



ALL-ECOM



Comparative Report on Training needs and Innovative learning methods in ecommerce in Spain, Portugal and Austria

Elaborated by nowa

**Based on the national reports of
Austria
Portugal
Spain**

Graz, January 2016

1. Overview of the research

The research, following methodological guidelines provided by the WP leader, was adapted to the national context. Synergies among WP2 and WP3 were exploited and a team work between national partners was developed answering to the objectives and targets of the two work packages.

The research carried out provided a qualitative and quantitative analysis.

In the quantitative research data were collected by questionnaires provided by the WP leader. The distribution of the questionnaires was organized in close cooperation between the national partners according to their areas of responsibility.

In the qualitative research focus group interviews, individual interviews and requests of written contributions, adapted to the needs of the partners on national level, took place.

The gathered data was analysed and three national report (Austria, Portugal, Spain) validated by the national partnerships were elaborated.

In Portugal less data from employees (20 instead of 50 questionnaires) were collected which could justify any deviations.

2

318 questionnaires, online and hard copy

Employees: 120

Employers: 144

VETs - trainers, executives: 28

Political actors/stakeholders: 26

8 focus group interviews

2 interviews with employers

2 interviews with employees

2 interviews with VET trainers

2 interviews with stakeholders

9 individual interviews with stakeholders/political actors

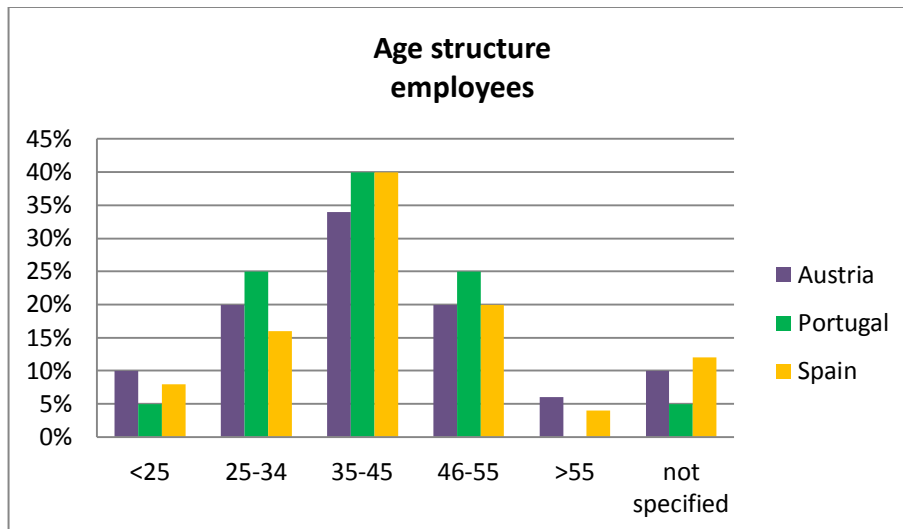
145 requests of written contributions

10 employers

145 employees

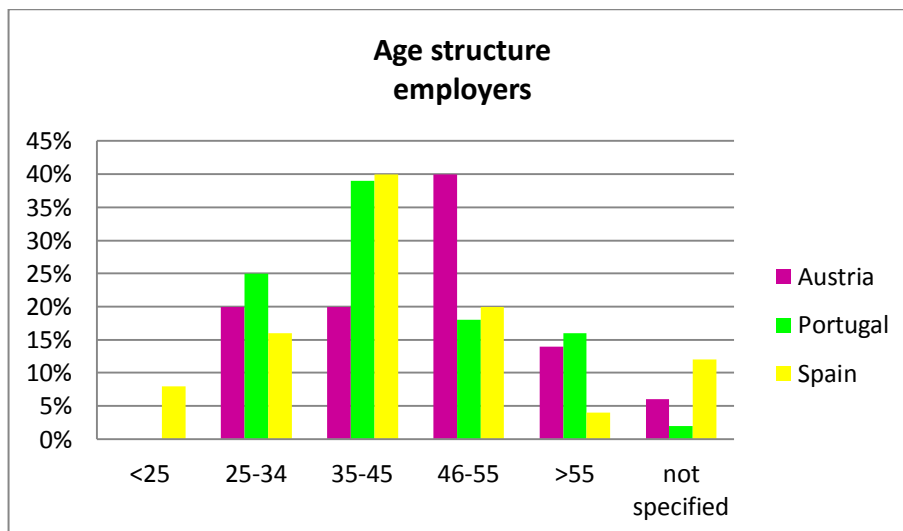
2. Target Groups

2.1. Age structure



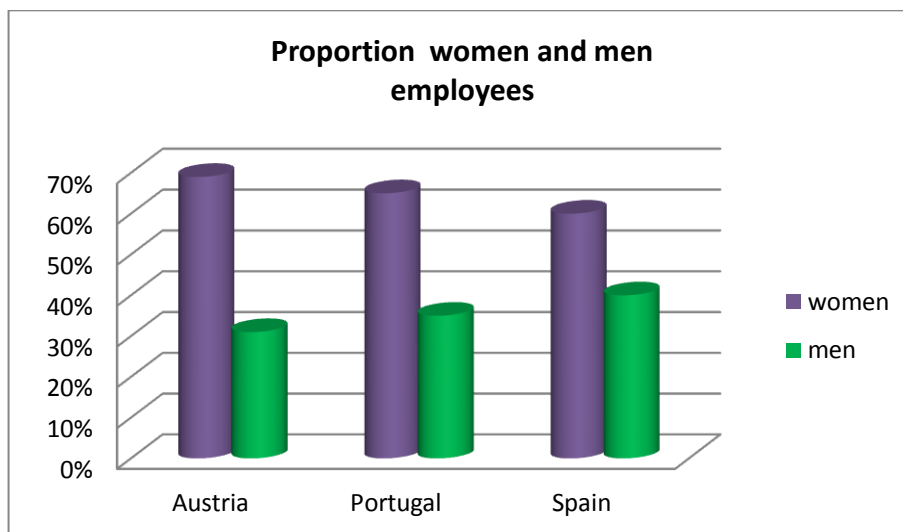
The majority of respondents are between 35 and 45 years old.

3



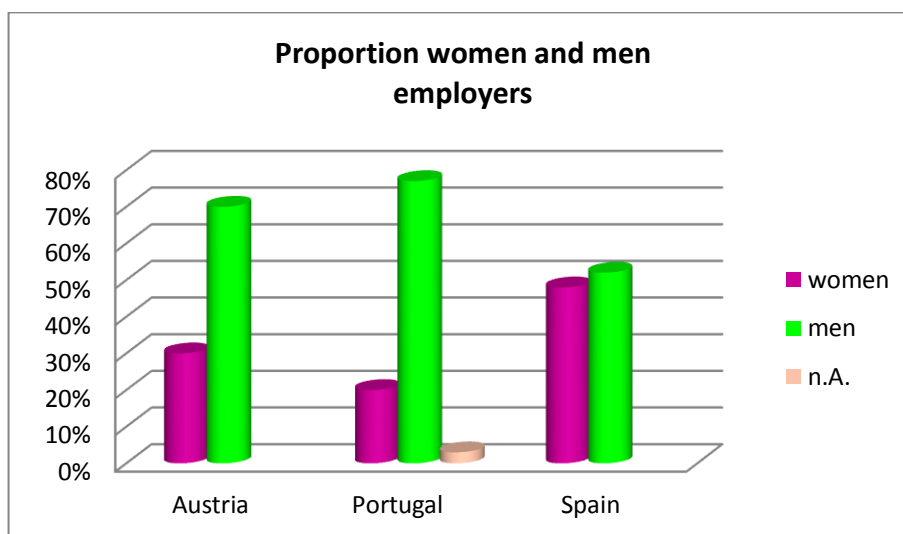
In Portugal and Spain the majority of surveyed employers are between 35 and 45, in Austria between 46 and 55 years old.

2.2. Proportion of women and men



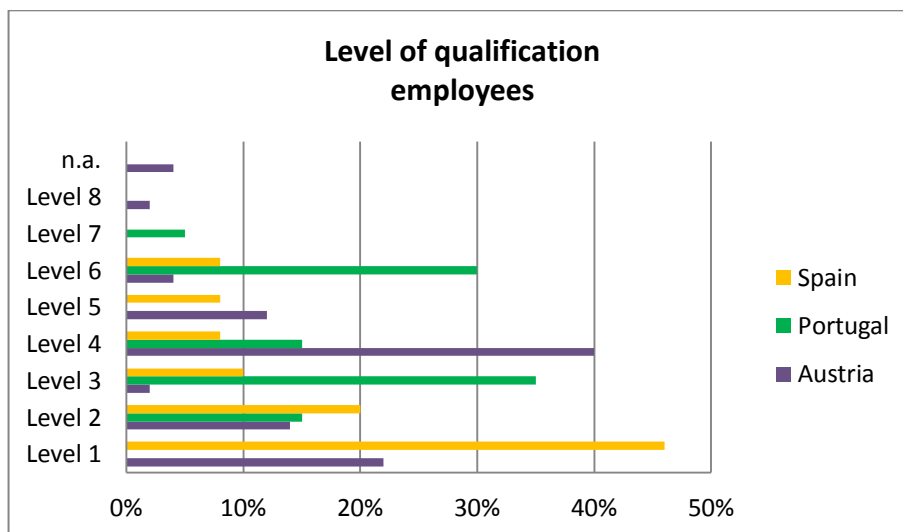
The proportion of women and men in the three countries was quite similar – about 60%-69% female employees in Austria, Portugal and Spain.

4



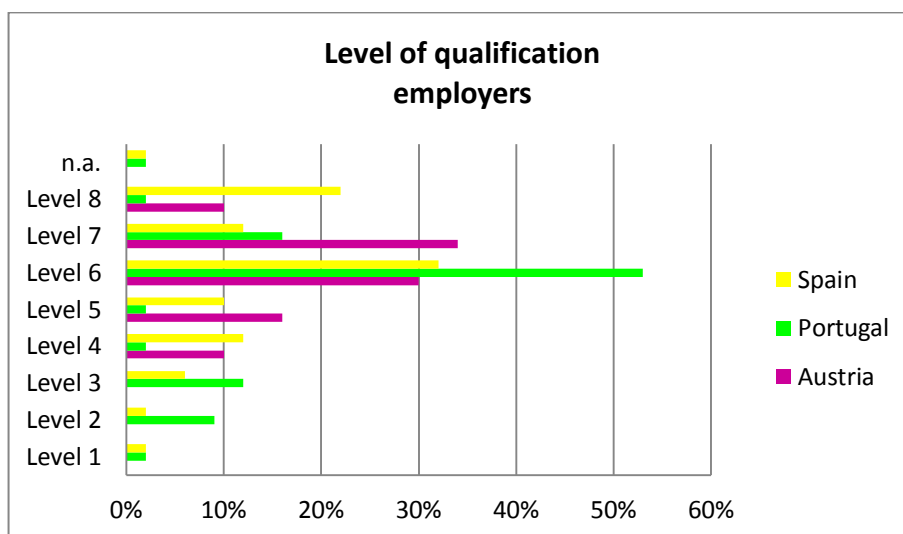
70%/77% male employers in Austria and Portugal, the result of Spain is divergent (48% female, 52% male).

2.3. Qualification level



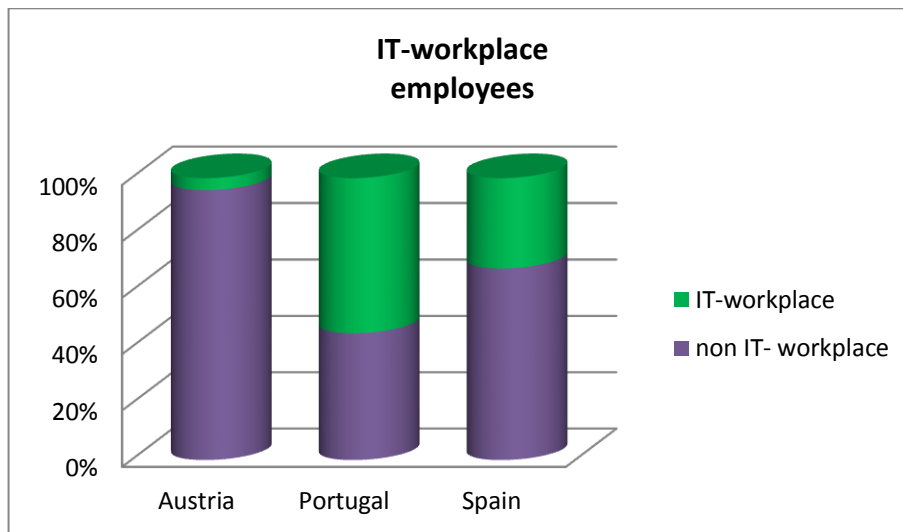
Most of the surveyed employees have a qualification level between 1 and 4 EQF, with the exception of Portugal with 30% level 6 EQF.

5



Most of the surveyed employers have a qualification level from 6 EQF upwards.

2.4. IT-workplace



55% of Portuguese, 32 % of Spanish and only 4% of Austrian surveyed employees work on IT-workplaces.

2.5. Wholesale/Retail



About 70% of surveyed employees and 74% of employers come from the retail sector.

3. Challenges in e-commerce

Generally, these aspects have to be considered:

The actual level of qualification of the commerce sector employees is quite low (EQF 1- 4) in all participating countries. An important challenge the economic actors need to overcome is the realisation that developing skills in this area are fundamental because e-commerce is a business opportunity valued by society which the commerce sector cannot ignore. The (still) low level of digital literacy of employees is a constraint to gain knowledge in the field of e-commerce and has to be considered regarding the development of (e)-learning methods. This conclusion is consistent with the fact that “general computer literacy skills” are, according to employers, VET providers and stakeholders still required and important to the commerce sector manpower.

The quite low level of qualification of employees causes a lack of knowledge about e-commerce in general which leads to a defensive and anxious attitude. There is a gap concerning e-commerce between the perception of stakeholders/employers and of employees.

Other challenges that can be pointed out are the following:

The future (and already the present) is characterised by a coexistence of online and offline business models, by multichannel business models that combine the presence on the internet, the physical space, the participation in social networks and the use of mobile communications. This tendency requires, on one side, the raising of new job profiles, new “professions” in the sector (e-shop assistant, e-merchandiser, online store controller, etc.) and on the other side, an increasing need of specific skills that need to be developed through training and working practice.

Management of the commerce sector needs to realise these changes in the consumer’s behaviour and understand that there is a new consumer profile that can be described as “older, living longer, urban, coming from smaller households, better qualified and informed, internet aware, environmentally conscious, more demanding and less tolerant to inefficiency”, that represents a challenge but also a business opportunity in terms of potential market niches to be exploited using e-commerce.

4. Training offer

4.1. Which trainings related to e-commerce have to be offered/ developed?

(See data below.)

All analyzes show that “General computer literacy skills” are essential for all following qualifications.

Basic information concerning e-commerce (general e-commerce skills; role and function of e-commerce) and knowledge about new technological applications are identified as important.

The new challenges (multichannel consumers, ...) require new profound knowledge in the fields of online consumers, their behavior and motivation, purchase, marketing; communication via social media; use of e-commerce and social media to increase sales.

Commerce employees need to be prepared to work with online and offline realities. This necessitates to adapt training of soft skills (communication; planning skills; problem solving skills; ...) to the change of communication and behavior of costumers.

Training concerning foreign languages and intercultural skills is fundamental to face the expanding market.

Training-offers available for the target group

Digital and technological skills available		Digital and technological skills available		Digital and technological skills available	
Austria		Portugal		Spain	
General computer literacy skills	70%	General computer literacy skills	25%	New working techniques	60%
Working with new technological applications	49%	New working techniques	25%	General e-commerce skills	60%
Training concerning the behavior of digital users	46%	Using e-commerce and social media as a mean to increase sales	15%	Training concerning the behavior of digital users	54%
New working techniques	45%	Using social media to communicate with clients	15%	Training concerning digital purchase process	52%
Training concerning foreign language and intercultural skills	43%	Working with new technological applications	15%	General computer literacy skills	48%
				Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing	48%
Soft Skills available		Soft Skills available		Soft Skills available	
Austria		Portugal		Spain	
Teamwork	88%	Teamwork	35%	Leadership	72%
Leadership	68%	Self-Motivation	30%	Teamwork	56%
Self-Motivation	67%	Communication skills	30%	Communication skills	56%
Communication skills	65%	Creative thinking skills	30%	Planning skills - focus on targets an results	44%
Planning skills - focus on targets an results	60%	Gender Mainstreaming, Diversity, collaboration in change	25%	Gender Mainstreaming, Diversity, collaboration in change	44%

Training-offers required/ important for the target group

Employees							
Digital and technological skills required			Digital and technological skills required			Digital and technological skills required	
			Portugal			Spain	
Using e-commerce and social media as a mean to increase sales	51%		Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing	80%		Working with new technological applications	56%
General e-commerce skills	50%		Training concerning foreign language and intercultural skills	75%		Using e-commerce and social media as a mean to increase sales	56%
Training concerning digital purchase processes	44%		Working with new technological applications	70%		Using social media to communicate with clients	48%
Training concerning role and function of e-commerce	43%		Using e-commerce and social media as a mean to increase sales	65%		Training concerning role and function of e-commerce	48%
Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing	41%		Using social media to communicate with clients	65%		Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing	44%
Training concerning foreign language and intercultural skills	41%					Training concerning dynamic digital management	44%
Using social media to communicate with clients	41%						
Soft Skills required			Soft Skills required			Soft Skills required	
Austria			Portugal			Spain	
Gender Mainstreaming, Diversity, collaboration in change	31%		Leadership	60%		Stress management	64%
Stress management	29%		Stress management	60%		Self motivation	56%
Creative thinking skills	28%		Communication skills	60%		Creative thinking skills	44%
Problem-solving skills	27%		Planning skills - focus on targets an results	60%		Gender Mainstreaming, Diversity, collaboration in change	44%
Self-Motivation	23%		Creative thinking skills	60%		Planning skills - focus on targets an results	40%
Leadership	23%					Problem-solving skills	40%

Employers					
Digital and technological skills very important/important		Digital and technological skills very important/important		Digital and technological skills very important/important	
Austria		Portugal		Spain	
Training concerning role and function of e-commerce	84%	General computer literacy skills	84%	General computer literacy skills	74%
Using e-commerce and social media as a mean to increase sales	81%	Working with new technological applications	60%	General e-commerce skills	63%
Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing	77%	New working techniques	57%	Using social media to communicate with clients	62%
Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing	77%	Using social media to communicate with clients	57%	Working with new technological applications	60%
Using social media to communicate with clients	76%	Using e-commerce and social media as a mean to inc	50%	Training concerning digital purchase processes	56%
Training concerning the behavior of digital users	76%			Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing	56%
Using social media to communicate with clients	76%				
Soft Skills very important/important		Soft Skills very important/important		Soft Skills very important/important	
Austria		Portugal		Spain	
Communication skills	82%	Leadership	80%	Planning skills - focus on targets an results	67%
Problem-solving skills	81%	Teamwork	77%	Communication skills	58%
Creative thinking skills	67%	Self-Motivation	68%	Problem-solving skills	57%
Stress management	67%	Communication skills	68%	Leadership	57%
Planning skills - focus on targets an results	66%	Planning skills - focus on targets an results	68%	Teamwork	54%

Stakeholders					
Digital and technological skills important			Digital and technological skills important		Digital and technological skills important
Austria			Portugal		Spain
Working with new technological applications	90%		Training concerning digital purchase processes	100%	Training concerning digital purchase processes
Training concerning digital purchase processes	90%		General computer literacy skills	83%	Training concerning role and function of e-commerce
General computer literacy skills	78%		General e-commerce skills	83%	General e-commerce skills
Training concerning role and function of e-commerce	78%		Training concerning dynamic digital management	83%	Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing
General e-commerce skills	70%		Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing	83%	Using social media to communicate with clients
Training concerning the behavior of digital users	70%		Using social media to communicate with clients	83%	Working with new technological applications
Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing	70%				Training concerning the behavior of digital users
Using e-commerce and social media as a mean to increase sales	70%				Training concerning foreign language and intercultural skills
Using social media to communicate with clients	70%				
Soft Skills important			Soft Skills important		Soft Skills important
Austria			Portugal		Spain
Communication skills	80%		Teamwork	33%	Communication skills
Problem-solving skills	80%		Communication skills	33%	Planning skills - focus on targets an results
Planning skills - focus on targets an results	80%		Problem-solving skills	33%	Problem-solving skills
Creative thinking skills	80%		Self-Motivation	17%	Creative thinking skills
			Gender Mainstreaming, Diversity, collaboration in change	17%	Gender Mainstreaming, Diversity, collaboration in change
Stress management	75%		Planning skills - focus on targets an results	17%	

VETs					
Digital and technological skills demand high/medium			Digital and technological skills demand high/medium		Digital and technological skills demand high/medium
Austria			Portugal		Spain
Training concerning the behavior of digital users	78%		Working with new technological applications	88%	Working with new technological applications
General computer literacy skills	56%		General computer literacy skills	75%	Using e-commerce and social media as a mean to increase sales
Training concerning foreign language and intercultural skills	56%		General e-commerce skills	75%	Using social media to communicate with clients
Working with new technological applications	44%		Training concerning digital purchase processes	75%	General computer literacy skills
Training concerning digital purchase processes	33%		Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing	75%	General e-commerce skills
General e-commerce skills	30%		Training concerning foreign language and intercultural skills	75%	Training concerning online consumer motivation/purchase/marketing
			Using e-commerce and social media as a mean to increase sales	75%	Training concerning foreign language and intercultural skills
					New working techniques
Soft Skills demand high/medium			Soft Skills demand high/medium		Soft Skills demand high/medium
Austria			Portugal		Spain
Communication skills	75%		Communication skills	88%	Communication skills
Stress management	50%		Teamwork	75%	Self-Motivation
Teamwork	50%		Leadership	75%	Planning skills - focus on targets and results
Creative thinking skills	38%		Stress management	75%	Problem-solving skills
Self-Motivation	38%		Problem-solving skills	50%	Teamwork
					Leadership

4.2. What has to be done to increase motivation for people to improve their competences on e-commerce?

The level of digital literacy of the working population seems to be a prerequisite to increase further development of digital competences such as e-commerce.

Training programs must be adapted to the different levels of qualification and the previous knowledge of employees and a low threshold approach has to be offered.

The motivation to take part in vocational trainings is higher if employees see career-chances. People have to see better qualification as a possibility for job retention. If employees improve their competences, job profiles have to be changed or expanded including all conditions like salary, working times, etc.

Training contents must be specific, not generic – which means application-oriented and workplace-based with high practical relevance.

The duration of training also plays a role regarding motivation. There is a clear tendency to offer short-term training as something that could attract more people (ranging from 4 to 25 hours).

In terms of place it seems to be an advantage to organise trainings at the workplaces.

15

Finally, especially for employees, financial aspects play a role as a motivating factor: offering “for free”- or low cost-trainings, flexible payment arrangements or financed by funds.

4.3. What are suggestions for optimizing the training offers?

Following the aim to promote “lifelong learning” vocational education is not finished with entering a job. The working place should be seen as a learning place by employers and employees.

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

To organise practical trainings in the workplace and to insure continuity on the trainings provided are important aspects.

Professional recognition of the vocational training in the labor market is considered as very important by all target groups.

Regarding further education it is important to offer trainings more targeted to the specific needs of employees and employers and therefore to establish individual training needs assessments and to evaluate the level of competences in order to design trainings that answer to the individual needs of people and the demands of companies.

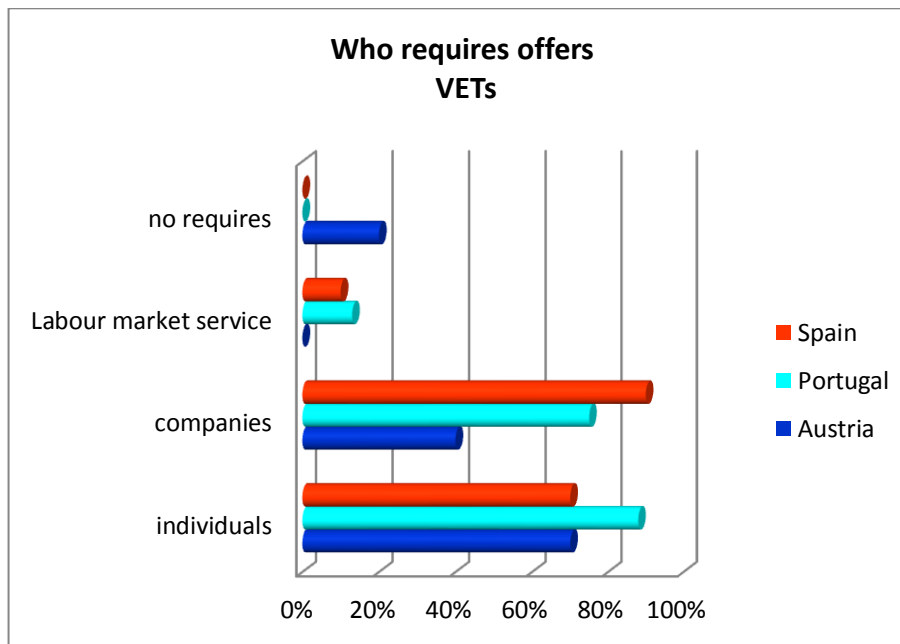
Concerning the learning process it is important to offer trainings with flexible time schedules that can answer to different needs and learning situations resulting from the various circumstances (working time, care responsibilities, learning type, ...).

Professional trainings regarding e-commerce used in companies



There is a striking difference in the perception of employees and employers concerning the training offers used in companies. Especially “training on the job”, where employers estimate a substantially higher proportion, and “none” which is indicated by significantly more employees. Employers see more training offers used in companies than employees.

Required offers in e-commerce-trainings



Most of the requests come from individuals and companies, in Austria the rate of companies is lower than in Portugal and Spain.

5. Innovative learning methods

5.1. How did the target groups define “innovative” learning methods?

Innovative is a concept not easy to define and with different meanings, but based on the specifications provided in the questionnaires “innovative” was mostly defined as learning with the support of ICT in various ways.

It was also pointed out that a mix of methods and the use of different approaches adapted to the needs of each participant or group of participants in the learning process is of high importance.

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

A good and result-oriented mix has to be prepared for the entire group or individuals. Methods, examples, exercises have to be selected in accordance with the specifics of the target groups taking into account criteria such as: age, gender, level of qualification or cultural aspects.

19

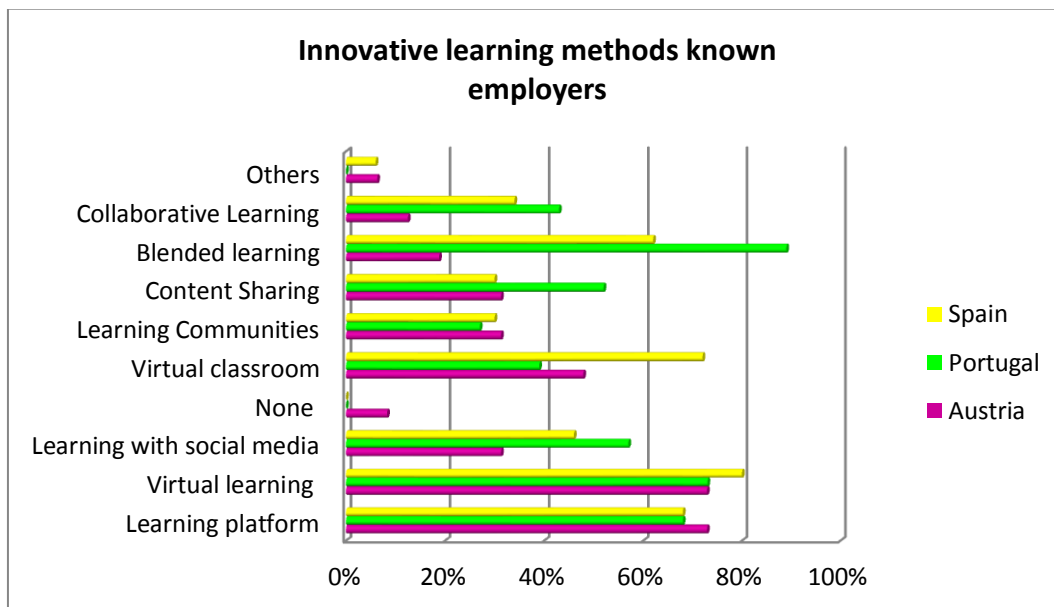
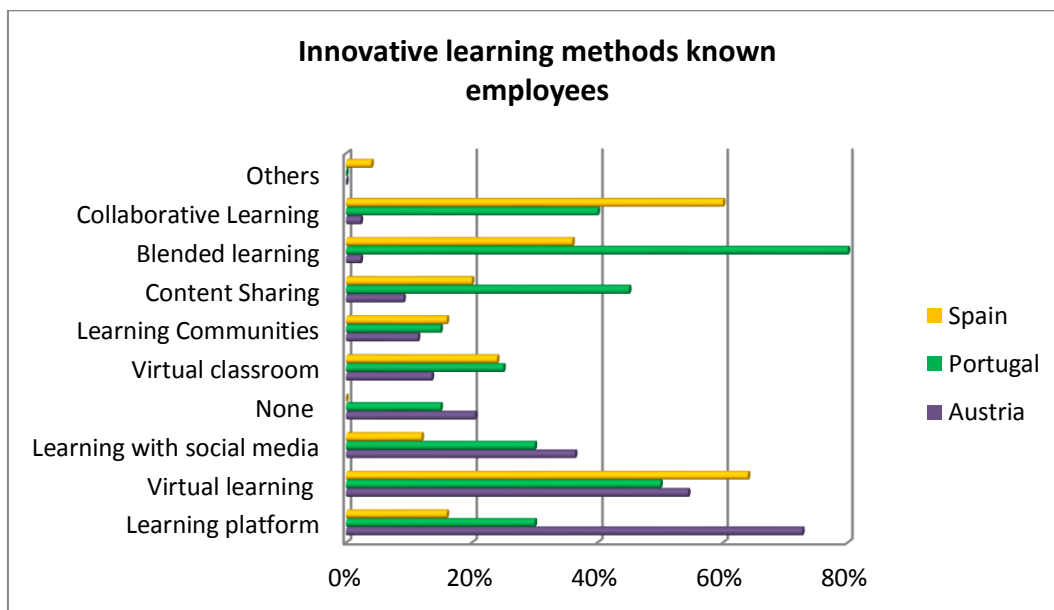
The results of the survey show that there are significant differences in the use of innovative learning methods: the younger they are the higher media literacy they have and consequently the higher is the use of virtual learning methods. The older they are the less interested in ICT and media and more interested in traditional learning methods as in classroom training.

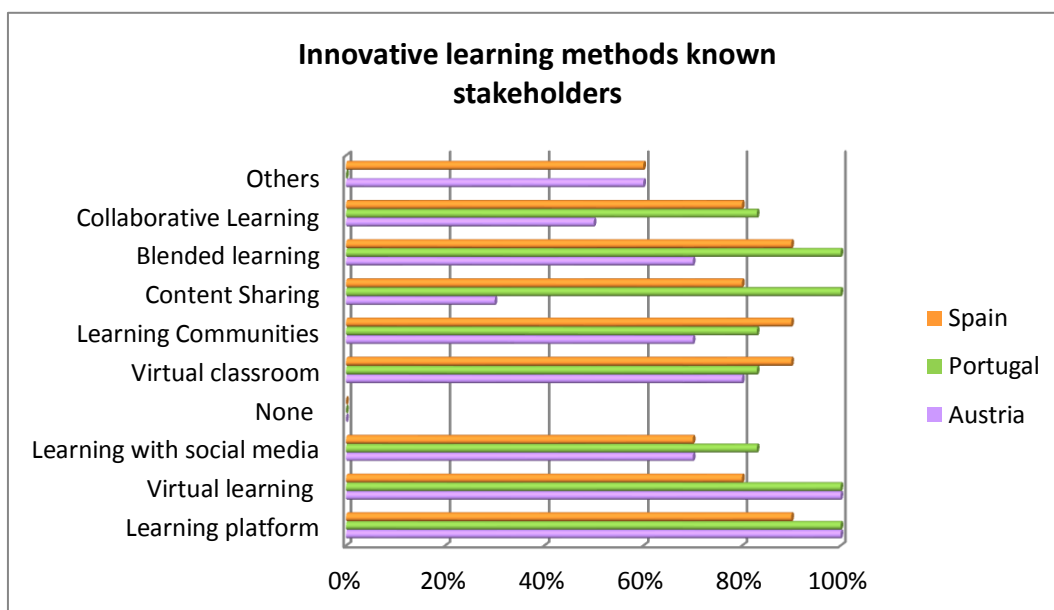
The same with the level of qualification: a higher level of qualification causes a more various use of innovative learning tools.

The research showed that not many e-learning methods are known, but there are differences between the countries.

Regardless of age and skill level, analysis shows, the more particular innovative learning methods are offered by VETs, the more they are known and participants are more open to those forms of learning. For example: blended learning in Portugal and Spain, learning platforms in Austria. *(See graphics below.)*

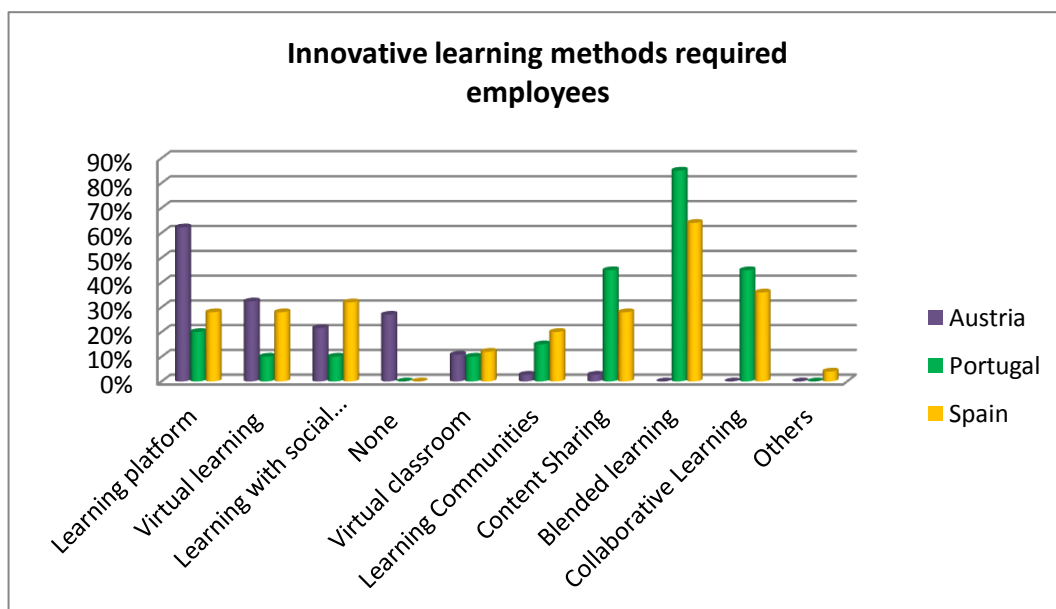
Innovative learning methods known

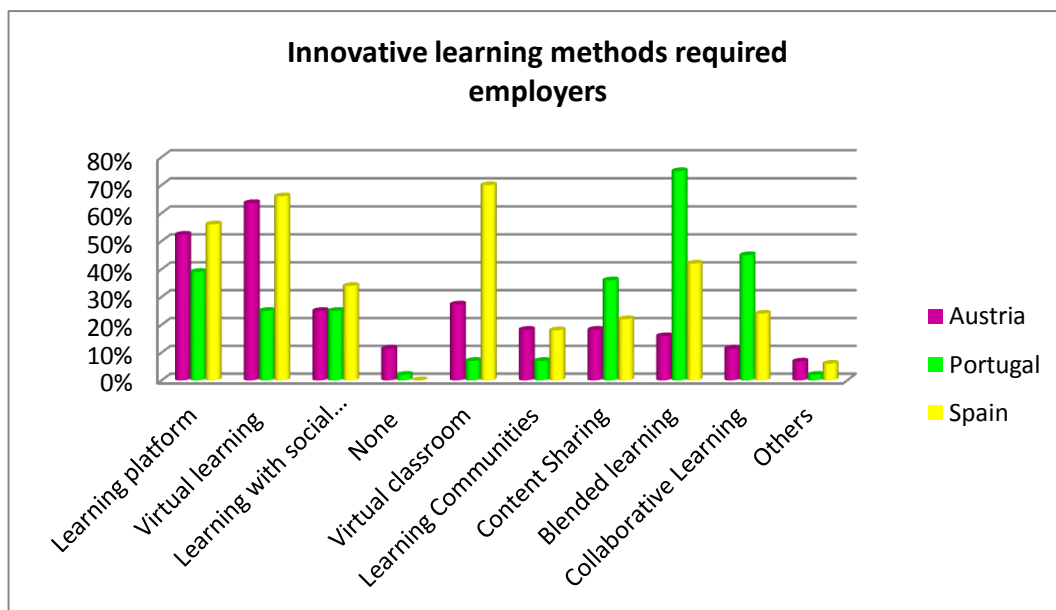




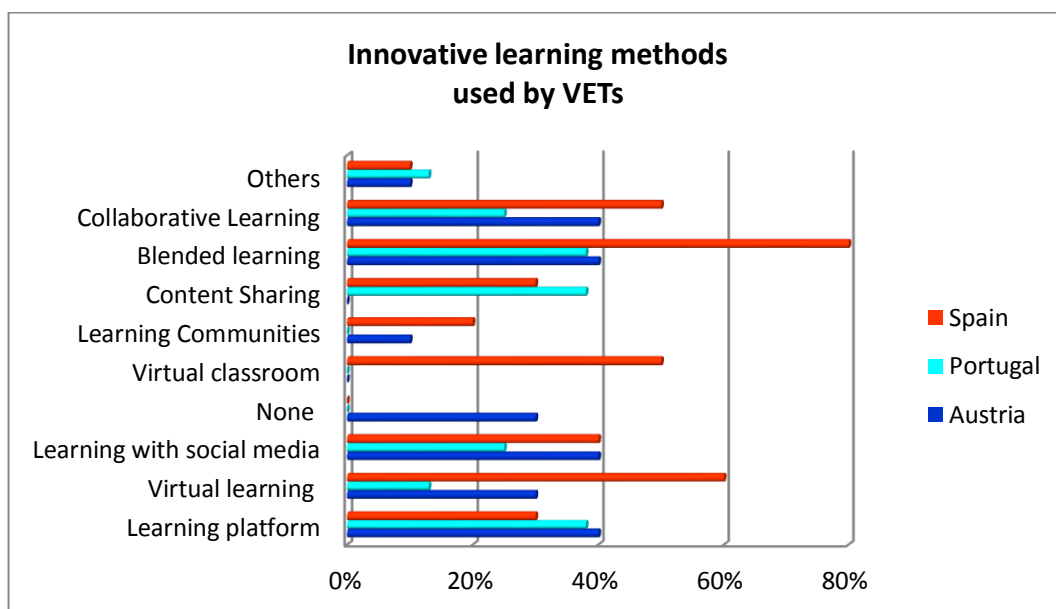
Innovative learning methods required

21





Innovative learning methods used by VETs



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

Depending on the target group and the level of qualification, knowledge and experience “innovative” learning methods - in the sense of technology orientated methods - are not always the adequate solution and the use of a mixture of complementary learning methods (theoretical training in a classroom, e-learning, simulated training, on-the-job training, etc.) having as focus “the learner” seems to be the wiser solution.

The key element seems to be the “motivation to learn”. This means that (life-long) learning in general has to get a more central position in life- and work-concepts because many of the employees are not used to learn, especially people with low qualification level.

Once people feel motivated to learn then it is all a question of understanding the learning styles of each person, being aware of the learning goals and the competences to be developed and then choose the more adequate learning methods.

Methods need to be adapted to participant’s profile (learning style, level of qualification, entry level, etc.), learning goals and competences to be developed. If this is not taken into account, no connection can be found, and e-learning will not be accepted and used.

23

The results of the survey show that especially employees need trainings to improve their general ICT skills to increase media literacy to be able to act within the field of e-commerce. This means that basic-trainings and awareness-raising information need to be provided to increase the knowledge and promote the use of different innovative learning methodologies.

Thus it is logical that if the competences to develop are around the “e” (e-marketing, e-consumers, e-commerce, etc.) the “e” methods could be appropriate but approaches on different levels/stages are required and have to be considered.

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

6. Conclusion

Requirements on employees in commerce considerably increased and changed. We face the situation that these requirements are not really compatible with the (low) qualification level of the current staff in commerce. Therefore certain key competences have to be increased and/or developed to enable employees to deal with the field of e-commerce.

Prerequisite for this personnel development are efforts to promote lifelong learning, reduce fear of this new field of work, increase affinity to new technology and to provide target group oriented access to innovative learning methods.

There should be a focus on the result of the survey regarding training offers used in companies: there is a striking difference in the perception of employees and employers concerning the offers, especially “training on the job” where employers estimate a substantially higher proportion, and “none” which is indicated by significantly more employees. In general employers see more training offers used in companies than employees.

Therefore we recommend involving responsible persons for personnel development in the development of training offers in order to provide an insight into the “reality” of employees and to improve the quality of internal trainings.

From a more systemic approach it means that the national qualification frameworks (NQF) and the existing qualifications in the commerce area have to be revised in order to integrate the dimension “e-commerce”. New qualifications need to be created and integrated in the NQF and EQF.

6.1. Training offer

In this project it is important to take into account the rather low qualification level of the target group who face the situation of multichannel business in various forms in their practical work.

Depending on the target group and the level of qualification and the field of work trainings covering “key skills”, “digital and technological skills” and “soft skills” have to be developed.

Key skills

- Learn to learn / motivation to be updated / Lifelong learning
- General computer literacy skills

Digital and technological skills

- General e-commerce skills
- Role and function of e-commerce
- Working with new technological applications
- Training concerning online consumers, motivation, purchase, marketing
- Using social media to communicate with clients
- Using of e-commerce and social media to increase sales

25

Soft skills

- Communication: ability to communicate via new technologies “at distance” (spoken and written communication)
- Training concerning foreign languages and intercultural skills
- Planning skills: using IT-supported tools for planning connected with “traditional” planning
- Problem solving skills: multichannel business models “create new problems”
- Stress management: new technologies cause expectations that everything has to be dealt quickly; multichannel costumers are well informed and critical

6.2. Innovative learning methods

Learning methods which position the learner (her/his learning aims, her/his learning style, circumstances, ...) into the center do not rank the pedagogical approach behind the technical approach and use a diverse mixture of methods.

Though a gender- and diversity perspective always has to be integrated, the most important factor to gain knowledge is motivation and curiosity.

If we aim to provide access to the various forms of e-learning for our target group the step “online socialisation” is indispensable. The analysis showed, that the respondents preferred only those innovative learning methods they knew which does not automatically mean that these methods are the most suitable.

Therefore we propose to follow Gilly Salmon’s 5 stage model for planning online learning as a guide through the ALL-ECOM development process of tools and trainings.

