

Lockdowns Have Alienated Young People from the World of Work



PUBLISHED AUG 19, 2022
BY [CONTINENTAL AG](#)

Emphasizing the benefits of in-company training more strongly

“The importance of in-company training should be communicated to young people,” says Reinhart. “We must make them aware of the contribution that in-company training makes to personal life planning.” This includes the high level of security that a job in trade or industry provides compared to an unachievable dream occupation.

“In the long term, in-company training often offers the same or even better career and earnings opportunities than a college education,” adds the Continental Executive Board member. In this context, she also believes companies have a role to play: “Companies must create the conditions to ensure that the career opportunities offered by in-company training are equal to those of a degree course – for example through more flexible training models.” Companies could, for instance, combine in-company training modules with supplementary university content. At the same time, she adds, the training opportunities for both young professionals after their training and for long-standing employees need to be expanded and made less bureaucratic. “Public funding for vocational training is currently far too complicated and inflexible,” argues Reinhart. “This is a problem that social partners must work on together with policymakers. We need to rapidly find effective solutions.”

Reinhart warns companies against blocking their access to qualified trainees through excessive requirements. “The training market has run dry. Many companies are not in a position to make great demands or to pick and choose when it comes to selecting their trainees,” says Reinhart. “We see valuable talent in many young people, which only needs to be brought out in a targeted manner and then nurtured. The motivation will then come naturally.”

School grades, she explains, are of limited significance with regard to the requirements of individual career paths. “A good mechatronics

engineer, for instance, does not necessarily have to be a straight A student. Their personal skills and abilities are much more important,” says the Continental Executive Board member. “This is why we carry out a targeted diagnosis for all applicants. At Continental, we refer to this as the ‘best fit’ approach. The ultimate aim here is to ensure equal opportunities for all.”

In view of the growing skills shortage, companies also need to open up their training programs to all target groups. “We can no longer afford to train only young people. Older employees, refugees, people without formal qualifications and the long-term unemployed also need to be integrated into the skilled labor market through training,” says Reinhart.

Press release distributed by Wire Association on behalf of Continental AG, on Aug 19, 2022. For more information subscribe and [follow](#) us.

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