
- 360-Degree Feedback
- Performance Appraisals
- Coaching and Mentoring Programmes
- HR Portal
- Greenhouse.io Recruiting Resource
- Bitrix24
- Factorial
- Xenium HR's Podcast: Human Resources for Small Business (Podcast)
- LinkedIn E-Courses: Talent Management
- VISMA - Commenius
- Framfot - Training and Education Company
- NETIGATE tools - Survey
- Lumesse - Talent Management Suite
- Hudson - Motivation analysis
- Business Discovery Platform
- Open Source HR Management Platform
- CornerstoneOnDemand
- Assessment center: overall evaluation of the person
- Job Rotation
- Partnership with Universities
- Social Network
- Involvement in the Territory
- Satisfied Employees
- Bizlaia Talent
- Ultipro
- Sprakling Grey Project
- Hoopla
- Coachlogix
- InfinityRH
- Work Simulations
- Onboarding
- Mentoring
- Performance Development Planning
- Employee Performance Recognition
- Exit Interviews

Neris Type explorer® ("16personalities"): This personality tool figures out the strengths and weaknesses of each of 16 per-defined personalities. It directly shows hidden talents. It uses the acronym format introduced by Myers-Briggs for its simplicity and convenience, with an extra letter to accommodate five rather than four scales. Furthermore, the dimensions of personality was implemented, called the Big Five personality traits, a model that dominates modern psychological and social research. This means, that NERIS Type Explorer®, which has already been applied 100 million times, gives a pertinent insight into the capacities of single employees and can help to better define the perfectly balanced team.

LEGO SERIOUS PLAY/S-Play project: LSP fosters creative thinking through metaphors using Lego bricks. The method has practitioners throughout the world (see the SERIOUSPLAYpro.com community of over 500 members, and the strategicplayroom.com forum with over 350 members). It is a management tool, which can be used offline in various settings. The S-PLAY (www.s-play.eu) project seeks to bring Serious Play to SMEs. Practitioners, trainers, business support organizations, and SMEs were talked to and it was determined how Serious Play can help them. Based on this research, workshop content was designed and instructor guidelines for SME-specific modules of Serious Play. Finally, we have digitalize the final version of the workshops so providing a dynamic tool for VET instructional designers anywhere.

WINGS4Success: Facilitators' Toolbox Part 2: Creative Consulting Tool for Intergenerational Learning: This tool can be used offline for courses. It is especially helpful to foster communication in teams with a wide range of age. The tool that can be applied by trainers in order to creatively start the dialogue with employees and sensitize them for the topic inter-generational learning in general. Sensitize employees to certain aspects relevant for successful intergenerational learning, such as stereotyping, demographic changes, knowledge transfer etc. Further integrate the employees in the process of promoting IGL activities in their company, and evaluate and review IGL activities together with employees. The idea is to involve staff from the start and to respect their opinion and suggestions to implement IGL activities. Therefore the facilitator should use creative methods to take off the official appearance of his attempt to promote IGL and the motivate staff to participate. A creative approach is also useful to make people share their thoughts freely and without any fear of negative consequences for their employment.

360 Degree Feedback: A 360-degree feedback survey offers others an opportunity to give leaders accurate and helpful feedback in a constructive and confidential manner. In a 360-feedback survey, the leader and a group of other users answer specific questions about the leader's performance. These users are chosen from those with whom a leader works day-to-day and typically include supervisors, direct reports, peers, and customers. Reliable feedback is necessary to test one's own perceptions, recognize previously unseen strengths, and become aware of blind spots in one's self-perceptions. Benefits of 360 Degree Feedback include an increase of self-awareness, clarifies behaviour, measures "how" things are done as opposed to "what" is done, promotes dialogue, improves working relationships, encourages personal development, increases accountability and enhances performance.

Performance Appraisals: Performance Appraisal is the systematic evaluation of the performance of employees. It helps in understanding the abilities of a person for further growth and development. Performance appraisals are mostly carried out annually for measuring the degree of accomplishment of an individual. They are implemented on a top down basis in which the supervisors has a major role to play in judging the performance of an employee without soliciting active involvement of the employee. Through evaluating performance of employees, a person's efficiency can be determined if the targets are achieved. This very well motivates a person for better job and helps him to improve his performance in the future.

Coaching and Mentoring Programs: Coaching and Mentoring are essential for talent management. In retaining and developing your top performers, a manager must recognize when coaching and mentoring are the right tools for the right people. By knowing the strengths of your team members, their work behaviour, and communication style, a manager can engage staff in creating an actionable plan for their performance goals, discover their approach to increase their effective results, and help them deliver on standards. It is available in all project languages. The costs differentiate, depending on what commercial tool is used.

HR Portal: HR portal is an online platform that features a wide range of HR resources to support HR operations. The platform is user-friendly and its resources are available for free and are accessible either via PC or mobile devices. The tools and learning resources are categorized into 'Enterprise Stages' and 'HR Functions' while visitors can browse and/or search for tools as per their 'Self Diagnosis'. Finally, the platform allows users to ask HR related questions.

Greenhouse.io Recruiting Resource: Greenhouse offers companies a 'for pay' Talent Acquisition software that can support them in their recruitment process. The platform helps corporations to elevate their effectiveness in hiring, by "improving the process for everyone involved - from hiring managers and recruiters to candidates themselves". Most importantly, through its site, Greenhouse offers a wide array of free resources that can help visitors enhance their knowledge and skills in the

fields. These include eBooks, Webinars, Case Studies, Success Stories as well as a regularly updated blog featuring articles with information and advice on the field.

Bitrix24: Bitrix24 is a small business management platform that offers businesses 35 tools on CRM, marketing, project management, business telephony, and HR. The platform has a free and paid version with the former featuring an employee directory and an organization chart functionality, customizable employee profiles, and a pulse tool to measure how much or how little workers are using various parts of the system. Moreover, via its social intranet, it lets users send company-wide announcements while it also fosters collaboration, and utilizes gamification badges to spur engagement.

Factorial: Factorial is a free HR software, which includes a function for centralized document management, an employee benefits administration as well as an organization chart generator and a shared calendar for the employees of a company. Additionally, it features a compensation management application through which users can manage employee payroll, dole out bonuses based on individual, team, or company goals and even optimize the offering of benefits like gym memberships or commuter reimbursement. It also produces automatically generated reports that can help users monitor everything from absenteeism to age distribution and turnover rate.

Xenium HR's Podcast: Human Resources for Small Business (Podcast): Xenium HR, a leading HR agency in the US, is offering a series of free podcasts dedicated to Human Resources for Small Business. The podcasts are presented by Xenium's Marketing Director, Bandon Laws, who hosts and interviews professionals from all sides of the industry 'digging up' tips, tools and insights that can be utilized by small businesses to enhance their capabilities in Human Resources and Talent Management.

LinkedIn E-Courses: Talent Management: An e-Course that is available through LinkedIn that helps participants to attain an understanding of what Talent Management is and comprehend its importance for a company. Moreover, it guides them on how to build a top-notch talent management strategy, use that strategy to create a talent management plan, and bring it all together using best practices. As part of this process, participants will learn how to identify talent needs, assess existing talent, recruit the right people, and develop employees to meet talent needs.

VISMA - Commenius: This software from VISMA, or rather set of modules of Software covers the entire Talent Management Process in an enterprise. It's difficult to tell if it fits even the smallest businesses but the combination of cost and complexity use (both technical but also in a HR-process) is always a barrier to manage for small businesses. This tool meets the need of understanding and supporting the entire process of Talent Management. The organization that developed the tool is providing training and consultancy if needed and are specialized in SMEs as customers.

Framfot - Training and Education Company: This tool is actually a set of training tools and material for working with the Talent Management process. It meets the needs found in our survey in the way it is giving very practical and specific tools for different steps in the TM-process. As this tool is designed more for the medium sized and larger organizations it needs to be "downsized" to fit the needs of the small enterprises - but can still serve as a good example and an idea of how to divide the TM-process into separate steps and stages. This tool is actually a set of training tools and material for working with the Talent Management process. It meets the needs found in our survey in the way it is giving very practical and specific tools for different steps in the TM-process.

NETIGATE tools - Surveys: Netigate has a number of surveys that can be used to understand the employee's engagement, loyalty etc... METIS is one of the tools using AI to understand the employees and their readiness for leaving/staying at the job. This tool fits first of all the Retain part of the TM-

process but can also be used to understand the Attract part as it gives an idea of what the employees are happy with and not.

Lumesse - Talent Management Suite: This suite is as they describe themselves “people-oriented” and focuses on engagement and contribution of employees in an enterprise. This means it will be very competent in meeting the needs of “Motivation” found in our survey. As it is a suite with a wide span, it also has tools for recruitment and other parts of the TM and traditional HR process. Again, - as TM so far has been covering the needs in the larger organizations - it is necessary to adjust the content and material to the reality in the smaller businesses.

Hudson - Motivation Analysis: This tool is focused on the motivation key factors in the organization. It is a test / assessment tool and can be used to analysis of the Employers perception on motivational and demotivational factors in the workplace. The Motivation analysis is also, as other tools found, a part of a suite or a modular system based on HR and TM.

Bussiness Discovery Platform: Through the adoption of a Business Discovery platform, companies can analyze the performance of their employees. For example, they can monitor the results obtained by individuals or teams; keep track of career advancement and training of each employee. All this through an intuitive and flexible analysis that does not require an obligatory path of questions. It is enough to have the data even in a simple Excel format to create detailed and navigable analysis, updated in real time, to support the work of HR managers and provide objective data on corporate talent.

Open Source HR Management platform: OrangeHRM is an open source HR Management platform, particularly suitable for SMEs; it is currently the most interesting open source project for the all-round management of human resources in a company. The platform is full of features and allows company to monitor every key aspect of the complex management activity of employees/collaborators. It is easy to use and the guidelines are in English language. This platform has an array of modules that cater to all HR needs throughout the employee life cycle. It gives the possibility to track the employees’ performance in order to retain the company talents, not only managing their performance, but their expectations. The platform allows the creation and management of training courses addressed to the employees/collaborators. In order to attract the right people for the right jobs, the module “Recruitment” helps the company to reach the best job boards around the world for sourcing and build a rich database of prime candidates. The module gives the instructions to conduct structured interviews, giving a base to evaluate and benchmark candidates.

CornerstoneOnDemand: It is a unified cloud platform to recruit, train, and manage people in the company. It gives to the companies the whole talent picture; find the right talent with social tools, customer career sites and a fun candidate experience. It let managers inspire greatness, motivate employees and deliver results. It provides goal and competency management, development plans and reviews. It align employees with organizational strategy and provide meaningful feedback. This platform helps leaders make better business decisions using real-time data and insights; it centralize employee data, improve agility and meet employees’ needs with self-service tools and a great user experience. The platform is available in English, German, Spanish, Italian languages.

Assessment center: overall evaluation of the person: It is a methodology used both for the staff recruitment and for the evaluation of their potential. It consists in the elaboration of a series of group and individual situational exercises aimed at highlighting the essential and distinctive successful behaviors to face future work situations. Therefore, it is a tool for the analysis and evaluation of human resources, aimed at understanding in advance whether a person can occupy different roles from the current one and whether he can meet them in terms of optimal performance.

The assessment centre usually includes individual tests, group tests and interviews. The process of identifying talent in the company generally begins with an assessment phase. This tool is used in the staff recruitment and selection phases, to evaluate employees within a company, to create development and training plans or to select redeployable staff. It is essential to identify the selection criteria (performance and results obtained over time, knowledge of the sector, mobility and willingness to move, learning speed) and, for each of them, to define a measurement rating. The actual assessment can be preceded by a "self-assessment" phase, in which employees are given the opportunity to make a self-assessment before exposing themselves to an external assessment. It generally consists of a simple questionnaire, prepared internally or acquired externally.

Job rotation: Job rotation is a common practice among large companies. It consists of rotating a person in various business divisions, for a number of years. This is done as a career path and training, but also to understand which area is the most suitable. It is therefore a development program that enriches people a lot, exposing them to new organizational situations, putting them in a position to deal with problems in different functional areas, to have to manage relationships with leaders, colleagues, collaborators with different experiences: it is also a tool that tests the ability of a person to adapt to new situations and to change. Usually it lasted two or three years and can also involve rotation at foreign branches in the case of multinational companies. It is very important that the tasks assigned, even if challenging precisely because they are addressed to a talent who has an above-average ability to learn, are in line with the level of competence that the talent has acquired, so as to allow it to achieve specific objectives.

Partnership with Universities: It is possible to establish a partnership with the Universities to directly search for talented young people during their studies. To attract them is possible to use ad hoc tools such as, among many others, placement in company Universities, Summer schools, scholarships, internships or apprenticeships.

Social network: A company's LinkedIn page is the first place candidates go to get an idea of the company, so it needs to make sure it's engaging and up to date. Facebook and Twitter are another good way to raise awareness of open job opportunities, so as to attract the widest possible number of candidates. Outgoing messages need to emphasise the positive aspects of the job. The company does not have to focus on social media only when there is a position to fill, but it is preferable to maintain a continuous presence because it helps to build a community of people connected with the company among which could be the talent for future research.

Being involved on the territory: Being involved in initiatives in the area in which the company operates, in charities groups and networks, can help build its reputation and provide an additional tool to convey to the outside world the right image on the type of people it is looking for. Building links with local schools and universities is equally important: it will help to create a community of potential future employees who know what the company expects and may want to work for it in the future.

Satisfied employees: Satisfied employees are the best publicity for the company, so it needs to think about how the company can make the most of this factor during the recruitment process, for example by posting interviews with employees in the work section of its website and producing videos or podcasts in which employees exchange opinions about the company. The content should not be limited exclusively to career development, several studies show that people also pay close attention to opportunities for socialization.

Bizkaia Talent: With the support of the Department for Economic Development of the Provincial Council of Bizkaia, bizkaia:talent was established in 2005 as a non-profit organisation with a clear mission: to foster and facilitate the implementation of the necessary conditions for attracting,

connecting and retaining in Bilbao, the Historic Territory of Bizkaia and the Basque Country in general, highly qualified people in the areas of knowledge and innovation. Bizkaia:talent offers to professionals and organizations services from international professional network meetings to talent service.

Ultipro: is a talent management platform delivered as a SaaS offering that includes tools for talent acquisition, onboarding, payroll, benefits administration, reporting, performance reviews, time and attendance and succession planning. It's also designed to be scalable, so businesses of any size can benefit.

Sparkling Grey project: SPARKLING GREY aims to providing SMEs with adjusted and innovative human resources management strategies that address age and multi-generational issues while supporting career management skills specifically targeted to senior workers. Material for the support of SMEs include recommendations and guidelines, assessment tool and toolkits.

Hoopla: is a new way to win for high-velocity teams. Hoopla's Data Broadcasting Platform combines TV quality video and graphics, breaking newswatches, live metrics, and game mechanics that turns any large screen display into an engaging communication system that aligns, motivates, and engages employees.

CoachLogix: is a secure, cloud-based coaching management platform designed to monitor the progress and impact of coaching engagements for you and your clients. Whether you are an independent coach or managing internal coaches, external coaches, or any combination of the two.

InfinityRH: brings together the most essential HR tasks in one place, simplifying processes and allowing teams to get back to the work that matters most. With a proven track record, the InfinityHR Platform utilizes HR cloud software to oversee all human capital management, payroll, and employee benefit services, helping managers to better engage employees and improve company culture.

Work Simulations: Work simulations or tests can be used by employers and HR managers in an interview setting to assess a potential employee's ability to perform tasks related to their job. These short tests can be easily arranged by an employer in an interview setting by giving the candidate a simple task to complete which is related to their job and to assess their performance in this routine task. This could include a short proof-reading or writing test, a customer service role-play scenario, a book-keeping test or a test which uses technology to assess their level of digital skill. These simulations and tests can be a very effective means of ensuring that businesses hire staff with the correct skill sets and expertise so that they can have a meaningful contribution to their business.

Onboarding: The HR practice of onboarding is included in this list of best practices for attracting the right talent for the reason that when we conducted surveys with businesses in our region, we found that many stated that their employees lack sufficient work-readiness skills and also lack what they termed 'common sense'. When asked to explain this further, business owners and managers stated that they felt that their employees might have had specific skills but they lack the soft skills needed to be well-rounded employees. However, while this might be true of individual employees, these issues could be overcome by investing in appropriate onboarding processes. Onboarding relates to the initial induction training and supports which employers should offer to new employees to get them up-to-speed on the working of the company and to ensure that they can become productive members of the company's team as soon as possible. However, many smaller enterprises do not invest in this training, and it can lead to company's hiring staff who are not well aligned to the company culture, who are not motivated to ensuring the success of the company and who do not fully understand the role that they have taken on in the company. For SMEs who do not have a HR department to design an onboarding process for them, there are a range of apps and online resources

available to support employers to design bespoke onboarding processes for their companies and to suit the needs of their individual employees.

Mentoring: is the practice of matching an experienced employee with a new or less experienced employee, so that the mentee, if a new employee, can quickly integrate into their new role in a company. If the mentee is an existing employee who has stagnated and is not developing new skills and acquiring new competences, they could be placed in a mentoring partnership with a more experienced employee so that they can develop specific skills or competences required by their job, or so that they can further develop their skills so that they can progress into leadership and even management roles. The benefits of mentoring for talent development is that it is cost-effective and time-efficient, as companies already have all of the resources, they need in-house for a successful mentoring programme. When developing talent in micro-enterprises, or those companies based in rural locations, it can be difficult to find suitable training and up-skilling opportunities for employees. As such, by pairing a mentee with an existing employee in a mentoring partnership, there is no need for the mentee to take time off work to attend additional training, as they can acquire the additional skills and knowledge, they need in-house.

Performance Development Planning: This is a good technique to involve employees in setting their own goals both for themselves professionally and also for the company they are working for. The aim of Performance Development Planning is to secure buy-in from the employees in developing and growing the company they are working for by inviting their input into designing a vision for the future of the company, while also aligning their personal motivations and professional goals to the company they are working for. This practice has been proven to be effective in motivating employees in a range of industries because by setting personal and professional development goals, employees feel that they can better contribute to the success of the company because their goals are aligned with their vision for the company. Adopting this practice in a company is quite straight forward; it involves a member of the management team meeting with individual employees to discuss their professional development goals and their vision for the business. Following this meeting, the manager and employee work together to set goals for the employee and for the company; and then then meet 3-4 times per year to review both goals and to re-adjust goals if required. This type of interaction between management and individual employees is key in motivating employees to work and stay working for a company, and it is a very cost-effective strategy for rural businesses in our region to try. If successful, this practice can help businesses in our region to motivate and even retain talent in their companies.

Employee Performance Recognition: Nobody wants to work for an organization where their efforts go unrecognized, so for companies who are struggling to motivate their employees or for those employers in Ireland who stated that their staff are 'lazy', it is a good idea to introduce some employee recognition strategies. Employee and performance recognition strategies have been proven to create a positive and productive working environment in a range of different companies in different sectors. In order to develop employee recognition strategies, employers need to first assess what are their intended goals and outcomes of the recognition strategy? If the goal is to motivate employees, the employer should first agree what they wish to motivate their employees towards and from this they will be able to set goals for their recognition strategy. The employer also needs to ascertain what the reward for the employee will be, how often efforts and performance will be recognized and to set metrics for measuring when employee recognition is justified and necessary. There are a range of online tools available for employers to support them to develop their employee recognition strategy.

Exit Interviews: are simply the practice of interviewing out-going employees. The purpose of conducting these interviews is to elicit relevant and up-to-date feedback on how your company is



performing for an employee. Through these interviews, employers can hope to learn what the company is doing well and also to identify areas where the company needs to improve its HR practices. As employers in Ireland mentioned that they were unsure of the reasons why they struggled to retain staff in their companies, these exit interviews could be an invaluable source of feedback for these employers as to why their employees are seeking employment opportunities elsewhere. Exit interviews can also be combined with employee satisfaction surveys so that employers can gain a complete picture of how they are performing as employers and how they could improve their HR practices for better talent retention.

5 Conclusion | Summary

The following conclusion is partitioned according to eight predefined overarching topics who bear the most significance for the further development of the project Talent 4.0. They were also defined in the individual national country reports each partner was assigned to compile.

Furthermore, the topics summarize the current state of the discussion, using the answers given in the sections of the summary from the participating small and medium sized enterprises from seven different countries within the European Union.

Moreover, each of the countries provided a short report reflecting their country. These individual reports are also integrated in this chapter. Although, only seven out of (currently) 28 countries from the European Union participated, more than 250 SMEs took part in the survey. Therefore, it is assumed that the given answers reflect the status within the whole European Union.

The following sub-chapters reflect the current state of Talent Management in SMEs as well as the way the survey was designed:

- Responsibility
- Willingness and Time
- HR and Talent Management
- Pillars of Talent Management
- Challenges
- Skills
- Settings
- Tools

5.1 Responsibility

When asked who is responsible for Talent Management within the companies that took part in the survey, respondents almost always picked manager, CEO, HR manager, accountant, educator, other. More than one third of the respondents stated that the responsibility of Talent Management lies with the HR-Manager while more than one quarter stated that it is the responsibility of the CEO to foster Talent Management. When the answer other was chosen, most of the time, they said that it was the owner of the company. As the companies that took part in the survey are small to medium sized, it can be assumed that manager, CEO and owner are the same sort of function. It makes sense that in a small company, the owner is also responsible for every task that is related to HR, including that of fostering or managing Talent Management. Therefore, the survey and its answers to the questions mirror to a certain extent the opinion of people in charge or with decision-making power about Talent Management.

At the same time, many answers said that they do not know or that nobody is responsible. This actually reveals more than that, the participant does not know who is responsible. It may also indicate that the term “Talent Management” is not yet familiar within the company and that no one is actually implementing any measures for Talent Management.

When analysing the answers, it became clear that the need for developing relevant resources for Talent Management is necessary. Some companies have a responsible person in place, while some do not have a responsible person in place. In the future development of this project, this point needs to be addressed. Overall, the main issue relating to responsibility is that the term ‘Talent Management’ is yet unknown to some SMEs.

5.2 Willingness and Time

It was asked in the questionnaire whether SMEs are willing to spend time on Talent Management or not. Furthermore, it was asked that if they were willing to spend time on Talent Management, how much time would suit them the most.

Time and willingness are important factors in all economic activities including approaches such as Talent Management. Moreover, they also go hand in hand. If there is time available but no willingness, nothing related to a certain activity will be done. The same obviously applies the other way around.

The results showed that more than 75 % are interested in investing time and effort in Talent Management. Moreover, according to the investigation research results, SMEs are willing to invest between 2 and 5 hours per month of their time in Talent Management. Taking the mean value, this comes to approximately 3.5 hours per month. This is quite surprising as this is a lot of time, especially for small and micro companies. While some SMEs did not want to invest any time, other SMEs showed willingness to spend even more than the average of 2 to 5 hours a month on Talent Management. However, it was highlighted that the learning units need to be relatively short and independent. Therefore, making it possible to spend the 2 to 5 hours easily into spread micro-units that can be implemented e.g. every working day and not bundled into e.g. one long three-hour session. Overall, the responses show a willingness to spend time resources on Talent Management, but also clearly state that time-efficiency is very important.

5.3 HR and Talent Management

Another question investigated was, if talent management was already part of the HR strategies of the participating companies or not. This was done in order to see firstly, where the European SMEs had to start their activities concerning Talent Management and if the individual SMEs or rather HR departments already implemented some sort of Talent Management.

Furthermore, it was investigated what the survey participant thought about the capacity for Talent Management in their companies. While 38.5 % rated their own company's capacity in Talent Management as effective, a large portion, i.e. 31.08 % answered this question with "neutral", which might be connected with unawareness with the Term of "Talent management" However, more than half of the participating SMEs state that they have capacity for Talent Management implementation at their own company.

Moreover, the responses show that Talent Management is already integrated in most Human Resource strategies in bigger (i.e. medium sized) companies, but not yet in micro and small sized enterprises. Close to 50 % of the participating SMEs stated that it was already part of their HR strategy. There were also some differences between the individual countries (see 2.1.4). Numerous respondents stated that they did not know if it was already integrated, as they were not responsible for HR within their company. Another reason for this is that the term 'Talent Management' has not yet fully made its way into the world of business and especially business management. The overall effectiveness of HR strategies, according to the results, is rated effective to neutral. Some participants did not answer this question, which again might be because they simply do not know the term.

5.4 Pillars of Talent Management

Participants of the survey were asked which of the four pillars (attract, develop, motivate, retain) of Talent Management need to be improved the most by their company.

Throughout all respective countries, the pillar develop reached the highest percentages, followed by motivate. These two popular pillars refer to HR processes that address employees already employed in the company. According to the results attract and retain were the least important pillars to SMEs.

The two pillars “attract” and “retain” are more connected with the notion of in-flow and out-flow of staff, which seems to be less of a problem for the surveyed participants than motivation and development within the companies themselves. However, it has to be said that if employees are motivated and have good development option, the retaining of staff would also be affected. The same applies for the attraction of new employees if a company is known to have good employee development.

5.5 Challenges

The results show some of the HR challenges faced by SMEs and micro-enterprises. They struggle to find and integrate strategies to attract, motivate, and retain employees. Further analysis of the responses, show that the greatest challenges, which businesses who participated in the research study face, relate to the Talent Management pillars of attracting the right staff, motivating and retaining staff once they have been trained. The points mentioned lead to the next issue, which is the ‘right staff’ and their skillset.

It can be said that the most common challenges relate to motivation and retaining employees. Furthermore, the location of the business (e.g. rural area) and the participation of employees was seen as challenges. Many participants also stated that a lack of resources, especially time and money, presented a barrier for Talent Management. This should be taken into account when developing further tools.

5.6 Skills

In order to provide useful tools and training it was essential to find out which skills are relevant to SMEs. Therefore, the participants of the survey were asked to rate following skills according to a scale ranging from “Very Unimportant” to “Very Important”:

- Social Skills
- Motivation
- Leadership
- Technical skills
- Adaptability
- Specialization
- Professional Skills
- Business Domain Knowledge

They were also asked to provide any skills that they see as important, but were not mentioned in the survey.

According to the criteria, “very important” and “important” combined to one criteria called “paramount” following ranking emerged:

Rank	Competency	Percentage
1	Motivation	93.33 %
2	Professional Skills	89.33 %
3	Adaptability	88.45 %
4	Social Skills	88.00 %
5	Leadership	74.67 %
6	Technical Skills	71.55 %
7	Business Domain Knowledge	69.78 %
8	Specialisation	68.00 %

Through further responses of the questionnaire, it became evident that the skills, which are required, and therefore, should be developed, are motivation, professional skills, adaptability, social skills, IT skills, leadership. Social skills refer to working in teams, speaking and presentation skills, but also conflict solving. By IT skills, it is referred to social media and digital tools overall, including the usage of smartphones, tablets and laptops/PCs as well as apps to be used on these devices. Any training material needs to consider these answers relevant to the target group. Therefore, since IT skills are not only required but also desired for, any training material should considerably include material that is IT related.

5.7 Settings

Another key aspect for developing a toolbox and training program is to know in which settings the target group wants to use the tools and trainings or rather feels confident to be in while learning about Talent Management. According to the outcomes of the survey, the offered tools will mainly be used in team and face-to-face settings. They will also include options to be undergone while being alone in the office. All of the options will be tailored to be undergone within an office setting, as this was chosen nearly three times more often by the participants, than outside of the office. This is an important fact to know, as the tools can then be designed in a way to facilitate these special settings. Especially, in the office, would provide an opportunity to “gamify” any tools that will be implemented. Some consideration should be taken, as the option vary between the countries.

Furthermore, it was investigated which personnel development measures should be implemented according to the survey participants. By far the biggest popularity with 25.83 % had “Onboarding Coaching”, which was followed by “trainee programs” with 23.54 %. “Project Work” and “Mentoring” closely enjoy the same attention with 18.75 % and 18.54 % respectively.

5.8 Tools

As the investigation research serves as basis for the toolbox and training program, it asked the participants about their needs and requirements concerning the tools. In the responses, the following tools reached the highest points: online guides and training sessions, videos and podcasts, educational material, apps and practice cases. Therefore, a large variety of different tools can be used for the training material. The individual project partner identified various tools as seen in chapter 3.

The Talent 4.0 project has to consider the time its target group can or is willing to allocate to enhance its knowledge in the field, as well as the type of tools and training it finds most suiting. The partnership has identified several tools that might be useful for the target group and are available in English or even more of the languages represented in the Talent 4.0 project. Following are some of the tools that were discussed between the partners and found relevant for the further development of the project.

5.8.1 Cornerstone on Demand

It is a unified cloud platform to recruit, train, and manage people in the company, which was a requirement by many SMEs participating in the survey.

It gives to the companies the whole picture of “talent”, including the finding of the right talent with social tools, customer career sites and a fun candidate experience. It let managers inspire greatness, motivate employees and deliver results. It provides goal and competency management, development plans and reviews. It aligns employees with organizational strategy and provide meaningful feedback.

This platform helps leaders make better business decisions using real-time data and insights. It centralizes employee data, improves agility and meets employees’ needs with self-service tools and a great user experience.

The platform is available in English, German, Spanish and Italian language. And is available at: <https://www.cornerstoneondemand.co.uk/>

5.8.2 VISMA – Commenius

This software from VISMA, or rather a set of modules of Software covers the entire Talent Management Process in an enterprise. It's difficult to tell if it fits even the smallest businesses but the combination of cost and complexity use (both technical but also in a HR-process) is always a barrier to manage for small businesses. This tool however looks easy to use and implement in the daily work.

It meets the need of understanding and supporting the entire process of Talent Management. The organization that developed the tool is providing training and consultancy if needed and is specialized in SMEs as customers.

It is available at: <https://www.visma.se/talent-management/>

5.8.3 HR Portal

HR portal is an online platform that features a wide range of HR resources to support HR operations. The platform is user-friendly and its resources are available for free and are accessible either via PC or mobile devices. The tools and learning resources are categorized into 'Enterprise Stages' and 'HR Functions' while visitors can browse and/or search for tools as per their 'Self Diagnosis'. Finally, the platform allows users to ask HR related questions.

It is available at: <https://hrportal.sg>

5.8.4 LinkedIn E-Courses: Talent Management

An e-Course that is available through LinkedIn that helps participants to attain an understanding of what Talent Management is and comprehend its importance for a company. Moreover, it guides them on how to build a top-notch talent management strategy, use that strategy to create a talent management plan, and bring it all together using best practices. As part of this process, participants will learn how to identify talent needs, assess existing talent, recruit the right people, and develop employees to meet talent needs.

It is available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/talent-management>

5.8.5 Sparkling Grey project

SPARKLING GREY aims to providing SMEs with adjusted and innovative human resources management strategies that address age and multi-generational issues while supporting career management skills specifically targeted to senior workers. Material for the support of SMEs.

It is available at: <http://sparkling-grey.eu/>

5.8.6 Hoopla

Hoopla is a new way to win for high-velocity teams. Hoopla's Data Broadcasting Platform combines TV quality video and graphics, breaking newswatches, live metrics, and game mechanics that turns any large screen display into an engaging communication system that aligns, motivates, and engages employees.

It is available at: <https://www.hoopla.net/>

5.9 To summarize:

From this summary of research findings, it can be deduced that among small and medium sized businesses surveyed in Austria, Germany, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Sweden and Cyprus the greatest challenges and barriers they face regarding Talent Management include that it is difficult to attract the right staff in the first place. There are several reasons stated for this, e.g. some of the companies are located in rural areas and are not so accessible or the industry the SMEs find themselves operating in is generally not so attractive to a younger generation. Furthermore, the businesses find it challenging to motivate their employees. This is not only challenging for every day work, but also in retaining competent employees as they strive for internal motivation.

Another big issue that was indicated by the conducted survey is that SMEs have issues in retaining talent, especially after employees have been trained within the business. This is a huge loss of time, resources and effort and puts barriers on the development of further employees as no one wants to invest in a person, if the likelihood of the person leaving is high.

From the analysis of the questionnaires, it clearly emerges that there often is a lack of talent management strategy in the development of skills for existing staff, but also in recruiting new staff. This is a factor seen across all participating countries.

Additionally, it became clear that most SMEs find it difficult to understand and define ‘Talent’ as well as “Talent Management” in the first place, which highlights the importance to work on and improve it even more, so that the SMEs can implement a sound and cost effective strategy that supports them in dealing with the challenges mentioned above.

In conclusion, Talent Management is an important supporting tool for businesses, whether they are micro, small, medium or large sized. It supports in some of the most important factors, including the attraction (hiring), motivation (managing) and retaining (developing) employees. Therefore, for businesses and organisations alike it is essential to foster Talent Management and to define a clear strategy and philosophy.

This Talent Management Philosophy should be a guiding principle dictating how organizations strategically hire, manage and retain their talent and how all-important ‘talent-related’ decisions are made (Fessas: 2016)².

As could be seen from the survey results, this is especially important in the case of SMEs, which are more reliant and dependent on the individual employees and their personal as whole then bigger corporations. It is harder to find or to replace productive, qualified and experienced personnel for SMEs. Thus, studies in the field highlight that for SMEs to increase their chances for success, they need to work towards enhancing their capabilities in the fields of human resources and skills development.

² <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-your-talent-management-philosophy-stephanie-dikaiou-fessas>
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