Commercial occupational activity takes place in an extremely **dynamic environment**. Those involved in the commercial sector must be able to rapidly respond to technological innovations, changing consumer demands and new social requirements to ensure their competitiveness. In professional work, one cannot react to external changes, but must be proactive by anticipating new trends and discovering new methods to accommodate them.

The **specialist work** they perform plays a crucial part in determining how we will live in future. How can customer needs best be met? How should products be brought to the market, whose production consumes fewest resources and complies with societal standards? How will products reach their destination via the most energy-efficient means of transport? To find sustainable solutions, specific **professionals skills** are required, which may be fostered by continuous vocational education and training.

A number of sustainability trends and required skills for selected commercial occupations are listed below. The information presented is based on the results of pilot projects carried out within the scope of the funding focus **"Vocational education and training for sustainable development 2015–2019"** (Funding Line I) and its scientific supervision (University of Hamburg, Institute for Vocational and Business Education).



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Latest information on vocational education and training for sustainable development: www.bbne.de

Sustainability in training practice: www.foraus.de/bbne

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Sustainability in commercial occupations

Trends and competencies



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Competencies

Trends towards sustainability are becoming increasingly visible, particularly in commercial occupations, requiring new competencies from all employees. The areas of potential, which already exist within respective occupations, may be used during the process. Related professions may provide further ideas. For more detailed information, please visit **www.bbne.de**

Retail



Trends

Develop strategies to minimise packaging

Evaluate different packaging solutions with regard to recyclability

Be aware of alternatives to plastic packaging and offer them in a targeted way

Know the criteria used to award different labelling

Assess and compare labels in terms of quality and credibility

When providing customer advice, steer them to high quality and sustainable labelling



Expectations for companies to assume corporate social responsibility (CSR) with the knowledge that sustainability reporting is rising

reporting

Be aware of the criteria contained in

CSR guidelines and of sustainability

Contribute to the conservation of re-

sources by optimising route planning

Take into account the economic and

ecological aspects in supply chain

Deploy reusable transport

management

containers

Explain societal responsibility of your company

Develop sustainable guiding principles for the company and commit to their implementation

Ensure producers comply with social and environmental standards

Include ecological and social guidelines on balance sheets

Conclude agreements with suppliers stating the ecological and social impact of goods ordered

Forwarding and logistics services

Globalisation of

trade leads to an

increase in traffic

flow and resource

are being established

number of city

New time- and

resource-saving echnologies are being

tested in the

Evaluate different means of transport with consideration of their resource consumption

Take into account the economic and ecological impact by combining different means of transport such as aeroplanes, ships, rail, lorries, carrier bicycles, etc.

Check opportunities and encourage cooperation with other companies to streamline the storage and distribution of goods

Compare means of transport with regard to noise generation and pollutant emissions

Minimise pollution by selecting low-emission sources of transport

Seek to identify (more) sustainable options, e.g. for the "last mile"

Be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of innovative transport technologies (e.g. autonomous vehicles)

Investigate the use of robots in warehouse logistics procedures

Find out about current trial methods for goods delivery (e.g. via drone)



The number of quality

and sustainability

labels is rapidly

increasing

Obtain and evaluate information about the conditions under which products are manufactured

Consider fair trade criteria when developing product range

Advise customers on the social and ecological standards of products



Cases about socially intolerable production conditions are often reported in the media

are increasing

The ecological and

economic costs of

freight transport

Wholesale and foreign trade