



Turn the Page

YOUR FUTURE IN THE PAPER SECTOR

Cultivating new growth

Recommendations and best practices
to attract and retain young people
to the pulp and paper industry



This brochure was developed under the EU project "Turn The Page", launched in March 2020 and concluded in February 2022. The project was coordinated by the Confederation of European Paper Industries (Cepi) in cooperation with IndustriAll European Trade Union and supported by the technical expert Spin360. The project was implemented by the following country partners: INDUFED (Belgium), the Finnish Forest Industries Federation (Finland), DIE PAPIERINDUSTRIE and IGBCE (Germany), Assocarta (Italy) and Solidarność (Poland).

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The landscape: what you'll find in this brochure

The European pulp and paper industry is a key contributor to the continent's society and its economy, as well as an increasingly digital, innovative and green industry. To best respond to new challenges such as greater demand for sustainability, new technologies and thus the need for innovative, digital approaches, it is essential to guarantee the industry's progress by finding and recruiting the next generation of employees and leaders.

"Turn The Page" was developed to respond to the need for a strategy for the pulp and paper industry to attract and retain young people, and as part of this to enhance their perception of the sector. This brochure collects the main results of the project to **support stakeholders** across the whole sector **by giving them practical, immediate and simple support and recommendations**, as well as **describing successful best practices** to attract and retain young people.

This brochure aims at sharing examples of best practices and concrete solutions to recruit a new workforce across the industry, guaranteeing its stability and competitiveness for decades to come.

The Pulp and Paper Industry in Europe

- produces **90ml** tonnes of paper and board
- **500** companies with **180,000** employees
- **€90bl** turnover

The European paper industry is a responsible industry and the leader on sustainability in the following areas:

- **74%** of paper in Europe is recycled – more than in any other industry
- **62%** of the primary energy used by the paper industry is renewable
- **92%** of our raw materials are sourced in Europe and certified as sustainable



New species: who is the younger generation?

Today's pulp and paper industry is innovative, green, and modern. To be attractive for the new generation, it's not enough for them to understand the industry and the opportunities it offers. It is also fundamental for people already in the sector to understand who the new potential employees are, and what they expect from a workplace.

Compared to other generations such as Gen X or baby boomers, Millennials and Gen Z have the following attitudes and inclinations:

1. Born in the digital age

Millennials and Gen Z are digital natives, where the pen is replaced by the laptop, and face-to-face by WhatsApp and social channels. This means first of all that they are used to language that is quick and immediate, having access to a wider range of information. And their information sphere is not limited to the local level but is global.

2. Socially and environmentally conscious

The new generations care about the most urgent issues the world is facing: climate change, social responsibility and respect for human rights. Young people's unprecedented mobilisation around the world shows the massive power they possess as contributors towards sustainability and social justice.

3. Disruptive and not afraid of change

The uncertainty of our times has required them to embrace change. Youngsters aren't afraid to take risks, be innovative and creative thinkers.

4. Make an impact: value is more important

Millennials and Gen Z cannot work well if they don't know what impact their work is going to produce, what is the meaning behind it. Such impact is strictly connected to their values, which they are not willing to leave behind when they come to work. They want to change the world, and at the same time they see their work as a journey.

5. Happiness, health and work-life balance

For the new generations, being happy is already success, and not vice-versa. It's not success that brings happiness, but rather work-life balance, health, decent wages and special attention to wellbeing that allows them to be more productive and engaged.

What are your experiences/ responses?

1. Preparing the soil: key elements and recommendations to attract young people

What is the pulp and paper sector's image among young people and their parents today? What do they know about it? Its potential is not commonly known, and they lack awareness of the variety of career opportunities it offers.

It is imperative to find ways to attract young workers. Such solutions must speak their language and consider their expectations: by leveraging such language, you can show them that the industry is far more than what they imagine. And that there is space for them to grow and to put their values into practice.

ATTRACTING

1.1 Spadework: how to engage youth in real-life work

There are many ways for companies to find and engage with young people. This could take the form of **either in-person or virtual** approaches, such as:

Company visits: open your doors!

In any area of life, young people and students are interested in seeing what's beyond the theory. They might want to see more technical aspects, such as the steps of the papermaking process, or just "breathe" a different atmosphere. This helps them to see a different world beyond their studies.

School visits: understand who might be your future workforce!

In addition to providing a chance to communicate about your business, this is also an opportunity for you to find potential new applicants, and understand their attitudes. Let them know about the career options you can offer. Bring employees with you who will be attractive to the new generation – for example newly recruited young staff members, whom students might be more comfortable with when it comes to asking questions.

Aligning skills with schools

At the same time, closer contacts with schools are an opportunity to better align with education and training providers. Make sure both sides are always up-to-date on current needs and latest technological developments. This will also help education and training providers better understand the industry's needs in terms of skills and competences, and integrate them into their curricula.





Paper fairs and events: get noticed!

Make sure your stand is visually attractive and people can see what your business is about. If possible, show your technology, either by bringing models of machines and samples of products, or by having screens to show them. Bring banners, leaflets, brochures and marketing material. While at the stand, work in parallel with social media, by creating event hashtags and maximising exposure of your location.

Use social media: leverage your digital potential!

Young people use social media as their primary point of contact – at the moment, primarily TikTok and Instagram, followed by Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Make sure you use the right channel for what you want to achieve. For example, if you want to raise awareness of your business, post photos on Instagram and ask your youngest employees to provide testimonials, e.g. in videos on TikTok. At the same time, create ads that communicate what you have to offer.

1.2 Putting down roots: guidance, programs, tools

Getting noticed is not enough if you don't show what you have to offer. Let people know why they should want to build a career in the paper sector. Demonstrate your potential and your added value, which may include:

Offer internships and apprenticeships

These have proved to be useful tools to get young people onboard through hands-on experience and the chance to put their skills into practice. Internships and apprenticeships should offer decent compensation and good working conditions and ideally offer longer-term perspectives in the company.

Intergenerational programmes

This could help in facilitating the access of young people to employment, enable the transfer of know-how between older and younger workers, but also promote reverse mentoring through which young workers support older ones to acquire digital skills

Showcase the wide spectrum of opportunities the paper industry can offer

Many young people aren't aware of what they can actually do inside the industry. There are many professions they might be interested in, so make it clear what different career paths they could follow, whether white- or blue-collar jobs. At this stage, it is also very important to involve parents, because their opinions might have a strong influence on their children's choices (you can find descriptions of jobs specific to the industry, as well as videos where young workers talk about their jobs, on the website <https://turnthepageproject.eu>).

Promote your values and culture

The new generation also wants to know what you have to offer in terms of company values and working environment. In addition to being great retention strategies, these are also a way to attract young people by showing them that the industry is keeping up with the times, and there is a place for them to grow and make an impact. This includes a people-centred culture which pays attention to:

- Offering flexibility, work-life balance and wellbeing
- Diversity and inclusion
- Good working conditions
- Good social dialogue and collective bargaining: collective agreements with trade unions that offer access to decent working conditions, good wages and other benefits
- Opportunities for continuous learning and coaching with quality offers of vocational education, training and skills outcomes

Fill vacancies via user-friendly tools

Using an easier application process can enhance the experience of users. At the same time, remember that vacancies can be easily announced via social media.

1.3 Examples of best practices for attracting young people



Finland: forest of opportunities - finland's biggest workplace school campaign

Description

This is a school campaign for Finnish 8th graders (14-15) and high school students (16-18) representing study and work opportunities from the forest industry; the circular economy; basics of forest management; the role of forests in mitigating climate change; and products made from wood. "School ambassadors", forest industry experts from various occupations and companies, visit schools either physically or virtually. The campaign includes a wood product portfolio which is sent to each participating school, to be used in teaching various subjects, including chemistry, mathematics, arts and student counselling.

The campaign has been going on since 2013 and reaches 25,000 students each year, or half of this age cohort in Finland.

Campaign web page

https://www.mahdollisuuksienmetsa.fi/en_us/index.html

Key stakeholders

Finnish Forest Industries Federation, Forest Product Engineers, Finnish Forest Association, Metsä Group, Stora Enso UPM, Versowood, DS Smith Sappi Kirkniemi, Koskisen Oy, Pölkky Oy, Tornator, Corex and Delfort.

Purpose

Excellent way to reach big groups of young people and share knowledge with both students and teachers/guidance counsellors. During the visit, the students get a clearer idea of what today's forest industry is really like: its diverse academic and job opportunities, how sustainability is related to everything the industry does, and all the products that can be manufactured from wood.



Germany: recruiting of new apprentices

Description

At WEPA Germany, the recruiting process of new apprentices consists of the following steps:

1. WEPA Germany uses employer branding to generate enthusiasm for the company;
2. An initial online test in advance of the applicant days is set up to get a first impression of the applicants;
3. Groups of applicants are brought to the company during applicant days: the selection process is supported by interaction in the group. Throughout the process, WEPA encourages engagement of potential apprentices and helps build enthusiasm.

Key stakeholders

Company and potential apprentices

Purpose

This well-established method allows a targeted recruiting process to specifically inspire and convince applicants to take up an apprenticeship in the paper industry, as well to as attract young talent.





Belgium: “young workers’ day” - a company visit with a preparatory class in school and a dialogue with company employees

Description

This is a best practice within the frame of the EU project Turn The Page. Indufed, in cooperation with two paper mills in Belgium and the communications agency Good Planet, has organised a project for school classes in the vicinity of two paper producers during which the classes/schools go through the following process:

1. They have a first conversation with GoodPlanet about the course of the project (different stages and project planning) followed by a preparatory activity in the classroom based on papier.be teaching sheets (teacher’s sheet, and online teaching module to be completed independently by students, available in two languages)
2. A day trip to the factory, where they have a company visit and prepare to have a dialogue with company managers / HR / sustainability department – addressing their questions, expectations, what is stopping them from applying with a pulp and paper company, etc.
3. Evaluation by teachers and pupils

Key stakeholders

Schools; pulp and paper companies

Purpose

Young people not only get to see a paper company but also learn about the sector and prepare for a fruitful dialogue with employees, so they can ask targeted questions. The pulp and paper mills benefit by establishing personal contact with potential future employees and learning what matters to the students.



Poland: raising students’ interest in the paper industry

Description

As part of International Paper’s collaboration with School Complex No. 2 in Kwidzyn, to raise young people’s interest in technology and the paper industry a series of donations are offered, including:

- (1) paper, trade magazines, archival copies; and
- (2) one-time scholarships for the best students in elementary school as well as a financial donation for organising a technical knowledge competition.

Key stakeholders

International Paper; Schools and training institutions in Kwidzyn

Purpose

Excellent way to reach big groups of young people on a regular basis and to get them interested and engaged.



2. Fertilising and watering: key elements and recommendations for retaining young people

What are the strategies put in place to retain young people in the industry? How can companies make sure employees are satisfied with what they do?

The new generation cares very much about things other than salary: work-life balance, company values, making an impact and being involved in decision-making, attention to sustainability, workplace culture and continuous training for growth. It is important to make sure that such components are embedded into companies' organizational culture.

Beginning with the onboarding phase, companies should think about retention strategies that focus on career development, stability and workforce engagement.

RETAINING

2.1 The greenhouse: company culture and working environment

Here are some suggestions for how to strengthen your company culture to improve retention.

Company vision

As a company, it is crucial to create a strong vision of what your employees can hope to achieve. Focus on concrete values and a people-centred culture: this will enable the creation of a culture of dialogue, where employees can express their ideas.

A state-of-the-art working environment

Attracting and retaining young employees also means restructuring the working environment to create a flexible and friendly space with an "open-door" policy. This includes managers taking a supportive stance toward junior employees, as well as dedicated opportunities where younger employees can talk openly and comfortably about their concerns. This will help make both sides more satisfied and productive, as well as giving management further insights into the workforce. A good social dialogue with trade unions in which young workers can take part will lead to good collective agreements that reflect their needs.

Wellbeing

Decent wages are important. The new generation also wants meaningful work-life balance that will allow them to preserve their wellbeing. Elements may include flexible working times, a limit to weekly work hours, extra protection in case of night work, overtime compensation, home office (where applicable), childcare subsidy, parental leave, health days etc. Additionally, monitor the level of satisfaction with such policies, conduct surveys so that staff can freely and anonymously raise any concerns. There, trade unions will have a supportive role. Indeed sectoral social partners are committed to promoting continuous and fruitful social dialogue to always safeguard good working conditions for employees.

Commitment to sustainability

Young people are increasingly committed to sustainability: they want to make an impact through the job they do. To make your industry attractive, show that your business is aware and proactive on sustainability issues. Communication is key!

Diversity and inclusion

Company values must include a commitment to diversity and inclusion of under-represented members of the workforce, such as women and minorities. This can be applied not only in the recruitment phase, where job postings can be made more inclusive, but also as part of your company strategy: in fact, a workplace committed to diversity and inclusion attracts support from employees. At the same time, establish codes of conduct on topics such as non-discrimination and equality.

2.2 Growing and training: continuous skill development

Training should be continuous. This applies to newly recruited staff, and also to existing workers. Technology evolves and markets require keeping up with the latest developments. When it comes to retaining your young staff, leverage continuous training: young people are “hungry” and always want to acquire new skills and competences. Here some tips on how to promote training and development.

Incentives

Based on the specifics of each country, your business can get information and leverage on a wide range of subsidies, whether government-led or private. To up/reskill your staff, look at what incentives are available for various types of training.

Lifelong learning as a must

As new technologies develop, it is important that employees at all levels always have the right set of competences to keep up with new challenges. Offering access to training, re – and upskilling and opportunities for high quality training leading to validation/recognition of acquired skills is key. The role of trade unions can be important for consultations on training programmes.

Employee mentoring

Establish a specific path that supports employees' professional development: this can be achieved through professional mentoring. A mentor can be a person in the workplace who leverages his/her experience and greater knowledge of the dynamics of work to support the development of a less experienced colleague's skills, abilities and knowledge. Such a mentee can be a new young employee, an employee moving to a new function, but also an employee aiming at talent development.

Mentoring is a specific learning journey which supports the mentee in the development of his/her broader skills for personal or career development. Therefore, mentors may decide to focus on:

- Developing skills and giving the opportunity to practice them; this includes hard skills but also soft ones like efficiency, effectiveness, confidence, resilience, proactivity and problem solving;
- Giving advice on problems and fostering decision making;
- Supporting the mentee in “thinking out of the box”, thus exploring new paths and challenging the status quo;
- Providing examples, sharing experience and offering a source of inspiration.

2.3 Examples of best practices in retention



Italy: Lucca paper educational district – Paper19 graduate specialisation course

Description

Paper19 is a two-year graduate specialisation course developed to train young graduate technicians and qualify them as superior technicians for production in the paper sector. The course consists of 2,000 hours of training: 1,200 hours in classrooms/laboratories and an 800-hour internship in a company.

The programme has been implemented thanks to the ITS PRIME Foundation, which received funding from the regional government.

ITS Prime, cooperating with Formetica and the associated companies of the paper and paper converting supply chain, structured the two-year course in coordination with Assocarta, Celsius, Lucense and Start, a professional technical centre in which all the technical institutes of the region participate (Polo Fermi-Giorgi, ISIS Lucca ISI Garfagnana, IIS Galilei in Viareggio, Marchi-Forti Institute in Pescia).

This programme is characterised by top-quality training and a high percentage of placements at the end of the course (more than 90%).

Key stakeholders

Teachers, pulp and paper companies, students (graduates, aged between 18 and 29)

Purpose

For teachers: most are employees of paper companies, providing the students with practical and theoretical training perfectly aligned with business requirements. This is a way to carry out initial training carefully tailored for potential workers.

For companies: they are the main beneficiaries of highly qualified human resources who have been trained on specific content based upon their needs.

For students: through these courses they achieve a theoretical and practical education in a very short time, getting to know the companies in the area and having live experience during the internship.



Italy: “Lucart Academy”

Description

The Lucart Academy is an in-house training programme designed to support the development of potential employees within the organisation and to ensure a process of sharing and continuity of company know-how. It is a training project developed over the course of a year, alternating lessons with internal and external teachers, with a final project work for each participant. The 2020/2021 edition featured Lucart process engineers.

Key stakeholders

Managers (Operations, R&D, Engineering, HR), attendees, internal teachers

Purpose

Sharing of expertise, talent development, valorisation and retention of key workers, distinction from competitors



Germany: diverse onboarding

Description

WEPA Germany creates a diverse onboarding process through programmes including an open house and a detailed apprentice induction week at the start of the apprenticeship. This consists of bringing apprentices together in a group to get to know each other and start creating a community; furthermore, the apprentices are accompanied throughout the entire training period, with the aim of offering them employment in the company and ensuring a good transition from the apprenticeship to the following job.

Key stakeholders

Companies and newly recruited staff

Purpose

Good introduction to the world of work, encouraging commitment.

Introduce individual topics to allow apprentices to meet new people within the company and build a network.



Finland: GROW Trainee Programme

Description

Stora Enso has implemented the GROW Trainee Programme, providing training and permanent positions for around 25 recent graduates worldwide. During this 16-month training, trainees have the opportunity to:

- Complete projects for Stora Enso's top management
- Embark on an international assignment (2-3 months working abroad)
- Participate in a leadership training programme at a top-ranked business school
- Have a personal mentor at Stora Enso

Key stakeholders

Companies and trainees

Purpose

Talent development
On-the-job training
Opportunity to retain people after the programme ends
Acquisition of skills and competences specific to the company



So, where do we start?

When seeking to attract and retain employees from the new generation, it's important to take a systematic approach. Below we provide a summary of all the tips to support your HR team across the entire employee life cycle.

Recruitment

Recruitment means finding and attracting people. First, give them an idea of what it means to work in your company: share your values, your culture, your good working conditions, your approach to innovation and sustainability. Then promote an easier application process that can enhance the applicant's experience. In addition to job vacancies portals and platforms, your talent search shall be also conducted in parallel via activities such as visits to schools, open days, fairs and events. Be active on social media, as these are the main information tools for the younger generation.

Onboarding

New staff may know very little (or nothing at all) about your organisation. Induction is key. When a newcomer arrives, make sure you can provide him/her with a solid background of who you are, including your vision, values and culture. Make sure they have the opportunity to meet the team and get to know the people within the organisation (this also depends on the size of your company). It is also necessary to clearly spell out key contacts, working times, the level of flexibility regarding breaks, leave and HR policies on benefits and compensation. When it comes to the core work, be clear when assigning tasks, and follow up to make sure everything is understood, while remembering to give employees a voice to express any concerns.

Career planning and development

To encourage the retention of staff, make career and development pathways available and visible for employees, giving them a clear view. Give guidance, set objectives and expectations, and do continual follow up. Career development also means continuous training: involve your employees into mentoring programmes or encourage more experiences to up/re skill themselves. When training is associated with personal development, people are more willing to take up new courses and acquire new competences.

Workforce engagement

Don't forget to strive for employee engagement and strengthening your workforce. It is widely acknowledged that when people work in good working conditions and with a good wage, in a fun, easy and relaxed atmosphere, their productivity rises a lot! Try to focus on activities aimed at team building, including retreats but also places where people can chat and play: social spaces, cafés, gyms, outdoor areas. If this is not possible, organise team activities at your premises. Even a simple lunch together is useful.

Visit our website

The Turn The Page website is a result of the Turn The Page project and contains the following tools and information. All of them are available in five languages and can be freely used and shared:

- Interviews with young workers in four countries
- A promotional video about the paper industry
- A list of blue- and white-collar paper jobs with short descriptions
- A list of paper-specific schools and training programmes across Europe
- An interactive best practices toolkit for stakeholders
- Facts and figures about the paper industry



www.turnthepageproject.eu

Contact details

Cepi

www.cepi.org
g.fadini@cepi.org

IndustriAll

www.industriall-union.org
sophie.grenade@industriall-europe.eu



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