

**PROJECT:**

**RETAIL MANAGEMENT FOR ADULTS  
IN LIFELONG LEARNING (ReTAIL)**

**PRODUCT:**

**ONLINE MODULES IN  
RETAIL MANAGEMENT**

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## **1-INTRODUCTION**

This report is the result of the external evaluation of the final product “On Line Modules Retail Management” elaborated within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci project ”Retail Management for Adults in Lifelong Learning (Retail)”

This project has been founded by the EC. In the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci programme. The aim of the project is to transfer and implement an existing written material<sup>1</sup> for teaching retailing management into an ICT-based learning material based on modules for an open learning environment targeted for adult learners. Thus, a group working in retail management without much formal education will be able to add to their knowledge and skills while still being within the labour market.

The project started in November 2007 and finished in February 2010. The partners of the projects are:

- The Commercial Colleague of Iceland
- Education and Training Service Center (Iceland)
- University of Applied Sciences (Finland)
- The North Highland Colleague (UK)

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<sup>1</sup> See 4-“Sources of Information”

## **2-OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the evaluation were:

- The evaluation of the course material
- Its adaptation to the target groups

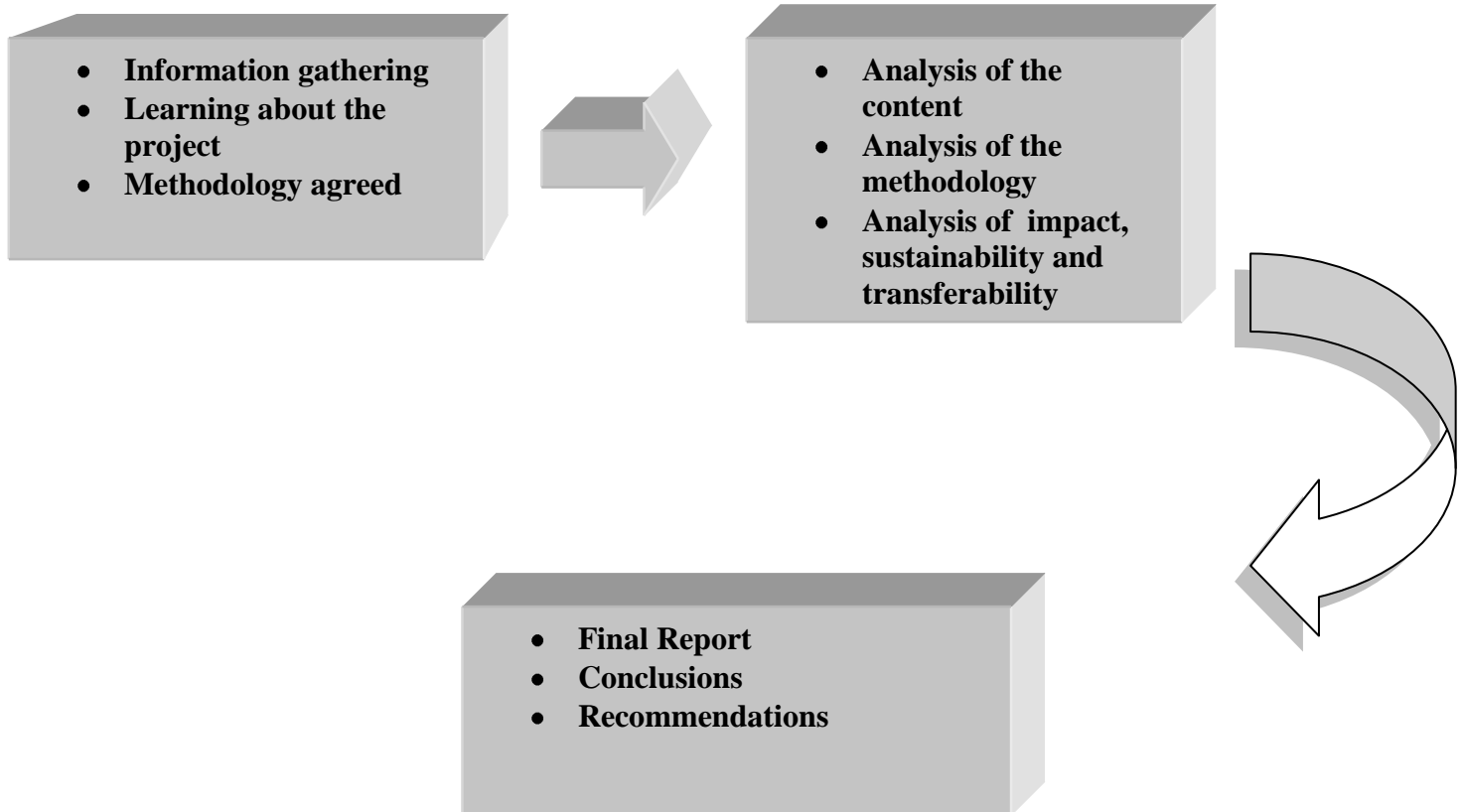
To achieve these objectives, it was convenient to highlight two fundamental elements of the evaluation:

Firstly, the analysis of the content

Secondly, the analysis of the methodology

### **3-METHODOLOGY APPLIED**

The graph below shows the evaluation work plan followed:



As we can see from the figure above, the key aspects to be evaluated were:

- Content
- Methodology
- Impact, sustainability and transferability

The content has been evaluated in every module, whereas the methodology, impact, sustainability and transferability have been analyzed considering the whole product including all the modules.

Finally, there is a section devoted to conclusions and recommendations for future improvements.

## 4-SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- On line modules Retail Management:
  - **Buying and selling**: Transferred and adapted by Egill Larusson from own material, some material from Retailing Management by Levy/Weitz with additions from Brian Tracy.
  - **Economics**: Transferred and adapted by Gudrun Inga Sivertsen from own material used at Verzlunarskoli Islands.
  - **Finances**: Transferred and adapted by Kati Kouhia-Kuusisto and Anne Mustonen from own material based on existing lecture/classroom materials with some additional material from Elina Merviö.
  - **It-modules**: English from NHC Online and Business Section from own material, copyrighted to NHC and Icelandic from Solveig Fridriksdottir, author of a textbook in IT used at Verzlunarskoli Islands.
  - **Management 1**: Transferred and adapted by Aileen Paton and Katrine Coghill from own material, copyrighted to NHC.
  - **Management 2**: Transferred and adapted by Aileen Paton and Katrine Coghill from own material, copyrighted to NHC.
  - **Marketing**: Transferred and adapted by Anne Chard and Jane McIntosh, copyrighted to NHC.
  - **Merchandising**: Transferred and adapted by Alda Jona Noadottir from Retailing Management by Levy/Weitz and from own material. Added to from Silent Selling by Judith Bell and Kate Ternus, Retail Success by George Whalin, 1001 ideas to create retail excitement by Edgar A. Falk.
  - **Labour rights**: English version based on existing material created by Kati Kouhia-Kuusisto and Anne Mustonen. Icelandic version based on own material by Thuridur Jonsdottir, copyrighted to Verzlunarskoli Islands.
  
- Pedagogical Guidelines
- Teachers Guide
- Learner's Guide to elearning
- Application form
- Minutes of the meeting
- Interim evaluation report

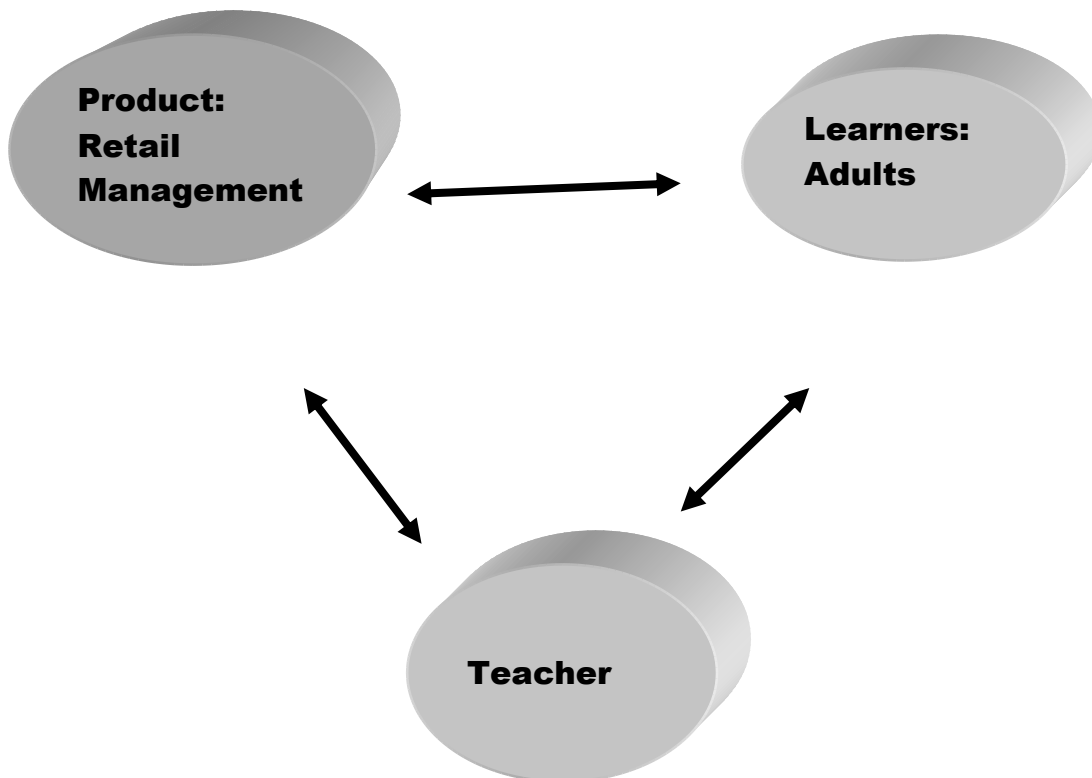
## 5-ANALYSIS OF THE METHODOLOGY

### 5.1-INTRODUCTION

The objective of this section is to analyze the methodology used, its suitability to the target group, to the learning environment and to the on line content.

To evaluate the methodology of the product, the evaluator has focussed on three main elements; the course, the learner and the teacher. In order to do this analysis the evaluator has used the following tools, the modules, the teacher's guide, the guidelines "Initial description of pedagogy of ITC-based learning material for adult learners" and the Learners Guide to e-learning".

**Graph of Intervention:**



## **5.2-PRODUCT: RETAIL MANAGEMENT, ONLINE COURSE**

The product is an online course “Retail management” divided into nine modules, which can be studied separately, although to get the most out of the course is better to study all the modules.

The modules are:

- IT/Learning e-learning
- Management 1
- Marketing
- Buying and Selling
- Merchandising
- Management 2
- Finances
- Economics
- Labour rights

Each module has been carefully prepared and elaborated on to get the maximum benefit. All modules include an index of the main content of the module, clicking on the bullet points you move to the area of study which is also divided into different sections.

The section on the left hand side of the screen is very useful, there the students can find “quick facts” which help them to better understand all the concepts and to get the main ideas of the unit.

The glossary is also a very valuable tool as it gives the opportunity to learn specific words related to the area of study which the student may not know.

The links are also very useful as they allow the student to delve deeper into certain concepts or areas which may be of interest to them. It also provides examples which can be very useful to understand all the concepts. The only

recommendation would be to revise these links as some of them do not work properly, for example: “see how Coca Cola conduct their quality management” in the management module.

It has been noted that at the time of this evaluation some modules for example: finance did not have any information included in “quick facts”, “glossary” “links”. It is quite likely the partnership is revising or completing this information and it will be included soon.

The navigation between the different themes or areas is very quick and straightforward, giving the possibility to go forward and backward easily. The inclusion of activities at the end of the section or unit is also an advantage, although an allotted time or deadline should be specified to do the activities within, unless the teacher says otherwise. It could also be advisable to include some multiple choice activities which allow the student to promptly check their knowledge, some of the activities proposed may be a bit time consuming and the learner could be tempted to skip them. These kinds of activities give the possibility of having feedback without needing the teachers’ assistance.

The “ I “ section is a very helpful instrument to encourage the learning process as it clearly indicates to the user a description and the main topics included in the module. It also establishes the aims of the module and what the learner is supposed to know once the module is finished. This section also includes an outline of the main content so that the learner knows in advance what he/she is going to learn and have a general idea of the whole module before starting. And finally they know what activities they are going to find and how they are going to be evaluated.

Adults are results-oriented. They have specific expectations for what they will get out of learning activities and will often drop out of voluntary learning if their expectations aren’t met.

The methodological approach is in complete accordance with the aims, there is a clear identification of the modules, the needs to be covered and the issues that should be addressed and also the areas to be reinforced and practiced.

Generally speaking, the product can be considered as user friendly, there is no need of any specific instruction on how to use it as it is very intuitive. So the learning process is simple.

### **5.3-THE LEARNERS**

**The target group** addressed by the project **is clear from the application form** “*The target group are learners aged 25-50 who have gone onto the labour market in retailing without much formal education and who now wish to add to their education*” and this has been maintained along the project. There has not been any kind of adjustment or change.

It would be advisable to have an introduction at the beginning of the course related to whom it is addressed to, in case this product is transferred to other institution or colleagues.

The material has been completely adapted to the target group, the language used is easily understandable, and the idea of translating it into their mother tongues in Finland and Iceland will favour the dissemination and use of the product by the learners. It would also be advisable to include the scripts of the videos.

It was a good idea to include an IT module and to place it at the beginning so that the learner can refresh his/her knowledge or to be used as a point of reference for other modules, which request IT skills as a part of an activity.

A guide of pedagogy on how to adapt the material to adults has been elaborated and it gives a clue of the sensibility of the partnership to the task. They are adapting the material not just to any students but to adults who learn in a different way.

In this guide they deal with concepts such as self-direction, self-assessment and self –correction which are present all along the course. The learners establish their aims, their time, their learning strategy. Self-directed learning can only occur if the course is well organized, well-presented and well-structured. If the navigation is easy and the objectives are clear.

The guide also brings to light concepts such as self-assessment and self-correction which are very important to allow self-directed learning. The feedback does not have to be immediate but it is recommendable to get it in reasonable time. It would be suggested here the inclusion of more multiple choice exercises or activities which include the answers so the learner can verify their knowledge.

It is shown very clearly that they have considered the target group. Adults in the workplace prefer practical knowledge and experiences that will make their work easier and provide them with useful skills for all that, it is important to bear in mind their prior experience, the importance of conversations to learn and authentic experience

In other words, adults need personal relevance in learning activities. All these aspects have been included in the course by means of activities such as group work, discussions, and forums, some of them based on previous experience. The exercises are simple but not elementary.

The material also includes a Learners Guide to e-learning providing some tips on how to learn online, moving from the hardware they will need, to the time devoted to study and the active participation they have to maintain.

Generally speaking, it is clearly demonstrated that the methodological part has been carefully considered and a significant effort has been made to adapt part of the content from the book "Retailing Management" by Levy and Barton to the target group and to online learning as it is shown by the documents elaborated: the Guidelines "Initial description of Pedagogy of ICT-based learning material for adult learners", the learner's guide to e-learning and the design and content of the modules.

## **5.4-THE TEACHER**

The author has created a “Teachers Guide” this is a very useful tool for experienced or inexperienced teacher, it is divided into four different parts.

The first part is an introduction to online teaching and learning where the characteristics of online courses are carefully explained, how they can give independence to the learners although they have to be supervised by the teacher, who establishes when and where to teach and to learn, and gives deadlines for the students to finish their work.

In the second part, the guide deals with tools that can be used in virtual learning environments such as discussion forums and wikis.

The third part shows the structure of each module giving the teacher a firsthand idea about what to find in each module, the different parts: introductory questions, theory and self-assessment exercises, glossary, discussion questions and such like. Why they are there and how to exploit this material to get the best results.

The last part is an approach to each module; the objectives the learner has to achieve and the activities to be done.

It is quite remarkable that each module gives the teacher an idea of the kind of learning method to be used and why. For example Human recourse and management will use a collaborative learning and group work, for finance the activities will be individual tasks, for merchandising progressive inquiry or exploratory learning. The guide also includes all the activities assignments involved in every module.

Some questions such as time given for each activity, accommodation to individual differences, and feed-back are left to the teacher to decide. It should be taken into account that feedback does not have to be immediate but it has to be prompt. In cases of incorrect responses an explanatory feedback should be

given. It would also be essential to give the teacher an orientation related to timing, that is, the time that should be devoted to each module.

Generally speaking, this guide is a very complete instrument that will facilitate the teacher's task by giving him/her information about how to exploit the course, what to do in every module and how to do it.

## **6- ANALYSIS OF IMPACT, SUSTAINABILITY, TRANSFERIBILITY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this section is the analysis of impact, sustainability and transferability; although all these concepts keep a close relationship it has been preferred to analyze them separately for the benefit of clarity.

### **IMPACT**

As can be deduced from the application form the project is going to have a strong impact in the countries involved as there are institutions with the capability to disseminate it throughout the country, for example: the Chamber of Commerce, the Training Service Centre and Byko Company in Iceland.

In the short term, the greatest impact will be for the target group, (adult learners in the retail sector), and of course, teachers. As has already been explained the material is easy to use, it has been translated into the different languages, adapted to adult learning and to a virtual learning environment which will make it easier for the learner to use the product. At the same time a guide for teachers has been created which will aid teachers immensely.

In the long term, the retail industry will receive the impact. Thanks to these modules the employees will be better prepared to accomplish their work. It will encourage the mobility of workers and contribute to establish links to organizations in other countries.

There are efficient channels for the distribution of this product and to raise people awareness about it such as articles and newsletters. The partnership has participated in seminars and meetings where they have had the opportunity to disseminate the product. It will have an impact on international level encouraging the mobility of students who feel confident in their knowledge as the same course will be followed in different countries.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

A project can be considered as sustainable if its outcomes continue after the end of the EU funding.

There is no doubt about the product sustainability since the course will be part of the business education at the commercial colleague of Iceland in the field of retailing. And it will also be an integral part of Distant Learning in the Commercial Colleague of Iceland.

In Finland and in Scotland, the Tampere Polytechnic University of Applied Sciences and the North Highland College, respectively, intent to offer this course next autumn.

Concerning the partnership, they seem to be well-organized and to work efficiently together. There has been a balanced distribution of the work although all of them have participated in all the tasks included in the work packages, Finland has been responsible for the methodology, Scotland for the content and Iceland for the coordination, organization and finance.

There seems to be a good international cooperation that may enhance the idea of working together in other projects in the same or a different area. They may decide to work together in a TOI or in a mobility project to encourage the placement of students in this course within each others countries once the course is finished.

## **TRANSFERIBILITY**

A significant amount of work has already been done; they have adapted part of the content from the book “ Retailing Management” by Levy and Barton” to adults, to an e-learning environment, making a very useful tool for distant learning.

It is possible to admit that they could use this pedagogy and knowledge of e-learning environment to adapt the content or material from other books in different areas of knowledge into an online course. That is to say, it would be quite possible to adapt other material to other fields.

At the same time, this on line course could be adapted to other countries, just by changing some parts which will be difference from country to country, for example issues related to legislation, employment law and customs.

Useful links for future projects for the partnership could be:

**<http://www.eurydice.org>**

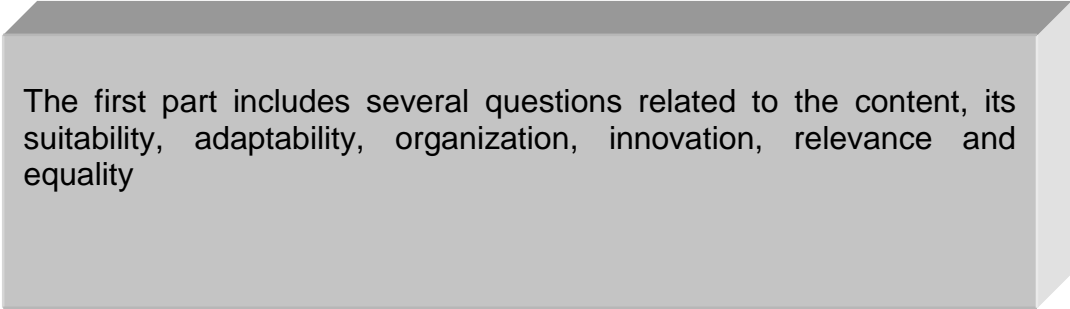
**<http://www.etf.europa.eu>**

**<http://www.eu-employment-observatory.net/>**

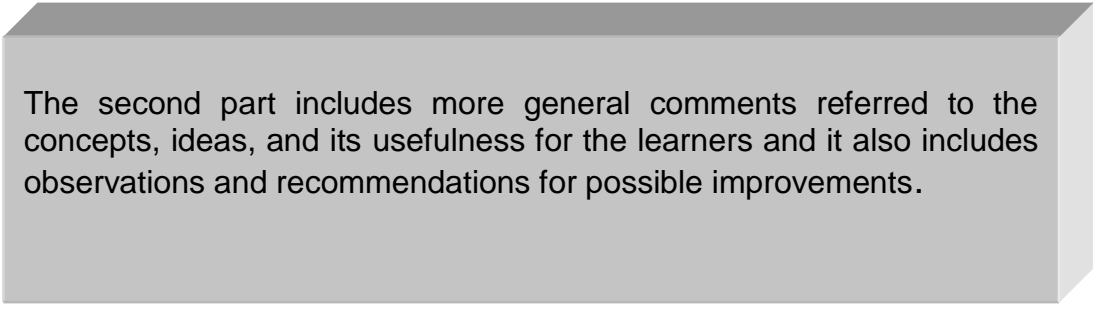
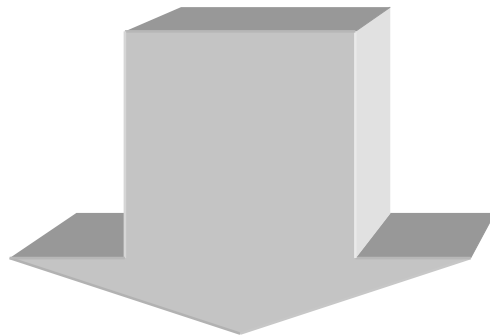
**[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/esf/discover/participate\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/discover/participate_en.htm)**

## **7.- ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this section is to analyze the content of the different modules, they have been evaluated individually as they deal with very different concepts. This individual analysis has been divided into two main parts:



The first part includes several questions related to the content, its suitability, adaptability, organization, innovation, relevance and equality



The second part includes more general comments referred to the concepts, ideas, and its usefulness for the learners and it also includes observations and recommendations for possible improvements.

## **7.1- INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY MODULE**

### **7.1.1- QUESTIONS**

#### **1. Is the content adapted to objectives of the product?**

Although the content is adequate, it would be worth delving deeper into tools used within Office environment and in the area of e-commerce.

#### **2. Is the content adequate for the target group?**

It is highly adequate since the IT tools are fundamental instruments in any professional sector, including retail. The content is not excessively technical or complicated to use in the point of sales. It is also advisable to include tools for helping the staff working in retail.

#### **3. Is the content well organized ?**

It is well-structured. It is important to underpin the links and examples used to support the theoretical part.

#### **4. Is the content current (not obsolete)?**

It would be better to use applications of office 2007 rather than 2003 applications.

#### **5. Is the content innovative and does it contribute solutions to cover training needs?**

As far as innovation is concerned it could be beneficial to remark about the links to Microsoft website to aid learning within those tutorials.

#### **6. Is the content relevant within this course?**

It is a module not as important as the other modules since it is presupposed that students should have a suitable knowledge of these tools and of the office

environment. It would have done more to make reference to the ecommerce and to the advantages of the information technologies such as email.

**7. Are the gender equal opportunities respected (non-sexist language, selection of images)?**

Equality is respected and there are no sexist references within the module.

**7.1.2- GENERAL COMMENTS:**

It is important to point out the two main concepts included in this module:

Internet and e-commerce

Firstly, Internet, good or bad, is currently part of life for millions of people. To apply the education to the context of the network is something fundamental.

A long time ago, a TV channel organised a contest where several people, individually and in different places, lived the experience of being together for a month in an unknown place.

They lived in a house without telephone, television, radio, food, press and video or cd, they could not receive visitors or leave the house if they did they would be disqualified.

How did they survive then? The peculiarity of the contest was not the renunciation to the use of these devices but the possibility of using them via Internet.

In fact, the contest was aimed to prove that nowadays it is possible to live physically apart from society thanks to all the progress and benefits of the internet.

This was because basic needs such as hunger (when participants were hungry, clicked on some prepay restaurant and ordered their meals using a credit card and the food was brought directly to the house by an employee who left it at the door from where it was collected) or communication with other people (this was substituted by the chat, the “Messenger” or the “video chat”) were covered.

Nowadays, the use of internet has become more common for multiple purposes and in different moments. It has also been declared that to not know networks means to be excluded from modern reality.

Secondly, the e-commerce is the sale of products and services through out the internet. This sector currently represents the highest rate of economic growth. Thanks to the minimum cost that is involved, even the smallest company can reach clients all over the world with its products and messages. Currently, more than 250 million people all around the world regularly use the Internet.

69% of the population connected to internet has bought something in the last 90 days. Considering this data, analysts estimate that this system will generate sales valued USD 9 one billion dollars until 2010.

If it is calculated that the normal average revenue of the users of Internet ascends to USD 59,000, it could be very beneficial for a particular company to attract this target audience

The e-commerce is a present wager not a future challenge. This is not new, the fact that e-commerce is on the increase and more and more SMEs benefit from it. Thanks to e-commerce a significant change is expected in our purchasing habits.

Advantages and opportunities for the entrepreneur:

- Geographical limits for businesses disappear.
- You can be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year.
- Great reduction in the cost of setting up in comparison with traditional trade.
- Speeding up business operations.
- Providing new means to find and serve clients.

- Add new strategies of relationships between clients and suppliers at an international level.
- Reducing the staff required.
- Reduction of prices due to the low cost of the internet in comparison with another means of promotion.
- More interactivity with clients and offer customisation.
- Globalisation and access to markets including millions of potential clients
- Introducing strategies in the sale of products to fidelize clients.
- Fast update of the information related to products and services of the company.
- Obtaining new business opportunities by being present in the market.

Advantages and Opportunities for the clients:

- The power to chose in accordance to their needs in a global market.
- It offers pre-sales information and possible test of the product before purchasing it.
- Immediacy when carrying out purchase orders.
- Pre and after-sales service online
- Reduction of the distribution chain, this allows the client to acquire the product with a better price.
- More interactivity and customisation of the demand.
- Immediate information on any product, and availability of accessing the information at any time.

But not all are advantages, there are also disadvantages, and the main inconvenience is the mistrust that still exists in the security of online trade. Although emerging novelties such as SSL, cash card, counter reimbursement, are contributing to make shopping online more secure.

Regarding the offer, the main disadvantage is that clients associate internet to bargain which makes it difficult to get a more attractive trading margin than in the traditional trade (traditional retail)

## **7.2- MANAGEMENT 1**

### **7.2.1-QUESTIONS**

#### **1. Is the content suitable for objectives of the product?**

This is the module which best represents the objectives of the product, it shows all the different areas within the management of a company. It should be the first module studied by the learners, after the IT module.

#### **2. Is the content adapted to the target group?**

Yes, it is well adapted since it allows the learners to study all the concepts related to management and then learn about the other areas of the company.

#### **3. Is the content well organized?**

The organization of the concepts and ideas is well-thought out. All the areas follow the same pattern ending with an activity. Every area within this module has got its own links.

#### **4. Is the content current (not obsolete)?**

Yes, all the concepts included, management, organization types, goal settings are up-to-date.

#### **5. Is the content innovative and does it contribute solutions to cover training needs?**

As far as innovation is concerned, it is worth pointing out the links included because they allow the students to work or practice further, not just read articles by famous authors. For example: [www.bized.co.uk](http://www.bized.co.uk). The inclusion of a multiple choice with the possibility of self-correction within the module is also innovative.

## **6. Is the content relevant within the course?**

This is the perfect module to start the course with as it includes all the main areas which are essential in any entrepreneurial organization.

## **7. Are the gender equal opportunities respected (non-sexist language, selection of images)?**

Equality is respected and there are no sexist references within the module.

### **7.2.2- GENERAL COMMENTS**

This is the best module due to its content, its structure, its organization and its relevance to real life situations. All the links are very interesting and the activities present situations that can be seen in a company, everyday.

One of the founding fathers of the modern theory of the management maintains that a great part of what is taught and practiced, related to this matter, is obsolete, wrong, or both. Acute and precise, Peter Drucker, affirmed that to remain competitive - and even to survive - companies will have become themselves organizations of knowledge specialists. An organization will be a set of specialists that will seek the best way of utilizing their knowledge.

In this module, the learners can practice what Druckers and other authors stated, because they will be able to acquire enough knowledge to establish priorities within the management of any type of organization. In addition, it gives the possibility to the students to continue learning autonomously, using the links and the very interesting and practical websites provided, for example: [www.bized.co.uk](http://www.bized.co.uk) in the section dealing with organization types.

This site shows a significant number of works and power point presentations from different areas of a company such as accounting and marketing. I have seen several of them and I would point out the one related to e-commerce since it excellently outlines the strategies to adopt to get into these sales channels, and additionally it contains activities.

The module is divided into nine sections:

- Management Theories
- Organization Types
- Goal Setting
- Planning
- Implementing
- Information Flow
- Communications flow
- Arranging meetings
- Assuring Quality

All sections are significant, the management theories section include all the theories of management such as the theory of chaos and the theory of Mintzberg. Lastly, the exercise at the end of this section is fully complete since it includes different types of activities.( to promote the individual and collective research of some of the theories studied within the area)

The second section, "Organization Types", shows the different types of entrepreneurial organizations, its size, structure and company culture. Additionally, this area has its activities which include the search of different examples of entrepreneurial organizations.

The section "Goal Setting" is also outstanding since it includes the last theories of goal setting, for example it makes reference within the area of objectives to the SMART criteria, which indicates that objectives must be specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time specific.

Another section which is worth highlighting is “arranging meetings”. this area shows how to optimize the meeting to the maximum, in order not to make the participants waste their time. It is important to underpin the link included, it belongs to a company which creates software to have online meetings.

All sections include simple, but effective activities which serve to support the content of the area. All learners should follow and do all the activities because along this process they can acquire new knowledge and to start researching individually.

It is important to point out the multiple choice exercise within the section of planning, since this is very effective and clear, it includes five points related to strategic, tactical or operational decision taking.

Finally, and as it has already been mentioned before, this is the most outstanding module of the course. It maintains the perfect balance between theoretical knowledge, practical activities and includes effective and useful links.

## **7.3.- MANAGEMENT 2**

### **7.3.1.- QUESTIONS**

#### **1. Is the content suitable for the objectives of the product?**

It is highly satisfactory since human resources are a key element within any organization in order for its correct functioning.

#### **2. Is the content adequate for the target group?**

Yes, it is well-thought out, especially the second section which is more precise and concrete than the first section.

The human resources section, although it is satisfactory, should not be so exhaustive, especially considering the target group.

#### **3. Is the content well organized?**

The organization is highly adequate, although some of the points include too many concepts (more than 20 pages). However, I would advise the inclusion of more activities and links.

#### **4. Is the content current (not obsolete)?**

It is current, some areas more than others, for example, the area of networking, which has recently become very popular since it can help to establish beneficial relations for the company.

#### **5. Is the content innovative and does it contribute solutions to cover training needs?**

Concerning innovation, it is important to point out the link presented (<http://www.businessballs.com/project.htm>)

in the area of "project management" since it will help the students greatly.

## **6. Is the content relevant within the course?**

The content is relevant. The sections included are very important, however they are too extensively dealt with.

## **7. Are the gender equal opportunities respected (non-sexist language, selection of images)?**

Equality is respected and there are no sexist references within the module. It is important to underpin that in the section HR staff development, they are showing photographs of different people of different race, gender, age, this is a clear indication that the authors are considering equality.

### **7.3.2.- GENERAL COMMENTS**

This module is divided into two sections: Human Resources and Business Planning and Development. Both of them are very well-structured. Although there are only two sections the contents are deeply dealt with and the learner cannot argue that the concepts have been lightly treated.

In the first section, Human Resources, all areas have their own links, activities and exercises.

Regarding links, for example: HR staff development has two links which are very interesting and well-chosen to start approaching human resources.

The first is a dictionary of terms related to the topic and the second includes the links of institutions and companies that have things to add to the study of the subject.

This first area also includes a case which puts into practice the identification of training needs and different solutions are given to the problem described.

It is important to underpin the inclusion of Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation model to be used in the final activity of the area, Kirkpatrick evaluated the training and the needs of the company.

The four levels of Kirkpatrick's evaluation model essentially measure:

- reaction of student - what they thought and felt about the training
- learning - the resulting increase in knowledge or capability
- behaviour - extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application
- results - the effects on the business or environment resulting from the trainee's performance.

The area of selection and recruitment explains how to select people and where to publicize the employment offers. What is missing here is a reference to professional networks such as LinkedIn or Xing where many vacancies are published.

Lastly, the area of motivation and rewarding, it is worth highlighting the concepts referred to the employee expectations and the analysis of the Maslow's pyramid.

The activities at the end of the area, particularly the one dealing with employee motivation within MacDonald's, are especially interesting.

The second section "Business planning" examines the different managerial models and how to implement them, this area is sufficiently developed but more activities should be added since they are scarce and not very consistent. The point dedicated to networking and such types is noticeable.

## **7.4-MARKETING**

### **7.4.1- QUESTIONS**

#### **1. Is the content suitable for the objectives of the product?**

It is highly adequate since marketing is an essential area within the daily routine of a retail business. A company can not move forward without marketing strategies, either operational or strategic. The knowledge of the clients, the optimization of the product's portfolio, all these strategies are oriented to build a long lasting relationship with the client and they are key elements of marketing.

#### **2. Is the content adapted to the target group?**

It is highly adequate since the concepts are not excessively complicated to grasp. And the student will learn to cope with situations that they did not know how to face before.

#### **3. Is the content well organized ?**

The organization is well-thought out. It is worth pointing out the section "marketing environment", which includes the first important concepts: marketing mix, Swot analysis, Boston matrix, buyer behavior and segmentation. The navigation is easy, you can quickly move around the website and find what you are looking for. The quick facts and the links are very useful.

#### **4. Is the content current (not obsolete)?**

The content is up-to-date and ideal for a person approaching marketing for the first time. It would be worth adding marketing online strategies and the treatment and use of social networks.

#### **5. Is the content innovative and does it contribute solutions to cover training needs?**

The content provides new knowledge for the students that added to their professional experience can be considered as an asset for the learner. The

innovation relies on the methodology used along the module which makes it easy to follow by the learners.

#### **6. Is the content relevant within the course?**

The content is highly relevant since marketing is a fundamental area within the sustainability of a point of sales. Authors have presented the essential concepts within marketing, this will be the base for the students to continue learning autonomously.

#### **7. Are the gender equal opportunities respected (nonsexist language, election of images)?**

Equality is respected and there are no sexist references within the module.

### **7.4.2 GENERAL COMMENTS**

Some years ago, when the first e-commerce sites started to come out, a chill went through the bodies of the most traditional retailers. A violent uneven fight was forecast: on the one hand, manufacturers and big platforms, with enormous resources and infrastructure and internet which opened the possibility of selling anything to everybody, with less cost than a traditional shop. And on the other hand, retail and small distributors, a ruinous structure derived from the exhibition and a limited geographical extent.

The challenge, for those who did not have another choice but to face this battle, was to look for the lost value.

From now on, retailers strategies started to differentiate.

Some, tried to come over to the side of the enemy by setting up, without much thinking, an online shop. In most cases, without planning, without strategy or clear objectives, without material or human recourses dedicated to it, and above all, without knowing why they did it. In the end, and after the foreseen failure, they finished with the prediction that the online sale would never work and they returned to their shops of brick.

Then, many retailers, victims of a wrong and simplistic information, plunged into the wrong battle: the price. Convinced that their great disadvantage was the price and that their clients would not be prepared to pay extra for buying, sacrificed it all. They gave up to all value, as though it was a burden, and they reduced margins until laughable limits trying to compete with the prices their clients could find online.

In reality, what they achieved, was to pauperize their shop, to impoverish the experience offered to their clients and to depreciate the brand. Consequences did not take long to be noticed: less sales even at laughable margins. They were trapped in a downwards spiral.

Others decided to bet on value. They concentrated in what they could only offer and promise: the experience of purchase. They would lose certain clients, but would attract others, and they would not have the need of reducing margins. What is more, as time passes, value adheres to price and the effort finishes being profitable. That is, it is necessary to orient towards the client and to adopt relational marketing strategies.

With this initial reflection, it is demonstrated that there are a significant number of strategies in marketing but all of them have as a final goal the relationship with the client to try to attract him/her permanently. This should be transmitted in a marketing module.

Several definitions of marketing from authors such as Kotler or Lambin should be included and compared. The main concepts to study are needs versus desires, these are the fundamental keys of the client oriented marketing.

Regarding marketing mix, a more profound study of the p's is missing since the author mostly focused on other variables. It would also be important to include the areas of clients, competence in distribution or the different prices strategies. The area devoted to buyer behavior is adequate, but it would be interesting to include examples from everyday life.

Another area which is important to promote, since this is practically the only competitive advantage an establishment may have, is the Loyalty and Customer

service and there is only a brief reference to the CRM (Customer relationship management),

Concerning strategic marketing, it is advisable to include innovative strategies developed at this moment of economic crisis, such as street marketing, social marketing, radical marketing, geomarketing, guerilla marketing.

Positioning strategies in social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, or strategies of Networking as LinkedIn or Xing are also worth including.

Generally speaking, the module is well thought out and highly adequate to the target group and I would only recommend the addition of the information already detailed above.

## **7.5- BUYING AND SELLING**

### **7.5.1 QUESTIONS**

#### **1. Is the content adequate to the objectives of the product?**

The content is highly relevant within the objectives of the course since it deals with two key aspects of any enterprise. How do we buy? How do we sell our product?

#### **2. Is the content adequate for the target group?**

The content is adequate since the concepts are clearly and simply explained, this will make it very easy for the target group to understand them. The authors concentrate on the basic and main ideas without delving deeply into very technical issues. The links used help to better understand the subject.

#### **3. Is the content well organised?**

The organization has been very well-thought out, starting with purchases, studying the different types of brands and how to buy them and then, how to sell them. Finally, several case studies are developed, where the strategies learnt in the section can be recognized.

#### **4. Is the content current (not obsolete)?**

The content is current. It does not delve deeply into the theories of purchase optimization that have appeared in recent years but the ideas and concepts dealt with are suitable for the target group.

#### **5. Is the content innovative and does it contribute solutions to cover training needs?**

Regarding innovation, the study cases can be highlighted. These are adequately

developed using different formats, visual, sound and written. The recommended links are very innovative from the learning point of view.

#### **6. Is the content relevant within the course?**

Absolutely, as it has already been explained, both purchases and sales are two essential areas within any type of business organisation. The development of a project is impossible without the correct functioning of both. For this reason, it is necessary and essential to learn some basic concepts of both along the course.

#### **7. Are the gender equal opportunities respected (nonsexist language, election of images)?**

Equality is respected and there are no sexist references within the module.

#### **7. 5.2 GENERAL COMMENTS**

It is worth highlighting two points within this module: private brands and sale closing techniques.

A store brand or private brand belongs to a distribution chain under which products from different manufacturers are sold.

The development of private brands started in 1975, known then as free product. The premise of its launch was: «As good as big brands but cheaper». Private brands began with the basics: milk, pastas, rice, legumes, cookies that were followed by articles frequently used in the house.

Private brands have grown in distribution in recent years, passing in some countries to exceed the sales of national brands.

The main advantages of products from private brands are a competitive prize obtained thanks to savings on advertising and promotion, and the quality of the product, that frequently is identical to the product commercialized by top brands, but cheaper.

Closing a sale: Why is it so important to ask questions? Firstly, because the control of the situation is taken by the sales person and then the customer will follow without much opposition. Secondly, the sales assistant can discover the clients' areas of interest and then to know when to use a closing technique and close the purchase.

That is, they should listen to their client's needs, so that they can exactly determine what they want and then sell them what they need to fulfil their expectations.

The sales assistant should let the clients speak and listen to them carefully rather than talking themselves. Pushing a client must not be confused with closing a sale. There are sales assistant who unconsciously put pressure on prospective buyers for example when they say: "This is the best product in the market" "This is what you need" "prices are going to rise" " there is another person interested" Then, the clients have the feeling of being under pressure, they lose confidence, and usually, the sale is also lost.

Then, the sales person wonders what went wrong. The solution would be to ask not to state to the client, if you ask them, they will believe, if you state they will doubt.

Although it seems surprising, 63% of the presentations within the selling process are made without the intention of closing a sale due to fear derived from ignorance.

The professional sales-assistant is well-trained and is always learning new selling techniques , because he/she knows it is much easier to sell using new tools and techniques than using intuition and improvisation.

## **7.6- MERCHANDISING**

### **7.6.1 QUESTIONS**

#### **1.-Is the content suitable for the objectives of the product?**

The content is adequate because it focuses on the importance of management in Merchandising. Objectives are very well described for people working within the retail sector. Additionally it orientates towards the individual work of the student and their activity production

#### **2. Is the content adapted to the target group?**

The content is adequate since it is not excessively technical and complicated and can be applied to many sale points. It is important to consider the lack of training resources for staff working in the retail sector. Additionally, it presents practical scenarios, which are easily applicable to real life situations. It will possibly make students realize the important of many factors that earlier were not appreciated while visiting commercial establishments.

#### **3. Is the content well organized ?**

The organization has been well thought out, a description of the different chapters and an explanation of how to navigate the whole module are described on the first page. In addition, the introduction specifies the objectives of the module and what is going to be taught/learnt.

#### **4. Is the content current (not obsolete)?**

The content deals with the latest strategies seen in the market currently. Additionally, the content is very easy to understand, the pages are not overloaded with information and the layout allows for the definition of several main ideas.

**5. Is the content innovative and does it contribute solutions to cover training needs?**

As far as innovation is concerned it is important to underpin the beginnings of the chapters with one discussion- question and the projects to be developed at the end of the chapter.

**6. Is the content relevant within this course?**

It is highly relevant. Merchandising is a basic area within the development of a sales point. The term "merchandising", can be defined as:

"The set of techniques directed to put products at the disposal of the consumer, obtaining a return to the investment made in the settlement"

Stores will tend to substitute the verbal argumentation for the visual one within the sales. A good Plan of "merchandising" allows the product to be offered to the client in a well presented manner, in conclusion, "merchandising" is useful to sell more

**7. Are the gender equal opportunities respected (non-sexist language, selection of images)?**

Equality is respected and there are no sexist references within the module.

**7. 6.2 GENERAL COMMENTS**

Merchandising is the part of the marketing that has the aim to increase the return in the sales point by means of different activities that stimulate the purchase in the sales point. Merchandising is the set of studies and sales techniques that allow the presentation of the product or service in the best possible conditions, both physical and psychological, to the end-user. In comparison to the passive

introduction, an active introduction is carried out of the product or service using a wide variety of mechanisms to make it more attractive: layout, presentation etc.

Merchandising includes all developed activity in a point of sales, that expects to reassert or to change the purchase behavior, in favor of the most profitable items for the settlement. The basic objectives of the merchandising are: call the attention, direct the client towards the product, facilitate the purchase action.

This module is directed to a target group without a high level of education, this is the reason why it should be specific and concise and specifically directed to, although there are many different actions, the animation of the sales point.

Therefore, Merchandising by the distributor is: the actions of the retailers in their establishments, who seek not only to sell their assorted items but also to optimize the return from the area dedicated to that specific sale.

At the same time, the module emphasizes activities and discussion questions for the improvement of the learning process.

It is important to point out that the introduction of the module is fully complete and summarizes perfectly the content included in the module. It emphasizes the objectives to be achieved by the students and tackles the questions that are essential in the eyes of the merchandiser.

Missing in the module is a specific section that defines Merchandising and definitions from different authors for comparison. Although there is a basic definition in the glossary, it is advisable at least to remark on the AMA (American Marketing Association) definition.

Generally speaking, the module does not delve into the different areas of the merchandising but the level is adequate for the target group, and it also allows the learner to study in depth thanks to the examples, activities and projects.

As far as the content is concerned it should be considered positive that the study of merchandising in websites has been included, as internet is a new sales channel where the visual impact is as important as in the physical shop.

There are two sections which are worth pointing out over the rest, Space Management and Visual Merchandising, as both are strategies easily adaptable to the sales point. Judith Bell's contribution sharing her experience in the sector of merchandising is very interesting as it provides the learner with a practical example. It is also worth mentioning the project in chapter of "Atmospheric" as it includes a key word "innovation" A student is asked to visit and compare a store and try to innovate using the new concepts learnt in this chapter.

To conclude my assessment of this module, it is important to define it as a well-thought out module that is also clearly oriented to the target group.

## **7.7- FINANCE**

### **7.7.1 QUESTIONS**

#### **1. Is the content adequate for the objectives of the product?**

The content is relevant for the objectives of the product since finances are a key elements within a company. Some companies, especially the small ones, usually outsource book-keeping, but still they must have a minimum knowledge of the area.

#### **2. Is the content adequate for the target group?**

The content is adequate for the target group since it includes the main concepts of finances without delving deeply into them.

#### **3. Is the content well- organized ?**

The content is well-organized. Apart from the examples included in the book keeping section, there are not many exercises in the other sections of this module, it is highly recommended to add more activities to reinforce some of the concepts within finances which may be seen as a bit complex.

#### **4. Is the content current (not obsolete)?**

It is up-to date, since the module deals with the main financial concepts which are the same as they were years ago

#### **5. Is the content innovative and does it contribute solutions to cover the training needs?**

As far as training is concerned the most innovative part of the module is the book keeping process.

## **6. Is the content relevant within the course?**

Although it is not one of the most important modules within the course, the content is relevant since as it has been explained before all companies must have a minimum knowledge of this area.

## **7. Are the gender equal opportunities respected (nonsexist language, election of images)?**

Equality is respected and there are no sexist references within the module.

### **7. 7.2 GENERAL COMMENTS**

It is worth highlighting three main sections: accounting, VAT, and profitability, especially contribution margin.

Accounting quantifies, in terms of money, operations that a company carries out with other participants in the economic activity and certain economic events that affect it.

Economic operations and events that accounting quantifies, are considered as achieved for example:

- When it has made transactions with other economic entities.
- When internal changes have taken place modifying the structure of recourses or sources.
- When external economic events to the company or derived from its operations have happened and their effect can be reasonably quantified in monetary terms.

Contribution margin is the difference between the selling price and the variable costs. It is also considered as the excess of income with respect to the variable costs, excess that should cover fixed costs and the utility.

Companies incur fixed costs and variable costs in the production process, and additionally a utility margin is expected,.

If the contribution margin is determined excluding the variable costs from the sales, then the contribution margin should cover the fixed costs and the utility expected by the investor.

The selling price is made up of three elements: fixed costs, variable costs and utility.

Utility: It corresponds to the percentage that the producer wants to win on the invested cost (fixed cost + variable cost). Example: if the total cost of a product is \$5,000 and the producer wants to win 20% on that cost, he should sell the product at \$6,000 its utility then will be \$1,000.

The formula used to calculate the contribution margin is very simple, provided that the only thing done is to subtract the variable cost to the unitary selling price, that is:

CM= sales revenues-variable cost.

Selling price 6,000

Fixed cost 2,000

Variable cost 3,000

$$MC = 6,000 - 3,000 = 3,000$$

The contribution margin allows to calculate how much a certain product is contributing to the company. It allows the identification of to what extent it is profitable to continue producing that article.

Some situations that the contribution margin allows to identify and analyze are:

1. If the contribution margin is positive, it allows the absorption of the fixed cost

and the generation of a margin for the expected utility. The bigger the contribution margin is, the larger the utility will be.

2. When the contribution margin is equal to the fixed cost, it does not leave margin for utility, therefore the company is in the break-even point (It does not earn, it does not lose)

3-When the contribution margin is negative, that is, that the variable costs are higher than the selling price, this is the time, before the situation gets even more critical, to suspend the production of the goods in question

The module of finances tackles key data of accounting for example: how to deal with the financial data of a company following the official accountable criteria within each country.

VAT is the tax charged over consumption and is applied to all kind of products, although with different VAT percentages. There is a European regulation but every country has the right to establish its own rates.

To finish this part, it is important to mention that profit and lost statements are studied, together with investments which include recovery calculations, the most significant one being the ROI.

## **7.8- ECONOMICS**

### **7.8.1 QUESTIONS**

#### **1.-Is the content suitable for the objectives of the product?**

The content is adequate. It only deals with the most basic concepts which are useful for real life situations.

#### **2.-Is the content adapted to the target group?**

Yes, as it has been explained in the section above, the content is clearly oriented to provide concise and simple ideas of certain areas of the economy that the learner can easily apply to the retail sector. It is important to know; what inflation is and how it can affect economic growth, what the opportunity cost is and the importance of being able to draw the supply and demand curve.

#### **3.-Is the content well organized ?**

The content is well organized, it is easy to follow and is steadily supported by quick facts and the glossary. It would be recommended to include the activities after each section of the chapter rather than to separate them in two different areas.

#### **4. Is the content current (not obsolete)?**

The content is up-to-date, it includes well-known definitions, that are as true today as they were years ago. Consequently, the materials included cannot be obsolete.

#### **5. Is the content innovative and does it contribute solutions to cover training needs?**

The innovation relies on the gathering of this information and material and its adaptation to the target group, rather than in the information or material itself.

#### **6. Is the content relevant within the course?**

The learner does not need to delve deeply into this subject, but to acquire the practical knowledge that they can use in their workplace.

#### **7. Are the gender equal opportunities respected (nonsexist language, election of images)?**

Equality is respected and there are no sexist references within the module.

### **7.8.2 GENERAL COMMENTS**

When a definition of Economy is requested, people, who are brought closer to the subject for the first time, usually give concepts related to money, prices or the wealth of people and countries.

If we ask to a person in the street his/her opinion on economic problems, their reply will surely allude to unemployment, price rising or the situation of the Stock exchange.

Indeed, the field of conventional study of the Economy covers all problems related to price allocation and analysis of activities that involve costs and that produce measurable profits, in brief, with the production and distribution of goods and services for the satisfaction of human needs.

Furthermore, sometimes prices are not expressed in currency units; for example: the criminal that is arrested pays their debt to society by spending time in prison.

The same method used to calculate the effect of consumption of olive oil when its price rises, is also utilized for some experts in economic analysis of law to estimate the effect that a rise of the penalties will have on criminal activity.

With a very short sentence, professor Lionel Robbins turned the field of study of the Economy gigantic; his well-known definition says that “It is a social science which studies human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which has alternative uses”.

However this definition is much wider than its author intended as it may include topics where money and the wealth of people and countries intervene indirectly and in a very general sense.

The aim of the module is to disseminate some basic concepts on the subject for easy understanding, the objective is not to delve deeply into the subject but to make students aware of the economic issues that can affect the correct functioning of a retail company.

For example: if there is too much money in the market, prices tend to go up and inflation is produced, if that increase of prices continues, the consumption can be affected, the sales decrease and unemployment is produced since employers do not need so much staff.

The module is structured in two main sections; the first area introduces the basic concepts of the economy and the second area includes topics related to macroeconomics, such as inflation, unemployment, deflation and a reference to the European and world areas of economic decision is also made.

Activities related with the area of study are included after each section.

In this first area that the author calls “Basic terms” it is worth emphasizing the differences between positive and normative economy.

Positive economy is limited to the description of the economic phenomena. The economic analysis is the results of the development of several techniques used to analyze efficiently and in depth all these phenomena.

The normative economy deals with the objectives to be reached either by the individuals or by the state.

Another important point is the difference between microeconomics and macroeconomics:

Microeconomics is the study of economic behavior of people regarding certain issues such as “what to buy? and what to sell?”, “How much to save? and how much to spend?”. It focuses on the individuals' economic decisions and how these decisions affect the markets.

Macroeconomics studies the economy as a whole, while microeconomic analyzes the individual pieces of the puzzle.

Other concepts that are dealt with, among others, are: Supply, Demand, Opportunity cost, Comparative advantage, Elasticity.

In the second main area “Inflation & Growth”, it is worth pointing out the area related to inflation as being fully complete and useful for the students.

## **7.9- LABOUR RIGHTS**

### **7.9.1 QUESTIONS**

#### **1-Is the content adequate for the objectives of the product?**

The content is adequate since labour rights are an important part of the employment legislation in a country and therefore they are also factors of relevance within the retail sector.

#### **2. Is the content adapted to the target group?**

Yes, it deals with the main areas concerning employment rights, in addition the module includes case studies which are well-developed and present real situations that can be familiar for the learner. Solutions to the cases are also included.

#### **3. Is the content well organized?**

The content is well organized, all the areas follow the same pattern of study, which makes the work easier for the student. In addition, the inclusion of solutions for the cases gives credibility to the described situations, since the student can quickly see the best solution to the situation.

#### **4. Is the content current (not obsolete)?**

The content is quite up-to-date, especially concerning the European legislation.

#### **5. Is the content innovative and does it contribute solutions to cover training needs?**

The innovation relies on the use of the same format for all the sections and the inclusion of solutions for the case studies treated.

## **6. Is the content relevant within the course?**

It is important to know about the area but as most of its content is based on common sense, the student will more likely concentrate on studying other modules.

## **7. Are the gender equal opportunities respected (non-sexist language, selection of images)?**

Equality is respected and there are no sexist references within the module.

### **7.9.2 GENERAL COMMENTS**

This module is very well structured, it is divided into five sections: Employment contracts, Employment protection, Grievances, Discrimination and Intellectual Property Rights. These sections are divided into four points: Introduction, Good Practice, Your workplace and legislation, being identical the structure for all areas.

Lastly the module ends with an area of cases, where eleven cases are studied including ten different situations related to the concepts learnt within the module.

The most significant sections are employment contracts and employment protection, because they contain the most essential data related to contracting and employee protection. The result, although it was well-thought out, only defines and relates the legislation ad hoc.

It is worth highlighting some information included in the section of discrimination, which is simple and concise: firstly, every citizen is entitled to the same opportunities in the EU, secondly, every citizen is entitled to equal treatment, thirdly, it is illegal to discriminate a person because of gender, age, disability, ethnic or racial origin, religion, or sexual orientation.

Another significant point, discussed within the module, is the equal treatment for men and women in employment.

Laws defending equal rights for men and women have existed since the creation of the European Community.

A total of 13 legislative documents have been adopted since 1970 to guarantee fair and equal treatment for men and women.

These laws cover different areas for example: equal treatment when applying for a job or in the workplace, protection to pregnant employees and the right to enjoy maternity or paternity leave.

Millions of women and men in Europe enjoy these rights everyday, but few of them know, it is thanks to the European Union.

Regarding the fight against other kinds of discrimination, laws defending equal rights for men and women were added to the new legislation of the EU in 2000, that forbids the discrimination for other reasons such as:

- Racial and ethnic origin
- Religion and beliefs
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

These five kinds of discrimination, together with gender discrimination, are included in the Treaty of Amsterdam of the European Union as the areas where the EU can act to avoid discrimination.

There are other reasons for discrimination for example: marital status, income, place of residence.

All EU countries are obliged to include these requirements for equality within its legislation. Likewise, countries willing to join the European Union should comply with these standards.

The legislation, regulating equal treatment in the European Union, establishes the minimum levels applied to all human beings that work in the European Union. Countries can go a step further and adopt even more strict legal measures.

This is a very important topic, since it is essential to know the legislation in order not to incur criminal offences against employment rights.

## **8.-CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The aim of the project is to transfer and implement an existing written material for teaching retail management into an ICT-based learning material, based on modules for an open learning environment targeted for adult learners. Thus, a group working in retail management without much formal education will be able to add to their knowledge and skills while still being within the labour market.

The project started in November 2007 and finished in February 2010.

The product is an online course “Retail management” divided into nine modules: The modules are: IT/Learning e-learning, Management 1, Marketing, Buying and Selling, Merchandising, Management 2, Finances, Economics and Labour rights.

### **8.1 METHODOLOGY**

It is clearly demonstrated that the methodological part has been carefully considered and a significant effort has been made to adapt an existing written material to the target group and to online learning as it is shown by the documents elaborated: the Guidelines “Initial description of Pedagogy of ICT-based learning material for adult learners”, the learner’s guide to e-learning, the teacher’s guide and the design and content of the modules.

The teacher’s guide is a very complete instrument that will facilitate the teacher’s task by giving him/her information about how to exploit the course, what to do in every module and how to do it.

Generally speaking, the methodological approach is in complete accordance with the aims. There is a clear identification of the modules, the needs to be covered and the issues that should be addressed and also the areas to be reinforced and practiced.

The product can be considered as user friendly, there is no need of any specific instruction on how to use it as it is very intuitive. So the learning process is simple.

**Recommendations:**

- To specify a time limit or deadline to do the activities within unless the teacher says otherwise
- To have an introduction at the beginning of the course detailing to whom it is addressed to, in case this product is transferred to other institution or colleagues

**8.2 IMPACT, SUSTAINABILITY, TRANSFERABILITY**

It is clearly shown that the product had, has and will have an impact on the target group and the sector. It is going to be sustainable since the course is going to be implemented in the partnerships countries. As it has already been said the product would be easily transferable.

**Recommendations:**

- The partnership seems to be well-organized and to work efficiently together. They may plan to work together in other projects in the same or a different area. For example, they may decide to work together in a TOI or in a mobility project to encourage the placement of the students of this course in each of the other countries once the course is finished.

**8.3 CONTENTS**

Throughout the evaluation of the contents I have been able to perceive the effort of the authors for reflecting the main areas of knowledge that learners should acquire. Most of the concepts included will sound familiar to the learners, and the way they are structured, makes them seem complete.

As far as the content is concerned, the most outstanding module is **management 1**.

It is a combination of excellent structure and content, worthy practices and activities. The links included are also essential for the learners to absorb the new concepts.

**Management 2** is adequate. The information included is too detailed, especially in the human resources section.

**Marketing module.** The contents are well introduced for learners approaching marketing for the first time. It would be advisable to include definitions of segmentation, consumer needs satisfaction, consumer's expectations and product life cycle. The module, in general has a good structure, but there is a lack of suitable links

**The merchandising module** is also outstanding, it is well-structured, the content is up-to-date and easy to apply in the different commercial establishments.

The learners will easily appreciate the different merchandising techniques explained within the module, during their next visit to a store.

**The economics module.** The contents included are of a very basic level, but suitable for the learners to acquire knowledge which will allow them to understand easily concepts such as economy, inflation, elasticity and their possible effects in the daily economy.

Excellent activities and exercises which reflect what is learnt in the module and favour the learner's initiative.

From **the Buying and selling module**, it is worth highlighting the point referred to closing a sale, this deals with different closing strategies that can occur in a point of sale and also, from a pedagogical point of view, it is important to mention the final video cases prepared for their discussion.

**The Labour Rights module** is significant so that all involved within business organizations assume that the correct treatment of people within these organizations, is essential.

It is important to underpin the point of Discrimination for its simple and clear explanations and the cases because they are useful and include the solutions.

**The finance module** is of a very basic level so that a learner with a lower level of education will not feel intimidated. The most remarkable aspect here is the significant number of exercises contained.

**The IT module**, which should be studied first, because it is essential as this is an online course. The module only includes two areas of knowledge the internet and the Microsoft office tools. Images, graphs and exercises are used for easy understanding.

To summarize, the product is excellent and it will be an essential support for the target group. This will help the learner to acquire an entrepreneurial mindset and a significant amount of knowledge highly useful for their work within the retail sector, which is the sector with more employees and more economic weight in the national economy of most countries.

I dare say, this course can have more uses than was first thought and it could be used as a basic tool for a person who wanted to become an entrepreneur.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended:

-To add more exercises and activities in some of the modules, as explained in the analysis. It is essential considering the target group.

-To include concepts such as street marketing, guerrilla marketing within the marketing module and to make reference to strategies of marketing online.

(these are included in the merchandising module but they are very superficially treated)

-To add more links since they are a fantastic tool for thorough understanding

-To change the business planning area since it may be a bit confusing for the learners. It will be worth improving the point “business plan” and to study further the points of this plan.