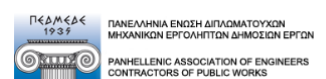




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Introduction

Hiring for the future in construction: forward-looking recruiting

In the construction industry—traditionally rooted in manual and technical skills—recruiting is undergoing a profound transformation. Environmental challenges, technological innovation, and evolving regulations demand a new mindset: it's no longer enough to fill today's roles; companies must anticipate tomorrow's needs. Surely recruitment strategies vary significantly between large corporations and small businesses. These differences are shaped by organizational structure, available resources, and strategic goals. While large companies often rely on structured, tech-driven processes, small businesses tend to prefer more personal and flexible approaches. Anyway, the best practices adopted by large companies can serve as both a source of inspiration and a practical guide for smaller businesses seeking to enhance their recruitment strategies and tools.

Why traditional recruiting is no longer enough

The construction sector is rapidly evolving due to:

- Digitalization of construction sites (BIM, drones, IoT sensors)
- New sustainable materials and green building techniques
- Stricter environmental and safety regulations
- Automation and robotics for repetitive or hazardous tasks

These trends are creating new professional roles and reshaping the skill sets required for traditional ones.

Future-oriented recruiting in construction

To stay competitive, construction companies need to adopt a proactive approach based on:

1. Analysing employment trends

- Studying sector analysis
- Mapping emerging skills (e.g., BIM specialists, environmental technicians, drone operators)

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2. Staying up to date with the innovative solutions

- Implementing advanced design software
- Using collaborative platforms for project management
- Adopting predictive safety tools on-site

3. Collaborating with training institutions

- Partnering with vocational schools, technical schools and construction academies
- Offering continuous training programs to upskill the workforce

4. Employer branding and talent attraction

- Promoting an innovative and sustainable company culture
- Highlighting opportunities for growth and specialization

5. Aligning with business strategy

Future-oriented recruiting in construction must be integrated into the company's long-term vision. Key questions to ask include:

- What skills will be essential for building sustainably and safely?
- How can we attract young talent to a sector often seen as traditional?
- What investments in training and technology are needed today to stay competitive tomorrow?

New Trends in Construction Recruitment

The construction sector is undergoing a major transformation in how it attracts and retains talent. With a growing labour shortage and an aging workforce, companies are rethinking their recruitment strategies to stay competitive and future ready.

One of the most significant shifts is the increased use of technology in both the recruitment process and on the job site. Companies are leveraging AI-driven platforms to streamline hiring, match candidates more effectively, and reduce time-to-hire. At the same time, roles requiring digital skills—such as Building Information Modeling (BIM) specialists, drone operators, and construction tech managers—are in high demand.

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This insight can then inform innovative recruitment strategies that highlight the values and meaningful outcomes of careers in construction.

These strategies should aim to deliver realistic, compelling messages about key aspects of construction roles—tailored to resonate with specific target groups and inspire them to consider a future in the sector.

Technology-driven platforms, diversity and inclusion efforts, skills-based hiring and focus on employer branding have revolutionised the way construction companies attract and retain talent. Embracing these advancements is essential for construction firms to stay competitive, adapt to changing demands, and build strong, dynamic teams capable of driving innovation and success in the modern construction world.

To attract younger generations, companies are increasingly using social media, short-form video content, and mobile-friendly job platforms. These tools effectively highlight the modern, tech-driven nature of the construction industry while helping to break down outdated stereotypes.

In Germany, apprenticeship training is part of the general vocational education system. But also in other countries, to address the skills gap, many firms are investing in apprenticeship programs, vocational partnerships, and on-the-job training. These initiatives help build a pipeline of skilled workers while offering young people a clear, debt-free path into a stable career.

Diversity and inclusion are becoming central to recruitment strategies. Companies are actively working to attract more women and underrepresented groups into the trades, recognizing that a more diverse workforce brings fresh perspectives and helps fill critical roles.

Finally, there's a growing emphasis on the candidate experience. From faster application processes to personalized communication and clear career development paths, construction firms are treating job seekers more like customers.

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Similarities and differences in recruitment tools across countries

Across the countries involved, there are many similarities in the tools used for recruiting young people into apprenticeships and vocational training.

Most countries make use of a wide range of instruments, including social media, company websites, and school visits to workplaces. However, these tools are often adapted to suit the specific cultural and educational contexts of each country.

The use of digital tools (social media, websites, job platforms)

While digital recruitment tools are primarily used by large, well-structured companies, they can also serve as a valuable source of inspiration for smaller enterprises looking to modernize their hiring processes.

Smart tools, bright futures: digital engagement for apprentices

To attract and engage future apprentices, a company should consider creating a dedicated section on its website specifically designed for students. This space should reflect a youthful and dynamic tone, using visuals, language, and design elements that resonate with a younger audience. It could showcase what the apprenticeship involves, how the training is structured, and what career paths are available afterward. Introducing the team, highlighting the company culture, and sharing stories from current apprentices can help make the experience feel more relatable and inspiring.

Social media and digital tools in recruitment: a strategic approach

Social media has become a cornerstone of modern recruitment strategies, particularly for engaging younger generations. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts are ideal for sharing short, dynamic videos that offer a glimpse into company life, showcase apprenticeship opportunities, and highlight the human side of the

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workplace. Tools like WhatsApp Business complement these platforms by enabling direct, personal communication with potential candidates.

Job boards are online platforms where employers post job openings and job seekers can search for employment opportunities. They serve as a centralized resource for finding and applying for jobs across various industries and locations. Popular examples include Indeed and LinkedIn.

Larger companies often lead the way in adopting these digital tools, thanks to their greater resources, dedicated marketing teams, and established brand presence. They can invest in high-quality content production, advanced analytics, and integrated recruitment platforms. Their structured approach allows them to implement comprehensive digital strategies that align closely with their employer branding and long-term talent acquisition goals.

Smaller enterprises, on the other hand, may face limitations in terms of budget, staff, and technical expertise. However, they can still benefit greatly from digital recruitment by adopting a more agile and authentic approach. Even with limited resources, smaller companies can create engaging content using smartphones, free editing tools, and organic social media engagement. Their strength often lies in their ability to communicate directly and personally, which resonates well with younger audiences.

A strong content strategy is essential for both. Companies should post regularly, sharing a mix of informative, entertaining, and authentic content that reflects their brand identity. The goal is not just to inform, but to build a sense of community around training and career development.

Engagement is key. Responding to comments, answering questions, and encouraging dialogue helps create a two-way relationship with followers. This interaction fosters trust and positions the company—large or small—as approachable and responsive.

Beyond content, the application process must be optimized for mobile devices. Young candidates expect a fast, intuitive experience that allows them to apply directly from their phones in just a few steps.

The benefits of digital recruitment extend beyond visibility. Online platforms allow companies to reach a wider audience, including candidates from different regions and

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with specific skill profiles. They also help reduce costs, as digital tools often lower the expenses associated with traditional advertising and recruitment management.

Larger companies often use advanced tools like Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to manage candidate flows, streamline communication, and personalize the recruitment journey. While these systems may be out of reach for some smaller businesses, there are affordable or even free alternatives that can still improve organization and efficiency.

Finally, digital recruitment can be integrated with broader marketing strategies, strengthening the employer brand and aligning recruitment with overall communication goals. Technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning—more commonly used by larger firms—are increasingly automating parts of the selection process, such as CV screening and candidate matching.

Ultimately, digital recruitment tools contribute to a more respectful and engaging candidate experience. By making the process more transparent, interactive, and user-friendly, companies of all sizes can leave a positive impression—even on those who are not ultimately selected.

Spain

OrientaLine is an educational and vocational guidance platform used in Spain, particularly aimed at students in the final years of secondary education (ESO) and Bachillerato. Its main goal is to help students and their families make informed decisions about their academic and professional futures.

The platform offers a series of interactive questionnaires that assess students' interests, strengths, and preferences. Based on their responses, OrientaLine provides personalized suggestions for study paths, vocational training options, and potential career choices. It also includes detailed information about university degrees, vocational qualifications, and training itineraries, including where to study them and the required entry grades.

OrientaLine is widely used by schools and guidance counsellors and is free of charge for students and families. It's designed to be intuitive and accessible, encouraging early reflection on future career paths and helping reduce uncertainty during key decision-making stages.

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In Spain, the concept of a Talent Map—or Mapa de Talento—is not a single platform but rather a strategic approach used by companies and institutions to manage human resources more effectively. It involves identifying and evaluating both internal and external talent to ensure that workforce planning aligns with the organization's long-term goals. This method allows companies to pinpoint critical roles, assess the skills and potential of current employees, and build a pipeline of future candidates. It also supports succession planning, reduces recruitment costs and time, and promotes diversity and inclusion. In sectors like construction, where competition for skilled professionals is high, talent mapping becomes especially valuable. It also enhances a company's image as an employer that invests in people and plans for the future.

On the educational side, EducaMadrid plays a key role in supporting digital learning across the Community of Madrid. This official platform provides a secure and free digital environment for students, teachers, and families at all educational levels—from early childhood to adult education. Built on open-source software, EducaMadrid offers a wide range of tools, including virtual classrooms based on Moodle, institutional email accounts, cloud storage, multimedia libraries, and administrative resources. It's designed to support both in-person and remote learning, while also ensuring data privacy and technological independence. Widely adopted in public schools, the platform is continuously improved based on user feedback, making it a cornerstone of digital education in the region.

Greece

- **JobFind.gr**
A widely used generalist job board in Greece with over a million monthly visitors. It supports both Greek and English, making it accessible to international users. Employers can post job ads that are shared across aggregators and social media. Jobseekers can create profiles, upload CVs, and access career resources.
- **RecruitGreece.gr**
A smaller, less prominent platform focused on connecting employers with talent in Greece. It may cater to niche sectors or international recruitment. Public information is limited, so direct exploration is recommended.

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- **Skywalker.gr**
One of Greece's oldest and most established job portals, active since 1999. It offers a wide range of job listings and tools like CV databases, salary calculators, and career guidance. The platform is in Greek and also organizes career fairs and employment events.
- **ApplInterN**
An innovative platform developed by DYPA (Greek Public Employment Service, known in Greek as ΔΥΠΑ = Dimosia Ypiresia Apascholisis) to connect Vocational Education and Training (VET) students with the labour market. It supports apprenticeships, internships, and job placements, and includes Business Ambassadors who mentor students. It promotes dual education and cross-border collaboration with Italy and Spain.

Italy

BLÉN.it—short for *Borsa Lavoro Edile Nazionale*—is a national digital platform in Italy specifically designed for the construction sector. Its main purpose is to facilitate the connection between jobseekers and companies within the industry, making the labor market more transparent and accessible.

What makes BLÉN.it unique is that it is an official system tool, developed and managed in collaboration with the social partners of the construction sector. This ensures that it is both reliable and aligned with the needs of workers, companies, and institutions. The platform is designed to promote employment opportunities and improve the visibility of job offers in construction. Workers can register and create a professional profile, which includes their qualifications, experience, and training.

Companies, in turn, can publish job openings and search for candidates that match their needs.

In addition to job matching, BLÉN.it provides access to information on training programs, certifications, and career development paths. It also supports bilateral territorial bodies in managing mandatory communications and implementing active labor market policies.

BLÉN.it is aimed at three main groups:

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- Construction workers who are looking for employment or new career opportunities.
- Construction companies in search of qualified personnel.
- Bilateral institutions and training organizations that operate within the construction sector and contribute to workforce development.

By bringing all these actors together on a single platform, BLEN.it plays a key role in strengthening the construction labour market in Italy.

Direct and spontaneous applications through the company website

Most companies today include a dedicated section on their official website—often titled "*Careers*" or "*Work with Us*"—where candidates can submit their applications directly to the Human Resources department. This channel offers a valuable opportunity for individuals to introduce themselves to a company, even in the absence of a specific job posting.

Submitting a spontaneous application allows candidates to proactively present their professional profile, skills, and motivation. It demonstrates initiative and genuine interest in the company, which can make a strong impression on recruiters. Unlike traditional applications that respond to advertised vacancies, this approach opens the door to potential opportunities that may not yet be publicly listed or that could arise in the near future.

For companies, receiving unsolicited applications can be equally beneficial. It helps build a talent pool of motivated individuals who are already aligned with the company's values and culture. In some cases, a well-crafted spontaneous application can even lead to the creation of a new role tailored to the candidate's strengths.

To make the most of this opportunity, candidates should ensure their application is personalized, clearly explains why they are interested in the company, and highlights how their background could contribute to its success.

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Online vs. traditional job advertisements: reaching different audiences

When it comes to recruiting both skilled workers and apprentices, companies today often find themselves choosing between online job advertisements and more traditional print ads in local newspapers. Each method has its own strengths and is suited to different target audiences.

Online job adverts have become increasingly popular due to their wide reach and efficiency. They allow companies to connect with a large pool of potential candidates quickly and directly. These platforms often enable real-time communication, faster response times, and easier application processes. Additionally, online ads tend to be more cost-effective and flexible, allowing for frequent updates and targeted campaigns. On the other hand, traditional job advertisements in newspapers still hold value, particularly when targeting skilled workers with strong local ties or individuals who may not be very active online. Print ads are often perceived as more formal and trustworthy, which can appeal to older generations or those who prefer a more traditional approach to job searching.

The choice between the two often comes down to the intended audience. Online platforms are especially effective for reaching younger people, such as recent graduates or apprentices, who are accustomed to digital communication. In contrast, newspaper ads may be more effective for reaching experienced professionals or older job seekers who are less engaged with digital media.

Ultimately, a balanced recruitment strategy that combines both online and traditional methods can help companies reach a broader and more diverse range of candidates.

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Constructing futures: engaging talent through education, experience and peer inspiration.

Laying the foundation: school partnerships and alternative hiring in construction

To ensure a steady and skilled workforce, construction companies must adopt effective recruitment strategies. One of the most impactful channels are establishing contact with schools and utilizing other recruitment methods. Building relationships with vocational schools, technical institutes, and high schools allows companies to engage early with students who are developing relevant skills.

This not only helps fill entry-level positions but also fosters long-term workforce development. In addition, companies can broaden their reach through other channels such as online job platforms, job fairs and recruitment agencies.

Together, these approaches create a robust and diverse talent pipeline essential for the industry's growth and sustainability.

Building interest: the power of practical experiences in recruitment

To attract new talent to the construction industry, companies could embrace inclusive and targeted recruitment strategies commonly used in other sectors. Beyond establishing direct connections with schools, some firms are also opening their doors to the public through open house events, offering firsthand insights into the industry and its career opportunities. Company visits for students, often organized in collaboration with schools, offer a valuable opportunity to introduce young people to the world of work. These experiences allow pupils to observe how a company operates, learn about different professional roles, and understand the skills required. They also help pupils make more informed decisions about their educational paths and future careers.

At the same time, open house days allow companies to engage a broader audience, including teachers, parents, pupils, job seekers, and the general public.

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During these events, pupils can participate in hands-on workshops and speak with apprentices, while parents and teachers can learn more about training programs and career development opportunities. Job seekers can explore working conditions and continuing education options, and the wider community can help spread the word about job openings.

Through these initiatives, construction companies could not only promote their sector, but they could also build a concrete bridge between education and employment, encouraging new generations to consider a future in construction.

In Germany in-person events where schools visit the company can be a powerful way to introduce pupils to different professions. These visits aim to give pupils a real sense of what working life is like, what skills are needed, and how training is carried out. The events typically include presentations about the company and its apprenticeship programs, hands-on try-out stations, and interactive activities like quizzes. A great way to make these events more engaging is to involve current apprentices in the planning and execution—letting them guide pupils, explain their roles, and share their experiences. These types of events can also serve as templates for broader initiatives like open house days.

Special attention should also be given to encouraging girls to consider apprenticeships, especially in fields where they are underrepresented. Communication should be tailored to reflect their interests and experiences, using inclusive imagery and language. Featuring female apprentices on the website, in social media, and during events can provide relatable role models.

Girls-only events, such as company visits led by female trainees or themed workshops, can create a more comfortable and inspiring environment. One particularly effective initiative is Germany's "Girls' Day," taking place every spring, which focuses on introducing girls to STEM careers through immersive, one-day experiences in companies. In 2025, this type of event created 15.000 opportunities, opening doors for 130.000 girls to participate.

In Spain, one common approach is to provide short trial work periods or internships, where students can spend a few days or weeks in a company, gaining real insight into the work environment and tasks. These experiences are like the FCT (Formación en

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Centros de Trabajo) model, where students alternate between school and practical training in a company.

Some firms also organize work sample activities, where participants are asked to complete small manual tasks. These exercises are designed not only to test basic technical skills but also to observe how candidates approach planning, safety, and teamwork.

To make the experience even more accessible, certain construction companies host “Try the Trade” workshops—one-day events where students can visit a company, meet professionals, and try out basic construction tasks under supervision. These workshops are often complemented by school fairs, where local builders set up interactive booths with tools and materials, allowing students to get a feel for the trade in a fun and engaging way.

In addition, many firms invite students to visit active construction sites, giving them a firsthand look at how projects are managed and what different roles involve. These visits are always conducted under strict supervision to ensure safety while offering a realistic view of the profession.

In Greece, while there are no direct equivalent, special events related to STEM careers are organized around International Women’s Day on March 8th.

In Italy this kind of tool is not widely used.

The only example is PMI DAY, the national day for small and medium-sized enterprises, where companies open their doors to students to introduce them to the world of manufacturing and opportunities for young people. This initiative, held throughout Italy, is an important opportunity for middle and high school students to see firsthand how products and services are made and to meet industry professionals directly.

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Apprentices as ambassadors: inspiring careers through peer connection

In Germany, the concept of the “Ausbildungsbotschafter” — or Ambassador for Apprenticeship — is a powerful approach to promoting vocational education and training (VET). At its heart lies a simple but effective idea: young people speaking to young people.

These ambassadors are typically current apprentices who volunteer to visit schools and share their personal experiences with pupils who are still deciding on their career paths. Because they are close in age and often come from similar backgrounds, they can connect with young people in a way that teachers, career counsellors, or employers sometimes cannot. This peer-to-peer communication makes the message more relatable, authentic, and inspiring.

The role of an Ausbildungsbotschafter is not just to talk about their own training program, but to demystify the world of apprenticeships, breaking down stereotypes and showing that apprenticeships are not a “second-best” option, but a valuable and respected path to a successful career.

Before stepping into classrooms, these ambassadors receive training in communication and presentation skills, ensuring they can confidently and clearly share their stories. Their visits usually include a short presentation, a Q&A session, and sometimes interactive elements that give pupils a taste of what an apprenticeship might involve.

In essence, the Ausbildungsbotschafter program turns young people into role models and motivators, empowering them to shape the future of their peers — and of the workforce as a whole.

In Spain there is a program very similar to the German “Ausbildungsbotschafter,” called “Somos FP Dual.” This project represents one of the most structured initiatives in Europe to promote Dual Vocational Training (FP Dual) through the direct involvement of young people. “Somos FP Dual” is a network of young ambassadors—students or former students of dual vocational training—who share their experiences with other young people, especially in schools, during career fairs, public events, and on social media. This program shares the same focus and goals of Germany and Greece programs. The program is promoted and supported by public and private institutions to ensure quality and dissemination.

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While Greece does not have a direct equivalent to the “Ausbildungsbotschafter” program, there are similar peer-influenced and youth-centered efforts within its evolving apprenticeship system. Greece recognizes the power of young people speaking to their peers about career choices. Authentic stories from apprentices help demystify vocational training. Programs are backed by educational and economic bodies to ensure quality and reach.

In Italy there is no national program structured exactly like the German “Ausbildungsbotschafter”. Italy has several initiatives promoting peer-to-peer guidance and training but lacks a formalized national program. In some regions or technical and vocational schools, there are local initiatives in which former students or apprentices return to schools to share their work or training experiences.

Country	Program Name	Type of Ambassadors	Key Features	Web site
Germany	Ausbildungsbotschafter	Young apprentices or former apprentices	Peer-to-peer, school visits, communication training	www.ausbildungsbotschafter.online
Spain	Somos FP Dual	Students or graduates of Dual VET	Testimonials, events, social media, school outreach	https://somosfpdual.es
Greece	Business Ambassadors / EU Projects	Entrepreneurs, former students, mentors	VET promotion, mentoring, testimonials, EU-funded projects (e.g., AppInterN,)	
Italy	Local initiatives / Erasmus+	Former students, teachers, peer educators	Local projects, peer education, testimonials, school orientation	

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From classroom to career: the power of internships

Internships are a common and widely utilized tool in Germany, Spain, Greece, and Italy for gaining practical work experience and they play a crucial role in shaping the early careers of young people. They offer a bridge between academic learning and the professional world, allowing individuals to gain hands-on experience, explore career paths, and build valuable networks within their chosen field.

One of the most significant advantages of internships is the practical experience they provide. Interns get to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, which not only deepens their understanding but also enhances their professionalism and work ethic. Alongside this, internships are a powerful tool for skill development, helping individuals refine existing abilities and acquire new ones that are directly relevant to their future careers.

Internships also serve as a form of career exploration. They allow young people to test different roles and industries, helping them make more informed decisions about their professional paths. Moreover, the networking opportunities they offer — through interactions with colleagues, mentors, and industry professionals — can open doors to future job opportunities.

Internships should never be left to chance—they require thoughtful preparation and planning to ensure a meaningful experience for both the intern and the company. One of the most important aspects is assigning a dedicated contact person who will guide the intern throughout their time in the company. Ideally, this person could be a current apprentice, which helps create a peer-to-peer connection and makes the intern feel more at ease.

The first day is crucial. A warm and structured welcome sets the tone for the entire internship. The responsible contact person should introduce the intern to the team, provide an overview of the company, and clearly explain what has been planned for their stay. This helps the intern feel included and understand the purpose and expectations of their role.

At the end of the internship, it's important to hold a feedback interview. This is a chance to reflect on the experience, discuss what went well, and identify areas for improvement. If possible, the company should also provide a written reference or

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certificate of participation, which can be a valuable addition to the intern's future applications.

In short, internships are more than just temporary roles — they are strategic stepping stones that enhance employability, build confidence, and often lead directly to long-term career opportunities.

Standing out at job fairs

Participating in a job fair can be a valuable opportunity for companies to connect with potential candidates, showcase their brand, and promote available positions. However, making the most of this opportunity requires thoughtful planning and an engaging presence.

In Germany, to begin with, the world of fairs is extremely diverse and plays a key role in career guidance and job searching. There are two main categories of events that address different needs:

- Fairs for students and young people in training, designed to help school students, to discover internship opportunities and career prospects.
- Fairs for skilled workers and professionals looking for new opportunities or seeking new challenges.

Companies typically register as exhibitors through an online form provided by the event organizers. These registrations are often handled on a first-come, first-served basis, so early action is essential to secure a spot. Once registered, companies may need to pay a participation fee, which can vary depending on the size and setup of the stand especially if additional furniture or equipment is required.

But simply having a stand isn't enough. Engaging visitors actively is crucial. Many attendees may be hesitant to approach a booth on their own, so representatives should take the initiative to start conversations. A visually appealing stand, creative design elements, and small giveaways or interactive features can help draw attention and make the booth more inviting. These elements not only attract foot traffic but also create a memorable impression of the company.



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In short, success at a job fair depends not just on showing up, but on standing out — through proactive engagement, thoughtful presentation, and a clear message about what the company offers.

Several job fairs across Europe are specifically designed for skilled workers. These events, often facilitated by EURES, the European Job Mobility Portal, connect skilled professionals with employers from various industries across the continent.

"Make it in Germany" is a German government campaign aimed at attracting qualified workers from other countries, especially the European Union, to work in Germany. In particular, "Make it in Germany" organizes online events, such as European Job Days, where candidates can meet German companies and receive advice on how to navigate the application process and qualification recognition.

Like Germany, Spain and Greece hosts a wide variety of job fairs and career events throughout the year, offering valuable opportunities for students, recent graduates, and job seekers to connect with companies and explore career paths. These events are organized both in-person and virtually, and are often supported by universities, private foundations, and public institutions.

In Italy job fairs are thoughtfully organized to offer a full experience. Some fairs even offer one-on-one coaching sessions or mock interviews to help you sharpen your approach. Jobs fairs are mainly aimed at graduates or undergraduates. JOB&Orienta is the most important Italian fair and it is held once a year.

Bridging generations: communicating apprenticeships to young people, parents, and teachers.

When recruiting apprentices, it's essential to remember that you're addressing two distinct target groups: young people (scholars) and adults (parents and teachers). Each group comes with its own set of needs, expectations, and challenges, and your communication strategy should reflect that.

For pupils, the focus should be on inspiration, engagement, and relatability. They want to see what their future could look like—what kind of work they'll be doing, who they'll be working with, and what kind of environment they'll be part of. Visual storytelling,

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interactive experiences, and peer-to-peer communication (such as hearing from current apprentices) are especially effective.

On the other hand, parents and teachers are more concerned with the structure, security, and long-term value of the apprenticeship. They want to understand the qualifications involved, the career prospects, and the company's reputation. Clear, informative presentations and opportunities for dialogue with trainers and company representatives are key to building their trust and support.

Balancing these two perspectives—youthful curiosity and adult responsibility—is at the heart of successful apprentice recruitment

Teachers also play a crucial role in guiding young people toward vocational paths. Hosting events specifically for teachers allows them to visit the company, learn about the apprenticeship system, and build connections with company representatives. These sessions can cover topics such as changes in job profiles, the skills expected from apprentices, and the practical aspects of training. Presentations, demonstrations of real work scenarios, and opportunities to speak directly with apprentices help teachers better understand and support their pupils' career choices.

Parents, too, are key influencers in a young person's career decisions. Organizing parents' evenings at schools provides a chance to inform them about the structure and benefits of vocational training, as well as the company's values and expectations. These events often include presentations by training experts, apprentices, and sometimes members of the management team. Parents can ask questions, hear firsthand experiences, and receive digital materials for further reference.

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Work while you learn: the dual VET revolution

Dual VET (Vocational Education and Training) is a model of education that combines theoretical learning with practical training. Is called “dual” because students split their time between:

- A vocational training centre or school, where they study the theory behind their profession.
- A company, where they apply what they’ve learned in a real work environment.

This setup helps students understand not just *how* things work, but *why* — and gives them a chance to develop both technical and soft skills.

Germany: The Pioneer of Dual VET- Ausbildung

Germany is the model country for Dual VET. The Ausbildung in Germany is a training program that typically takes place after the end of compulsory schooling.

Key features include:

- Generally, 3–4 days per week in a company, 1–2 days in school
- Apprentices sign a training contract with a company and receive a monthly salary.
- Programs last 2 to 3.5 years.
- Strong involvement of chambers of commerce and industry or chambers of crafts and skilled trades in curriculum and certification.
- High employment rates after graduation.

Spain: FP Dual (Formación Profesional Dual)

Spain has adopted the German model and adapted it to its context:

- Students alternate between school and company, the time spent in each setting can vary depending on the program and region.).
- Companies and schools co-design the training plan.
- Internships are often paid and can lead to job offers.
- Supported by the Fundación Bertelsmann, regional governments, and the Ministry of Education.

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Greece: Dual VET in Development

Greece has introduced Dual VET more recently:

- Implemented in EPAL (vocational upper secondary schools) and IEK (post-secondary institutes).
- Supported by EU projects and the Public Employment Service (DYPA).
- Students spend time in companies under apprenticeship contracts.

Italy: “Apprendistato”

Italy has a dual system similar to the German and Spanish models. It was introduced in 2014 and has since been expanded through national reforms and EU support,

- Apprendistato (apprenticeship contracts) for students aged 16+.
- A paid employment contract (Type I apprenticeship) for students aged 15–25

Dual Vocational Education and Training plays a crucial role in preparing young people for the workforce. By giving students hands-on experience in real work environments, it helps them build the skills and confidence they need to transition smoothly into employment.

Another key advantage is that it greatly improves employability. Many students are offered jobs by the very companies where they completed their training, as employers already know their capabilities and how well they fit into the team. This creates a direct and effective pathway from education to employment.

Finally, Dual VET strengthens the connection between schools and the world of work. By involving companies in the training process, education becomes more dynamic and aligned with the actual needs of the labour market. This ensures that students are not only learning theory but are also gaining relevant, up-to-date skills that industries truly value.

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Here is a visual comparison chart of the Dual VET systems in Germany, Spain, Italy, and Greece, highlighting their structure, duration, company involvement, compensation, and key challenges:

Dual VET System Comparison: Germany, Spain, Italy, Greece

Country	Structure	Duration	Company Involvement	Compensation
Germany	Typically, 3–4 days/week in company, 1–2 days in school	2 to 3.5 years	Strong involvement of chambers and companies in training and certification	Paid (monthly salary ¹)
Spain	Alternating weeks or block formats between school and company	Typically, 1–2 years	Companies co-design training plans with schools	Often paid (salary)
Italy	School-work alternation, dual apprenticeship programs	1–3 years depending on program	Partnerships between schools, training centers, and companies	Paid (apprenticeship contracts)
Greece	EPAL and IEK programs with in-company training	1–2 years	Supported by Public Employment Service and EU projects	May include stipend ¹ or apprenticeship contract

¹ A salary is a regular payment made to employees in exchange for their professional work
A stipend is a fixed amount of money provided to individuals—such as interns, apprentices, or students—to support them during a period of training or education. May not include benefits and are taxed differently depending on the country and situation.

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Public and private intermediation

How public employment services support companies in finding skilled talent

Public Employment Services (from here defined “PES”, such as BA in Germany, CPI in Italy, DYPA in Greece, and SEPE in Spain) offer a range of free or low-cost services that can support companies in finding the right talent.

These services maintain large databases of jobseekers, including profiles of skilled tradespeople, apprentices, and general labourers. By posting job vacancies through PES platforms, companies can reach a broad and diverse audience, including individuals who may not be active on commercial job boards.

PES also offer pre-screening and matching services, helping employers identify candidates whose qualifications and experience align with the job requirements. In some countries, they provide financial incentives or subsidies for hiring unemployed individuals, young people, or those undergoing retraining—making it more cost-effective to bring new workers on board.

For apprenticeships and internships, PES often collaborate with vocational schools and training centres, helping companies connect with young people looking for hands-on experience. They can also support career fairs and information sessions, which are particularly useful for promoting construction careers to young people and jobseekers. Moreover, the German PES can support companies in the creation of a meaningful job and company profile.

Germany

Germany’s “Lehrstellenbörse,” a free online database for apprenticeship opportunities provided by the Chambers of Crafts and the Chambers of Industry and Commerce. For companies, the Lehrstellenbörse offers a free and straightforward way to advertise apprenticeship vacancies. This means that businesses, regardless of size, can reach a wide audience of potential trainees without incurring extra costs. It’s a practical tool for employers who want to attract motivated young people and invest in their future workforce.

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On the other side, young people and job seekers can use the platform to search for available training positions in their region or field of interest. The interface allows users to filter by profession, location, and company, making it easier to find opportunities that match their goals. Once they find a suitable listing, they can apply directly to the company, streamlining the application process.

Importantly, the Lehrstellenbörse is not just a job board — it's part of a broader support system. Chambers of crafts and skilled trades (Handwerkskammern) and other professional bodies offer guidance and resources to help young people make informed career choices. They assist with writing applications, preparing for interviews, and understanding the apprenticeship system. This support ensures that users are not navigating the process alone, but are backed by experienced professionals.

In essence, the Lehrstellenbörse is a bridge between education and employment, helping young people take their first steps into the world of work while supporting companies in building their future talent.

Spain

In Spain, SEPE stands for Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal, which translates to the State Public Employment Service according to the SEPE. It's an autonomous public body under the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy responsible for implementing government policies related to employment and unemployment benefits in Spain. SEPE manages unemployment benefits, promotes employment policies, and provides resources for job seekers and employers on its website.

Greece

In Greece DYPA (Public Employment Service) Portal for Apprenticeship Placements offers a well-structured vocational education and training system that combines both theoretical learning and practical experience. This includes 51 Apprenticeship Vocational Schools (EPAS) and 31 Institutes of Vocational Training (IEK), which together provide a wide range of opportunities for young people to gain professional qualifications.

For employers, the system offers a valuable opportunity to get involved. Companies can register to host students for their practical placements, allowing them to train potential future employees while contributing to workforce development.

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The vocational programs cover a variety of sectors, including construction, mechanics, tourism, administration, IT, and many others—ensuring that both students and employers benefit from a system that is responsive to the needs of the labor market. DYPA Career Days are job fairs organized by the Public Employment Service (DYPA) in Greece, aimed at connecting job seekers with employers. These events facilitate direct interaction between candidates and businesses, allowing for on-the-spot interviews and the exchange of CVs. DYPA Career Days are held in various locations throughout Greece and sometimes abroad, offering a platform for networking and exploring employment opportunities

Italy

In Italy, Employment Centres—known as *Centri per l'Impiego*—are public offices managed by regional and autonomous provincial authorities. Their main mission is to support individuals throughout their journey into the world of work. These centres offer a wide range of free services designed to help both jobseekers and those looking to improve their professional skills. For individuals seeking employment, the centres provide assistance in finding job opportunities and connecting with companies that are actively hiring. They also offer personalized career guidance, practical information about the labour market, and access to training programs that can enhance employability. From the employer's perspective, Employment Centres play a key role in recruitment support, helping businesses identify and hire qualified candidates. They also guide both individuals and companies in accessing various benefits and incentives, such as unemployment support or hiring subsidies.

Overall, these centres serve as a vital link between jobseekers and the labour market, promoting employment and professional development across Italy.

From CVs to careers: the full-service role of employment agencies

Employment agencies can help companies find the right candidates for open positions, whether temporary, permanent, or on a project basis. They do this by posting job ads, screening candidates, conducting interviews, and often managing the initial stages of the employment relationship. For job seekers, these agencies offer access to job opportunities that may not be advertised, as well as support in preparing CVs, improving interview skills, and managing the application process. Many agencies specialize in specific sectors, such as construction. This specialization allows them to



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better understand employers' needs and candidates' qualifications, allowing for more accurate matching. Some agencies also focus on international recruitment, helping workers move across borders within the EU, often helping with visas, housing, and legal documentation.

However, the significance of this recruitment tool varies considerably across countries:

Germany: In the main construction industry, temporary work is prohibited for employees who perform typical construction work. However, there are exceptions: Temporary employment between companies in the construction industry is possible if certain conditions are met, e.g., if collective agreements and social security contributions are complied with. The maximum assignment period for temporary workers is usually 18 months, but this can be extended by collective agreements. In 2018, the number of skilled workers placed in the construction industry was 7%. In Germany, the number of registered temporary jobs has been declining overall since the second half of 2022, reaching its lowest June figure since 2010 in June 2025. (Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit, Berichte: Blickpunkt Arbeitsmarkt – Entwicklungen in der Zeitarbeit, Nürnberg, Juli 2025)

Spain: Agencies are also regulated, but the system is more flexible than in Germany. Temporary Work Agencies (ETTs; Empresa de Trabajo Temporal,) must be authorized by the government, and they often collaborate with public employment services. Spain has a high reliance on temporary contracts, and agencies play a key role in managing this segment of the labour market

Greece: The construction sector receives little support from employment agencies. Agencies must be licensed, but their focus is primarily on seasonal and low-skilled labour.

Italy: Employment agencies are well-established and diverse, playing a central role in the labour market matching supply with demand. The “Agenzie per il Lavoro”, which are private entities authorized by the Ministry of Labour, are the main actors in this space. There are approximately 80 licensed agencies operating across the country, and they dominate the market for temporary and specialized placements.

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Adapting recruiting instruments to the individual company

Before starting any recruitment process, it's crucial for a company to take a step back and assess its specific needs. This initial phase lays the foundation for everything that follows, ensuring that each decision aligns with the company's goals, values, and operational capabilities.

A key part of this step is defining the ideal candidate profile. This means identifying the technical and soft skills that are essential for the role, as well as the qualifications, experience, and personal traits that would make someone a good fit for the company culture.

It's also important to clarify what the company expects from new hires—not just in terms of daily tasks, but also in terms of long-term contribution and growth.

Once the profile is clear, the next step is to choose the right tools for recruitment. Rather than using every available platform, companies should focus on a few targeted tools that are most effective for their industry and hiring needs. It's also important to consider the company's capacity—both in terms of budget and technical skills—when selecting these tools.

With the tools in place, the company should develop a clear recruitment strategy. If social media is part of the plan, a content calendar can be extremely helpful. This ensures consistent, well-timed posts that attract the right audience. All recruitment messaging should also reflect the company's brand—its values, tone, and visual identity—so that candidates get a true sense of what the company stands for.

Transporting your employer brand

Attracting and retaining the right talent goes beyond simply advertising job openings. It's about building and communicating a strong employer *brand*—one that authentically represents who you are as a company.

Authenticity is key. Candidates today are looking for transparency. They want to see real stories, hear from real employees, and get a genuine sense of the company culture. Consistency across all platforms—whether it's your website, social media, or job ads—is essential to building trust and credibility.

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Effective communication with candidates is another crucial element. In international or diverse markets, using multiple languages can make a big difference. It shows respect and makes candidates feel more comfortable and engaged. Beyond language, communication should be tailored to the needs and expectations of the applicant. This includes the tone you use, the format of your messages, and the channels through which you reach out.

Building a *strong employer brand* also requires a willingness to invest time and resources. Content creation, campaigns, and candidate engagement all take effort—but the return on investment can be significant. If a company is struggling to attract the right candidates, it may need to reflect on its current practices and be open to change. This could mean rethinking job offers, updating internal policies, or simply listening more closely to feedback from applicants and employees.

Ultimately, embracing a *change of mindset* is essential. The job market is constantly evolving, and companies that are flexible and willing to adapt are more likely to succeed. Employer branding should be seen as an ongoing process—one that is regularly reviewed and refined.

Differences between large companies and SMEs

When it comes to values and ways of working, there are often clear differences between large corporations and small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). While big companies tend to focus on structure, scalability, and formal processes, SMEs often operate with a different set of values. They typically emphasize flexibility, agility, and a more personal approach to teamwork and leadership. Communication tends to be more direct, and the work environment is often more informal and adaptable.

This difference in culture also means that SMEs need to be especially mindful of how they present themselves to potential candidates. Today's workforce is looking for more than just a paycheck—they want purpose, balance, and a positive work environment. Many candidates now prioritize work-life balance, meaningful work, and flexibility over higher salaries.

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To attract this new generation of talent, companies—especially SMEs—must be willing to update their mindset. This includes supporting continuous learning and promoting diversity and inclusion. It also means focusing more on the actual skills and potential of candidates, rather than rigid job titles or traditional qualifications.

Finally, creativity can be a powerful tool in recruitment. SMEs can stand out by using innovative strategies—such as storytelling on social media, hosting informal meetups, or offering unique perks that reflect their values. They can also design roles more flexibly, tailoring them to both the company's needs and the candidate's strengths. This not only helps attract top talent but also creates a more fulfilling and productive work experience for everyone involved.

Conclusion: building a cohesive and strategic talent journey

The End-to-End Recruiting Strategy is more than a hiring process—it's a holistic approach that aligns talent acquisition with business goals.

By thoroughly analysing organizational needs, leveraging the right recruiting channels, prioritizing candidate experience, and ensuring smooth onboarding, companies can attract, engage, and retain top talent effectively.

This integrated model not only enhances operational efficiency but also strengthens employer branding and long-term workforce stability.

In general, building a cohesive and strategic talent journey in the construction sector involves attracting, developing, and retaining skilled workers through targeted initiatives.

This requires a multi-faceted approach that includes creating a positive work environment, offering career development opportunities, leveraging technology, and building strong employer branding.