

Quality management and product tests in continuing education and training

Quality development is an important concern for providers of continuing education and training. A relatively new approach is product testing in continuing education and training by Stiftung Warentest. Today we are asking you for your impressions of quality development in continuing education and training, and of product tests.

Quality improvement and measurement

1. Please indicate with a cross how far you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>tend to agree</i>	<i>tend not to agree</i>	<i>don't agree at all</i>	<i>don't know</i>
The quality of continuing education and training has distinctly improved in the last three years.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In the last three years, life has become very much harder for disreputable operators in the continuing education and training market.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality efforts have strongly influenced the daily work of trainers and tutors in continuing education and training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality improvement in this sector has only just begun.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What approaches is your establishment using for quality improvement in continuing education? And which of the approaches stated is the most important for your establishment?

	<i>Approaches used</i>	<i>Most important approach</i>	<i>Not relevant for us</i>
Self-evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional quality alliance with common quality criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seals of quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation in competitions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Certification for employment agencies (AZWV)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distance learning authorisation (ZFU)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DIN EN ISO 9000ff certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LQW (Learner-oriented quality testing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EFQM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please specify _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. How important, for your establishment, are Stiftung Warentest's comparative assessments of training offerings?

very important *quite important* *not that important* *not at all important*

4. In your opinion, to what extent is it possible to measure the following aspects of continuing vocational education and training quality by means of tests?

	<i>perfectly possible</i>	<i>quite possible</i>	<i>hardly possible</i>	<i>not possible at all</i>	<i>don't know</i>
Quality of prior guidance and counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of education and training providers' internal procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of subject matter and content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of educational and teaching input	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of infrastructure (e.g. premises, equipment, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Price-performance ratio of continuing education and training offerings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expressing the quality of training offerings with one overall score	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. In your view, how well suited are Stiftung Warentest product tests to the following continuing education and training products or services?

	<i>very well</i>	<i>quite well</i>	<i>hardly</i>	<i>not at all</i>	<i>don't know</i>
Training courses or sessions taught face-to-face	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blended learning courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal guidance counselling for training purposes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online guidance counselling, telecoaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information systems, training databases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E-learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courseware, CD-based learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. In relation to other quality improvement approaches in training establishments, is product testing in continuing education more of ... *a complementary approach* or *a competing approach* ?

7. Product testing of education need not be confined to the continuing education and training sector. How important is it to extend comparative testing of education to ... ?

	<i>very important</i>	<i>quite important</i>	<i>not that important</i>	<i>not at all important</i>	<i>don't know</i>
Schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Universities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your experience with product tests in continuing education and training Please comment on your specific establishment only.

8. Have you read any Stiftung Warentest test results on continuing education and training offerings?

yes *once* go on to question 9 *two to five times* go on to question 9 *six times or more* go on to question 9 no, never go on to question 18

9. How often do you consult the following media to find out about product testing of continuing education and training?

	<i>often</i>	<i>occasionally</i>	<i>never</i>
"Test" magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Finanztest" magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Stiftung Warentest website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other media consulted frequently, namely: _____			

10. Do you find it easy or difficult to locate a specific training product test that has been published in the past? *on the whole, easy* *on the whole, difficult*

11. How do you rate the amount of information provided in published training product tests?

The amount of information ... *... is too high* *...should be higher* *...is just right.*

	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>
12. Are the published training product tests sometimes worded in a confusing way?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Do the published training product tests offer potential participants any concrete help with choosing the right course?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. On the basis of training product tests, have you ever made changes to products which were not tested?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. The following list of statements relate to Stiftung Warentest product tests in continuing education and training. Please indicate with a cross how far you agree or disagree with each statement.

	<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>tend to agree</i>	<i>tend not to agree</i>	<i>don't agree at all</i>	<i>don't know</i>
The criteria used in the tests are appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The methods used in the tests are not appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The presentation of the results is effective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Product tests in continuing education and training do not offer helpful pointers for quality improvement in training establishments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The results of product tests in continuing education and training are generally credible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. To what extent does your establishment react to Stiftung Warentest quality criteria when designing its course offerings?

<i>To the criteria...</i>	<i>to a very large extent</i>	<i>to quite a large extent</i>	<i>to quite a low extent</i>	<i>not at all</i>	<i>don't know</i>
on the quality of guidance and counselling prior to training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
on the quality of internal procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
on the quality of subject matter and content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
on the quality of educational and teaching input	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
on the quality of infrastructure (e.g. premises, equipment, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
on the price-performance ratio of different continuing education and training offerings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To the different weightings of individual criteria in an overall score	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. Which of the following attributes, in your view, accurately describe Stiftung Warentest's product tests in continuing education and training, and which do not?

Please answer this for every attribute, on a scale of 1 = very accurate indeed, to 5 = not accurate at all.

	very accurate indeed 1 2 3 4 5 not accurate at all	don't know
fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
biased	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
frivolous	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
scientific	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
bureaucratic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
untransparent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
competent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ineffective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tests and their effects

18. To what extent, in your view, do the test results for a particular training offering affect that provider's market position in the tested sector (e.g. languages, IT, etc.)?

And to what extent do they affect the provider's position in the overall market?

	to a very large extent	to quite a large extent	to quite a low extent	not at all	impossible to generalise	don't know
in the tested sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
in the overall market	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. Has Stiftung Warentest tested any of your company's continuing education and training offerings?

no, never

→ go on to question 21 | yes → How many times? → go on to question 20

20. Please indicate with a cross whether or not each of the following statements applies to you.

On the basis of the training product tests, we...	no	yes
...made changes to the offerings tested.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...withdrew offerings from the market.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...expanded our offerings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If changes were made because of the tests, please state the most important changes in keyword form:

21. Should the number of tests in continuing education and training ...

be significantly increased? | stay about the same? | be somewhat reduced? | The tests should stop completely.
 be somewhat increased? | be significantly reduced? | go on to question 23

22. Who should carry out product tests in continuing education and training?

Stiftung Warentest | Another body → Who? _____ | Don't know

Features of your establishment

Please comment on your specific establishment only.

23. Please award school-type grades [1 = excellent, 6 = fail]:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	don't know
How do you rate your establishment's current economic situation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
And how do you expect it to be in three years' time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. Is continuing education and training one of your establishment's core activities, a subsidiary activity, or do you not offer continuing education and training (any more)?

We offer continuing vocational education as a core activity. | We offer continuing vocational education as a subsidiary activity.
 We offer continuing general education as a core activity. | We offer continuing general education as a subsidiary activity.
 We do not offer continuing education (any more).

25. Is there serious competition from providers abroad, from your establishment's point of view? | yes | no

26. Which of the following subject areas are part of your continuing vocational education and training provision?

	<i>core element</i>	<i>also offered</i>	<i>not offered</i>
Languages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health, well-being, fitness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership or management training, self-management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education, pedagogy, psychology, social pedagogy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business and commercial training (human resources, sales, purchasing, finance and accounting)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial and technical training (e.g. welding or other production technology, inspection and measurement technology)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial IT applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial and technical IT applications (including CNC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IT programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal or tax issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27. Your role

Managing director, proprietor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Training guidance/counselling staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Head of a training department	<input type="checkbox"/>	Head of administration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational staff, trainer, coach	<input type="checkbox"/>	Administration staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>		

28. How many permanent members of staff do you current employ in continuing vocational education and training, and how many in total? *If you do not know the precise figures, please estimate.*

	<i>In continuing vocational education</i>	<i>In total</i>
1 – 9 employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 - 49 employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50 - 99 employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
100 - 249 employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
250 employees or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

29. How many continuing vocational education and training participants did you have in 2004?

What is the trend for this year?

Estimated figures are acceptable.

	<i>Number in 2004</i>	<i>Trend for 2005 about the</i>			
		<i>higher</i>	<i>same</i>	<i>lower</i>	<i>don't know</i>
All participants in continuing vocational education and training		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
of which: participants with training vouchers		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

30. What especially important aspect, in your view, should be taken up (again) in the next questionnaire?

(Keywords only, please)

Thank you very much for taking part.

(Return address for window envelope)

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Please post the completed questionnaire back to us by August 9, 2005.

Or fax it to the following fax number: + 49 (0)228/107-2985.
 We recommend returning the completed questionnaire by post; faxes often arrive with missing or illegible sections and then require follow-up by telephone.