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## In-Company Trainers in Austria

**In-company trainers are responsible for around 80% of the apprentices' training time. Although they consequently play a key role in apprenticeship training, they represent a group that has so far received little attention. A representative survey conducted by ibw among more than 1,000 in-company trainers in Austria provides revealing insights: a remarkable 98% of the in-company trainers say that they like doing their work as trainers (67% strongly agree, 31% rather agree). They see their currently by far biggest challenge in the recruitment of apprentices, i.e. in a quantitative and qualitative shortage of applications. Another major difficulty for in-company trainers is the distraction of apprentices by their mobile phones.**

The results of the online survey which was conducted in January 2019 among 1,072 in-company trainers in Austria and commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) show that the trainers see the greatest challenge for training in the qualitative and quantitative shortage of apprentices, which, in turn, is due to demographic reasons as well as the resulting increasing competition for (particularly gifted) young people between companies and upper secondary schools<sup>1</sup> (see Diagram 1). 80% of the trainers (43% strongly agree, 37% rather agree) see the too low number of qualified/good applications and 70% also generally too few applications for their vacant apprenticeship posts as a current challenge for training apprentices in their company.<sup>2</sup> It should additionally be noted that this survey only covered in-company trainers who are (currently still) active and not (former) trainers from companies that have already stopped providing apprenticeship training or that (due to lack of demand) had to end their apprenticeship training.

The trainers also consider the distraction of apprentices by their mobile phones (70% strongly or rather agree) and

the burden of the constantly increasing documentation and administrative workload (64%) as problems that make it more difficult to train apprentices. Only one third of the trainers (33%), however, feel challenged by limited financial resources for investment in company-based apprenticeship training.

An expression of the qualitative lack of youths who are willing and able to undergo a vocational education and training programme is not least the lack of general training maturity among young people as attested by many trainers (68% strongly or rather agree), and here in turn inadequate knowledge of mathematics (i.e. "practical arithmetic") among youths (67%) comes first. On the other hand, the young people's lacking command of German is perceived as a challenge much less frequently (39%).

Consequently, the desire to improve education or previous qualifications in compulsory schooling (92% agreement, of which 57% see this as very useful and 35% rather useful) is at the top of the list of possibilities for providing trainers with even better support in their work (see Diagram 2).

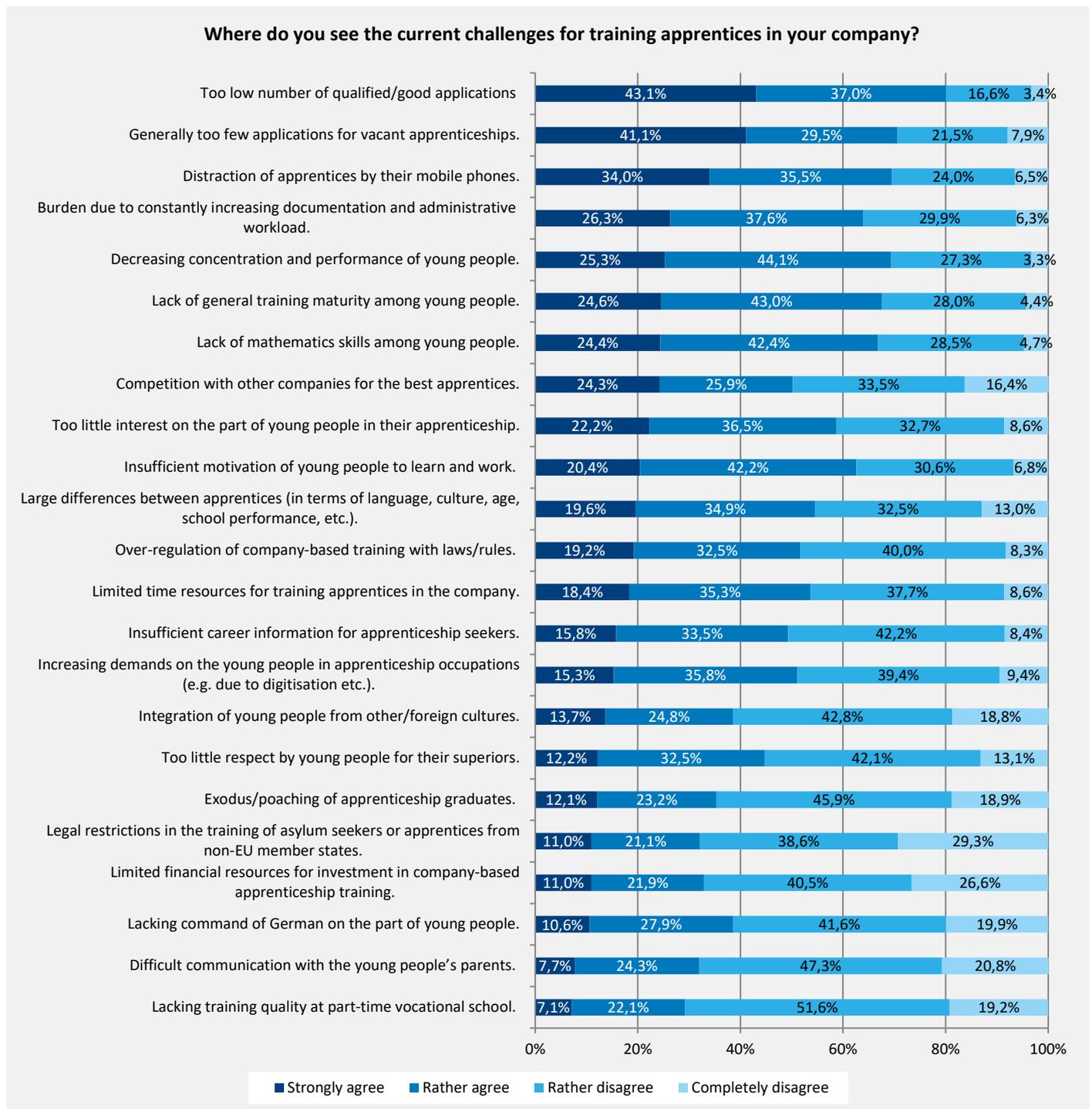
<sup>1</sup>See also chapters 3, 4, 7 and 15 in: Dornmayr Helmut; Nowak Sabine (2018): 2018 Survey of Apprenticeship Training. Structural Data, Trends and Prospects, ibw Research Report No. 193, Vienna

<sup>2</sup> Another survey carried out in April 2018 among almost 4,500 Austrian enterprises had already revealed very clearly that a considerable proportion of Austrian enterprises (38% yes, 22% perhaps) would be prepared

to train significantly more apprentices if they found sufficient numbers of suitable and interested young people (cf. Dornmayr, Helmut; Lengauer (prev. Winkler), Birgit (2018): Company Survey on the Demand for/Lack of Skilled Labour - Skilled Labour Radar, Part II, ibw Research Report on behalf of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber WKO, Vienna).

DIAGRAM 1:

Challenges for training apprentices



Source: 2019 ibw trainer survey (n = 1,072 trainers).  
 N.B.: Some of the selectable answers in the above diagram have been shortened.

In this context, the desire for courses which focus on the apprentices' personal development before the start of their apprenticeship (86%) and the stronger promotion of days of practical work experience ("taster apprenticeships") (84%) are also frequently expressed.

Only one aspect is given more importance than the improvement of qualifications provided by compulsory

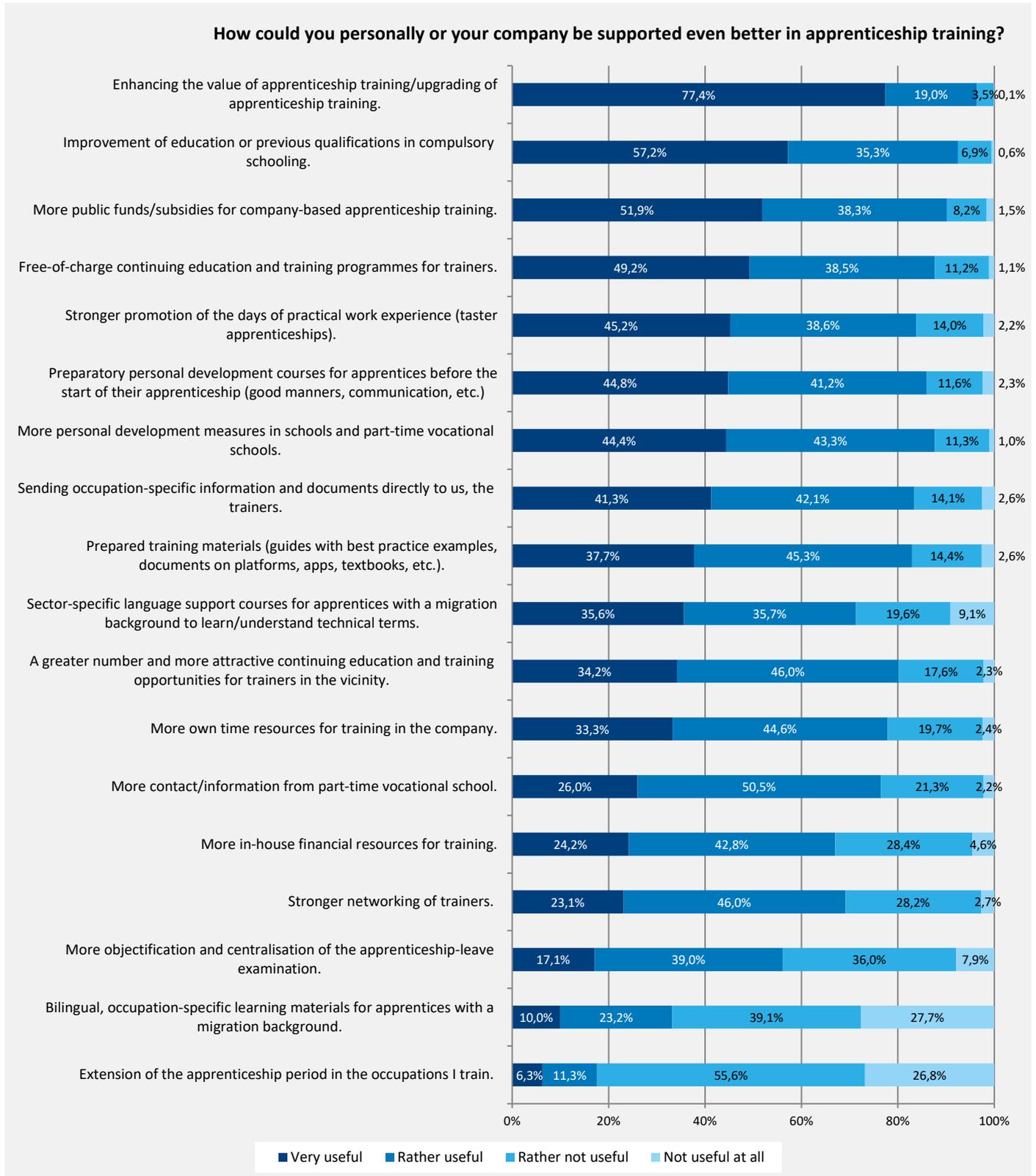
schooling: the desire to improve the image and enhance the value of apprenticeship training (96% agreement, of which 77% see this as very useful and 19% rather useful). This may also influence the desire for more public funds/subsidies for company-based apprenticeship training (90%) and for free-of-charge continuing education and training opportunities for trainers (88%).

In general, the trainers perceive themselves as having very different and diverse roles at the same time (see Diagram 3): as technical experts (95%), role models (95%), organisers (88%),

counsellors (88%), supervisors (87%), confidants (82%), colleagues (78%), teachers (59%) and educators/social workers (59%).

DIAGRAM 2:

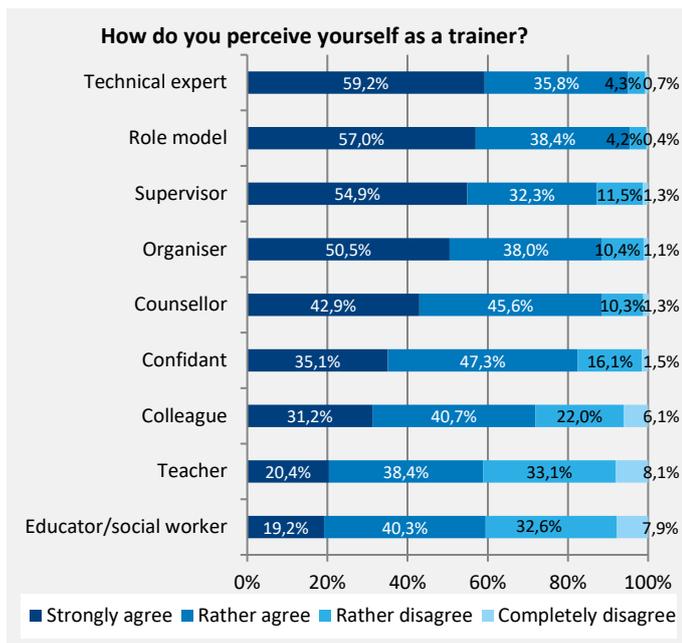
**Support potential in apprenticeship training**



Source: 2019 ibw trainer survey (n = 1,072 trainers).

DIAGRAM 3:

Perceived roles as in-company trainers

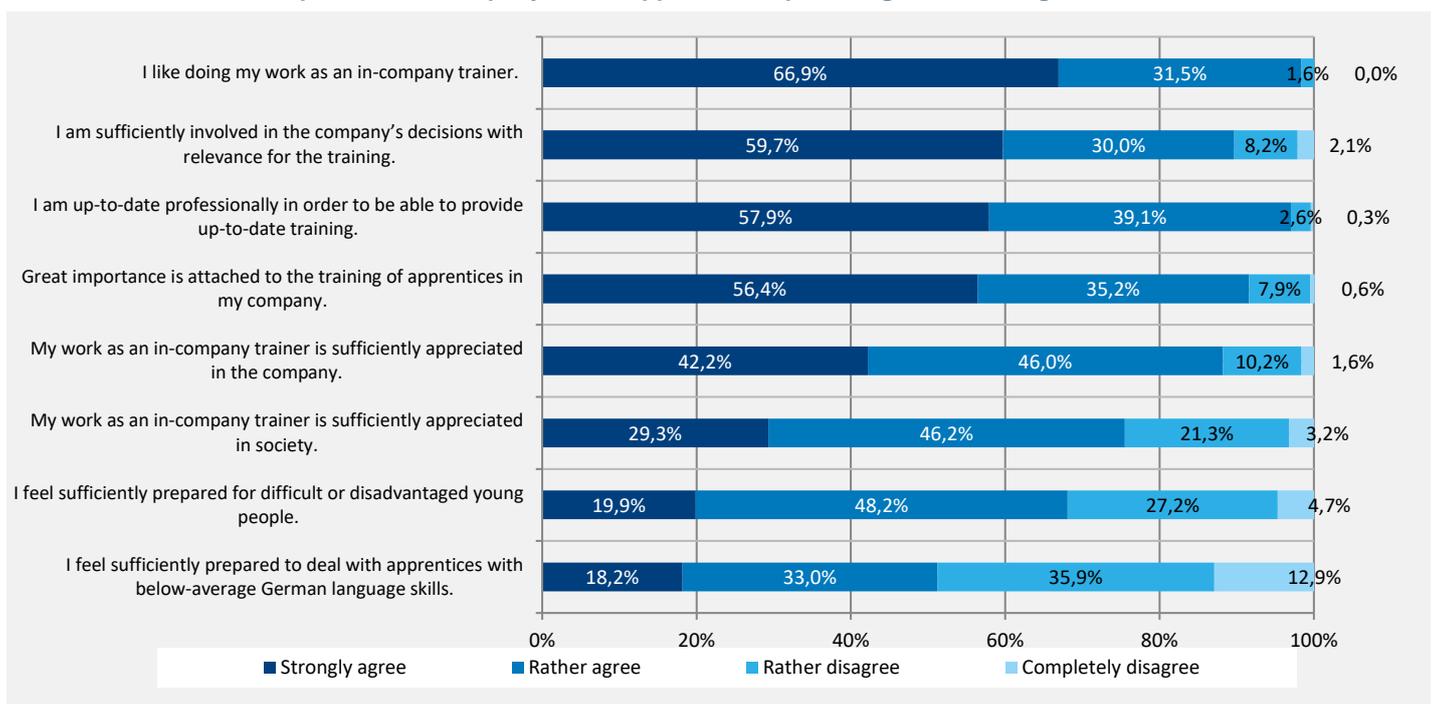


Source: 2019 ibw trainer survey (n = 1,072 trainers).

The survey among in-company trainers also shows that apprenticeship training is highly rated in the majority of companies (cf. Diagram 4): 91% feel that the training of apprentices in their company is of great importance (56% strongly agree, 35% rather agree), 88% of the trainers feel that their work as trainers in the company is sufficiently appreciated

DIAGRAM 4:

Importance of company-based apprenticeship training and “training culture”



Source: 2019 ibw trainer survey (n = 1,072 trainers)

(42% strongly agree, 46% rather agree), whereas appreciation in society is perceived as less pronounced (66%).

A remarkable 98% of the in-company trainers say that they like doing their work as trainers (67% strongly agree, 31% rather agree). This high positive motivation of in-company trainers undoubtedly represents a sound basis and enormous potential for the successful further development of apprenticeship training in Austria.

Possible activity dimensions derived from the present study concern the following topics:

- recognition/appreciation and the provision of public resources,
- the promotion of knowledge of mathematics (i.e. “practical arithmetic”),
- the achievement of educational objectives in compulsory schooling,
- continuing education and training opportunities for trainers,
- the provision of prepared training materials, and
- the use of digital learning technologies.

The entire study “In-Company Trainers in Austria” (ibw Research Report No. 196) can be downloaded free of charge from <https://www.ibw.at/bibliothek/id/497/>.