

Assistant and Trainer

During a virtual event organized by the Munich regional chapter in February I once again became aware of the many facets of our profession. In the meeting that dealt with our goals, plans and perspectives for 2021, Susanne Hoffmann-Pütz, an IMA member for 21 years and management assistant at ADFC Munich, told us how she wanted to support her apprentice for professional office management „to the best of her ability during the phase before the final exam“. That topic piqued my interest, because I myself had been thinking about training an apprentice at my employer. What a great opportunity to be able to question an IMA-colleague from our network on this topic.

Susanne reports that it had effectively been a cold start. Until then, the only certified trainer for apprentices in her company had been her superior, the country manager. Thus, it was her who asked Susanne to take the training exam to become a trainer for commercial organizations. That way Susanne would be able to take over during the supervisor's absences. So Susanne seized the opportunity and went back to school at the chamber of commerce.

"That was quite a high standard", says Susanne, „the requirements within the subjects of methodology, law and pedagogy were greater than expected“. But in July 2020 she successfully passed the exams.

Susanne benefited from the fact that she already had had a lot of experience working with volunteers in her organization. For years she has been mainly responsible for the organization, deployment and administration of federal volunteers and interns at the ADFC. As a result, she is used to being surrounded by young professionals and school graduates and guiding them. But being a trainer also means to have managerial responsibility for young people at the beginning of their professional life.

I am interested in what the relationship between the trainer and her apprentice is like. The apprentice is 19 years old and shares the office with Susanne. That way, she is trainer and colleague at the same time. Generally, it is always an enrichment and a nice, fulfilling task to accompany young people at the start of their professional life. Even if things don't always go well.

The IHK (chamber of commerce) clearly specifies how much time apprentices should spend in which specialist areas and not all companies are able to cover all areas themselves, as it is the case with the ADFC. Susanne seized the opportunity to find

partners for the training, in payroll accounting for example. The IHK provides its network to support this.

Of course, I wanted Susanne to tell me what she would look for when selecting an apprentice resp. what she considers an important quality. She says that this is clearly the interest in the training as well as the interest in the company, especially what the company really does. Everything else can be learned, and that's what the apprenticeship is for. This means that there must be a basic motivation and curiosity about office work.

Susanne also says that it is impossible to want to teach trainees everything. It is much more important to be a good role model also by continuing one's education even as an experienced assistant.

Doesn't that sound like a wonderful opportunity to inspire young women and men for office management and to develop new talents for your company? Even if apprentices only remain with the company for a year or two following their apprenticeship and it is not necessarily profitable in purely financial terms, it is still an important contribution to society to create positions for apprentices.

And then we also talked about our own training. Susanne remembers her training at the vocational school, which primarily provided her with sophisticated theoretical specialist knowledge, but provided too little practical experience. Clearly a disadvantage compared to apprenticeships which combine training at the company and at the vocational school.

I remember my trainer very well. At the time she had a position somewhere between parents and teachers for me – both a person to respect and a person to trust. I think it's sometimes important to look back at my own beginnings in order to understand how much potential there is in the role of trainer.

The conversation with Susanne inspired and motivated me to take up the thread again in my own company.

Here are a few more facts about

IMA member, Susanne Hoffmann-Pütz,

Management assistant at the General German Bicycle Club (ADFC)



The General German Bicycle Club e. V. represents the interests of everyday and leisure cyclists nationwide. It currently comprises more than 200,000 members of all ages, including over 30,000 in Bavaria. More than 1,000 active people in around 50 district and local associations in Bavaria commit themselves as volunteers for a higher status of the bicycle, be it through various events and campaigns, a nationwide cycling policy, comprehensive services for cyclists, the promotion of cycle tourism or public relations.

More information about the goals and tasks of ADFC find here: <https://www.adfc.de/>

More information about the qualification for trainer for commercial trainings you will find on the website of IHK:

<https://www.ihk-muenchen.de/de/Aus-und-Weiterbildung/Weiterbildung/AdA-Ausbildereignungspr%C3%BCfung/>

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