

FORCAL PROJECT

Retailers of all sectors employ 20% of the total employed population, being the 80% small or medium size companies. 20% of the total number of retailers is working in textile and footwear sectors. The number of footwear shops in Europe is around 200.000 and it is estimated that more than 600.000 people work as footwear shop assistants in shoe shops. To this number we should add shops assistants who are working on big stores where footwear is also sold.

In spite of the size of the sector and the number of people employed, there is not specific vocational training addressed to shoe shop assistants. Nowadays, footwear shop assistants only have the possibly to develop their vocational training in general areas, such as commercial courses. Other professionals as footwear manufacturers and designers concentrate most of the knowledge about footwear design, quality and performance, but this information is not adapted to footwear shop assistants necessities, not existing any course content specifically focused on the particular necessities of that group of professionals.

The lack of vocational training addressed to footwear assistants has the following consequences:

There is any academic qualification to back up their knowledge.

As a consequence of the lack of vocational training footwear, shops assistants are replaced easily and this collective has a low quality's employ. The contracts are made for short term and their stability is very low. Besides they usually have low salaries.

The consumers have not assessment in order to select health and ergonomic footwear. The use of appropriate and healthy footwear is very important to avoid foot problems in general but specially for some populations as children or elderly people. In fact 95% of footwear buyers consider very important that the footwear shop assistant help them to select the footwear (IBV).

The main objective of the project is to develop and to valorize an innovative e-learning course in the field of functionality, health and quality of footwear addressed to footwear shop assistants.

The aim of this course is to cover all the aspects that could be valuable for professionals to improve their knowledge about footwear, foot, and shoe performance. The course intends to train about foot health and the design characteristics that may have influence on shoe ergonomics and quality. The goal is that and so shop assistant can become professionals that can act as prescriptions and not only as sellers. After the course, footwear shop assistants will be able to give advice about what is the best shoe for a specific user (child, adult, elderly people, etc.) and for a particular use (sport, work, etc.).

To have an adequate impact the project will generate and validate an internet course that will be endorsed by the Vocation al

Training centre of the Polytechnic University of Valencia

The way to solve the hole vocational training is generating specific material to these collective though internet. That is because this collective is very scattered over all cities and villages of all Europe.

The project work-plan has been structured in the following phases:

Definition of training needs

Definition of training contents

Development of training contents

Implementation of the on-line tool

Pilot training course

Valorization of the course (enclosed exploitation and dissemination) of the course

Project management

Objectives:

The specific objective of the proposal is to elaborate a training offer specifically adapted to the group of professionals involved in the sale of footwear in Europe, giving the possibility of obtaining an academic qualification. The aim is to provide this group with professional training by means e-learning as initial training or along their professional career.

This final objective will be reached by means the accomplishment of the following intermediate objectives:

Development of the learning content. This content is innovative because there is not material in Europe specifically adapted to the particular needs of the target groups of the project. The content will cover the following aspects in particular:

Aspects related to the footwear quality

Aspects related to ergonomics, functionality and comfort depending on the type of user of the footwear (children, adults, elderly...) and its use (sports, work...)

The content of the course will be updated in the future in order to integrate the knowledge obtained as result of the RTD tasks of the project partners.

Implementation of the content in an e-learning course to be developed through Internet. The course will be developed in several of the languages of the EU with the aim of assuring the accessibility to the greatest number of possible users. The use of ICT and of more advanced learning products will be promoted, as the creation of transnational virtual working groups of users.

Development of a pilot test. The course will be developed by footwear shop assistants in order to detect possible problems and improvement opportunities before its validation and start-up.

Diffusion of the learning material with the aim of promoting the development of the course by the greatest number of footwear sellers in Europe. Establishment of an exploitation and commercialization plan for the results.

Project association:

In order to guarantee that the activities of the project work-plan will be carry out efficiently, each partner involved has been selected by his complementarily with the others, by his expertise to develop their main role in the project and including both the interest of the addressed sector (CEDDEC) and the final users (CCOO).

In that sense, R+D complementary centers (IBV and CTC) and TomasBataUniversity in Zlín (TBU), which are experts in different aspects of footwear, developed the content of the course. The course methodology has been developed by the Postgraduate Training Centre of the Polytechnics University of Valencia (UPV), which is a Vocational Education & Training (VET) institution with a wide experience in e-learning. Employees of a chain of footwear shops (STIVAL) validated the course participating in the pilot test. Regarding the dissemination of the course, the European Confederation of the Shoe Retailers Associations (CEDDEC) is involved. CCOO is a social partner member of a transnational partnership along Europe, which will participates through his training area, will participate in the pilot course, and the most important, will watch the interest of the final users.