

PANORAMA

TURNING INTERNSHIPS IN LOGISTICS & SUPPLY CHAIN INTO SUCCESS

• 2024 •



STUDY AND BEST PRACTICES
ON INTERN ONBOARDING
AND OFFBOARDING



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INTRODUCTION

WHAT ARE EMPLOYEES LOOKING FOR IN THEIR CURRENT AND FUTURE JOBS?

“ This is the question many companies are asking in a context marked by a talent shortage and, more broadly, human resources challenges. The supply chain sector is no exception, despite its rapid growth. In addition to the scarcity, and sometimes shortage, of human resources, **the supply chain also faces major challenges, particularly the phenomenon of digitalization**, which calls for new working methods, new skills, and new employee expectations around work. However, the supply chain has several strengths it can highlight: its cross-functional nature, strategic importance, dynamism, and career growth opportunities, all of which can help make it more attractive.

While improving organization and working conditions is undoubtedly a key lever for attracting and retaining new talent, **many companies today are turning to internships and apprenticeships** as a valuable and effective mechanism for recruiting and integrating young, emerging talent. Yet, it is not always easy for companies to attract young interns in the fields of logistics and supply chain, for two main reasons.

First, **there is a significant lack of awareness about careers in logistics and supply chain** in society, particularly among young people. Supply chain is often mistakenly associated with and limited to transport, warehousing, and storage activities. The absence of courses in high schools (with the exception of vocational schools) likely contributes to this misconception.

Second, **the field suffers from an image problem** that needs to be explained and better promoted in society. Among the negative aspects cited, employees often mention the high levels of pressure and workload that characterize their daily lives. Additionally, there is sometimes a lack of understanding about the supply chain from other departments within companies.

Following [the first major study on the HR landscape in the supply chain](#), the HR LAB is now presenting a second in-depth study on the topic of intern onboarding and offboarding. **The results of this study will help companies better understand the challenges and identify best practices for properly training and familiarizing interns, who have the potential to become ambassadors of the employer brand.** ”



Blandine AGERON
University Grenoble Alpes,
CERAG Professor
Editor-in-Chief of the Logistics
& Management Review



1 DEFINITION OF ONBOARDING AND OFFBOARDING

Onboarding refers to all the practices and processes put in place by a company to facilitate the integration of a new hire, in this case, interns (e.g., providing a desk, setting up an orientation program, organizing a welcome event, etc.).

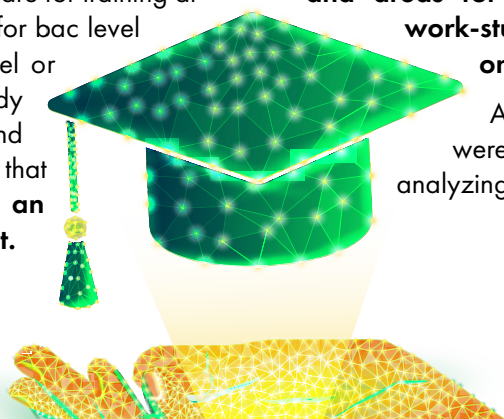
Offboarding involves all the practices and processes a company implements to best manage the departure of employees, in this case, interns (e.g., exit interviews, farewell events, etc.).

2 THE ORIGINS OF THE STUDY

There have never been so many young people on work-study contracts in France. 852,000 apprenticeship contracts began in 2023 in the private and public sectors (+2% on 2022), according to [DARES](#). **By December 31, 2023, over a million young people were on work-study programs (1,020,015).** This compares with 447,648 in 2012. 61% of contracts are for training at bac +2 level or higher, just under 15% for bac level or equivalent, and 22.5% for CAP level or equivalent. This enthusiasm for work-study contracts on the part of young people and companies can be explained by the fact that **work-study contracts appear to be an effective springboard to employment.**

France Supply Chain conducted a survey of its members during the winter of 2023-2024 **to understand the motivations behind the choice of a work-study program**, the effectiveness of recruitment and induction processes, and practices for monitoring and offboarding work-study students. **The aim is to identify strengths and areas for improvement to enhance the work-study experience and its impact on talent retention.**

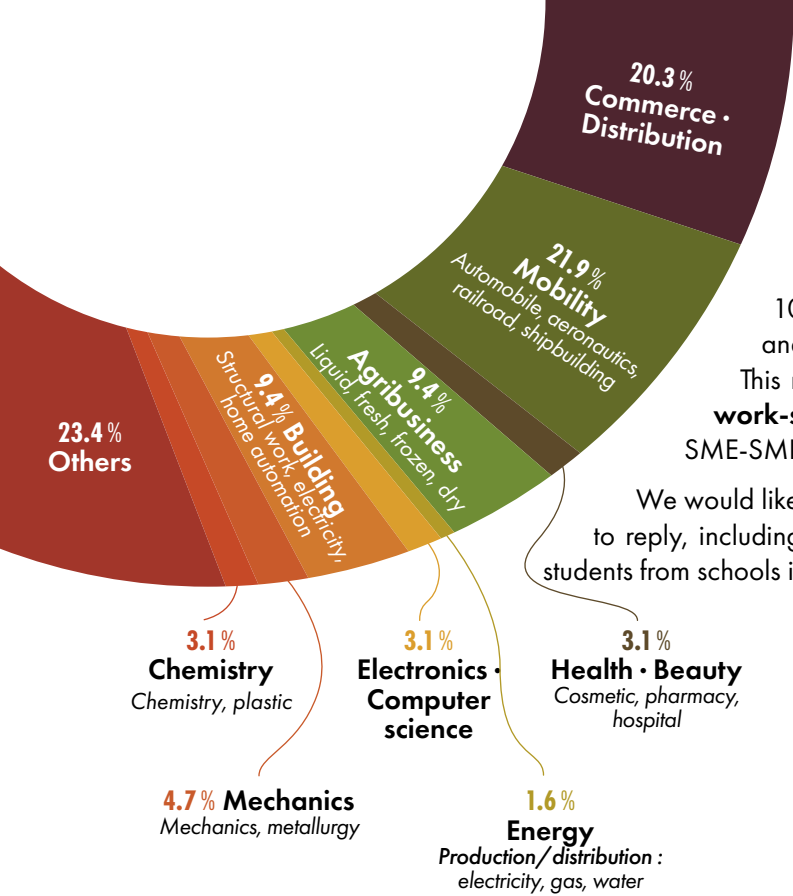
Academics and professionals were involved in gathering data and analyzing the results of this study.



3 SURVEY RESPONDENTS

105 people responded to the survey: 64 work-study students and 41 local HR managers and apprenticeship supervisors. This representation of stakeholders provides **a cross-section of work-study issues**. The respondents work in large groups, ETIs and SME-SMIs. These companies cover a wide range of business sectors.

We would like to extend our warmest thanks to all those who took the time to reply, including members of the Lab Richesses Humaines and work-study students from schools in the network.



4 WORK-STUDY STUDENTS AND LOCAL HR MANAGERS AND APPRENTICESHIP SUPERVISORS SHARE THEIR VIEWS ON WORK-STUDY PROGRAMS

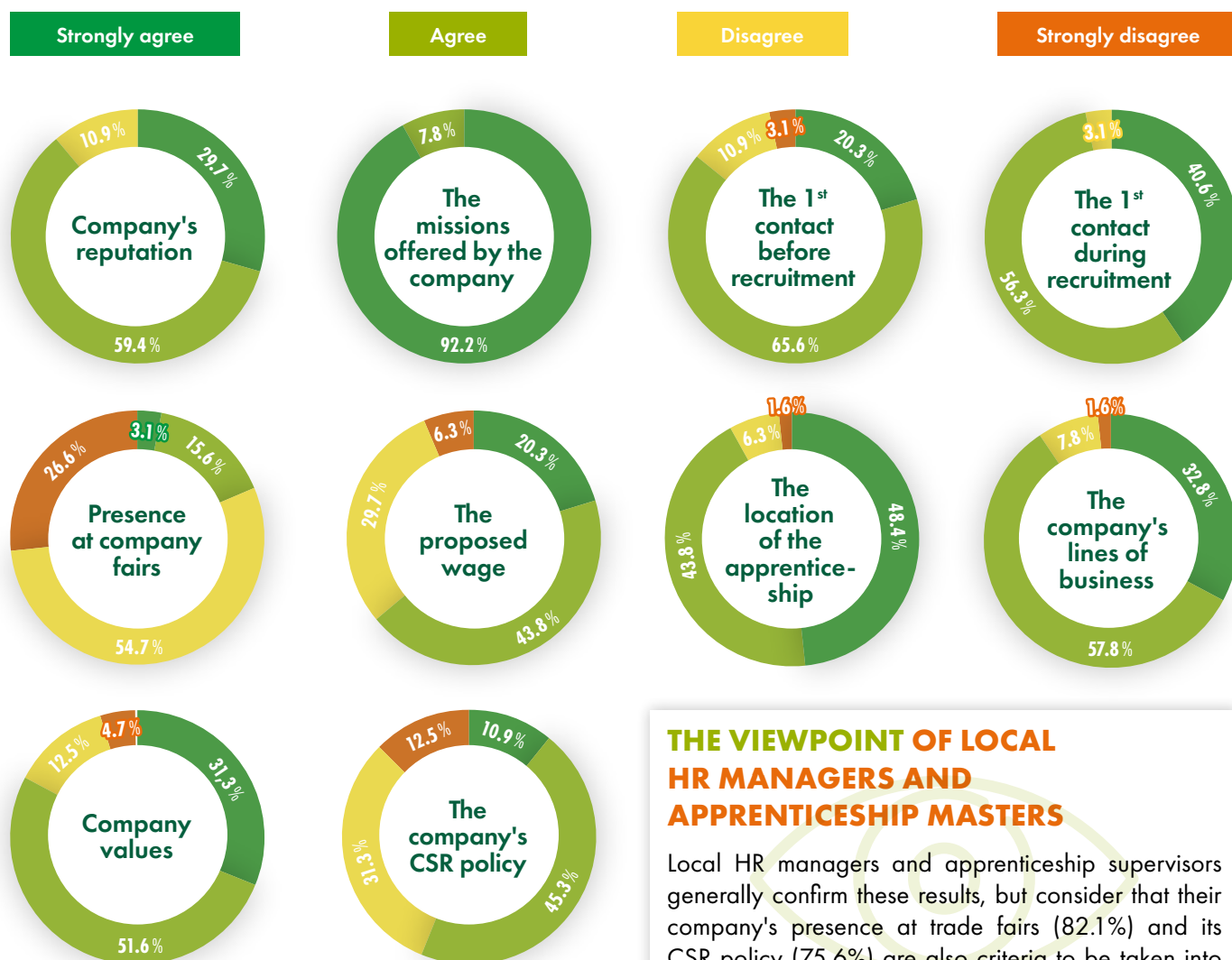


THE COMPANY'S REPUTATION AND THE ASSIGNMENTS ON OFFER ON OFFER ARE THE MAIN CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING A WORK-STUDY PROGRAM

The results show that **the missions offered by the company are a decisive criterion for choosing a work-study program**, with 92.2% of alternating students. In comparison, the company's reputation, while still important, is slightly less decisive, but remains important for 89.1% of alternants.

The first contact before and during recruitment is also significant, with 85.9% and 96.8% of alternants respectively agreeing or strongly agreeing. The salary offered and the location of the work-study program are important but secondary criteria for 64.1% and 92.2% of alternants respectively.

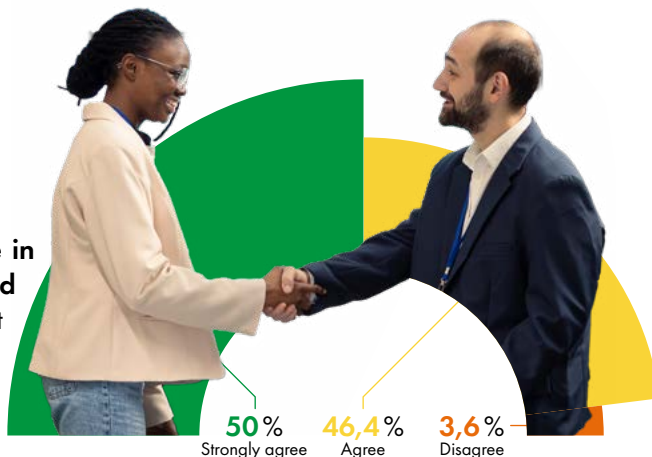
CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING A WORK-STUDY PROGRAM FOR ALTERNATING STUDENTS





A PERSONALIZED WELCOME FOR WORK STUDY STUDENTS

Over 80% of alternants consider that **a personal welcome in the department, with a presentation of the alternant and the teams, is essential**. The announcement of their arrival at the company and the allocation of an office are also important elements for all respondents. The provision of a welcome pack is also one of the elements that alternants expect on arrival.



PERSONALIZED WELCOME FOR ALTERNATING STUDENTS

Although companies are implementing a multitude of actions and resources to welcome their alternating students, it appears that the official announcement of the arrival of alternating students in the company via various communication channels (website, internal letters) is less systematic for at least 18.5% of alternating students. 10.1% of alternants surveyed said they had not been welcomed into their company or department. Some mentioned telecommuting as an obstacle.

THE VIEWPOINT OF LOCAL HR MANAGERS AND APPRENTICESHIP MASTERS

Welcoming work-study students is a process that involves all the company's departments in a relatively balanced way. Local HR managers are directly involved (70.4%) and apprenticeship supervisors (59.3%). However, **apprenticeship supervisors** feel that they are not sufficiently trained to take on alternating work-study students, as emphasized by 51.8% of respondents who said they had not been trained. However, **71.4% felt that it would have been useful and necessary to have been trained to better welcome alternating students and thus be more effective**.



REGULAR UPDATES TO BETTER TRACK ALTERNATING WORKERS

The process of monitoring work-study students is mainly implemented through regular weekly or monthly meetings between the apprentice master and the student. It also requires the involvement of local HR managers to ensure its effectiveness). **63.7% of companies organize a joint meeting** with all their alternants to share experiences.

When it does exist, however, **this follow-up process does not seem to be widely presented and shared within**

companies, as almost 60.8% of alternants point out, even though it enables alternants to develop their skills, ensures that the skills acquired match the training program and contributes to a successful integration. **They would also like their induction to be better organized**, particularly in terms of announcing their arrival at their company (67.3%), providing a welcome pack (52.7%), and organizing a convivial moment (52.7%).

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK-STUDY TRAINEE FOLLOW-UP PROCESS



THE VIEWPOINT OF LOCAL HR MANAGERS AND APPRENTICESHIP MASTERS

The process for monitoring work-study students is based on regular communication between HR and the other players involved in the monitoring process: apprenticeship supervisors and reception departments. Although highly adapted, it can lack effectiveness, as 61.9% of local HR managers and apprenticeship supervisors point out. **Evaluation is also anecdotal** (less than 5% of respondents), **despite the fact that 97.9% of local HR managers and apprenticeship supervisors agree on the need to evaluate the follow-up process**.



INTERESTING ASSIGNMENTS AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TO RETAIN WORK-STUDY STUDENTS

While they greatly appreciate this form of training, it seems that **the alternating students are sensitive to the missions proposed in the new position (100%) and to the development of skills (100%) in order to remain with their company.**

The success of a work-study program hinges on three key points:

70.3 %

The work-study student has successfully completed the assignments entrusted to him/her;

68.8 %

The assignments correspond to the skill blocks defined in the training program;

54.7 %

The work-study student wishes to remain with his/her host company.

It's important to remember that what attracts work-study students is not what keeps them. Thus, the company's reputation, which was very important when choosing a sandwich course, becomes secondary. In conclusion, companies do not have to "work" on the same criteria upstream of work-study programs as they do downstream.

Strongly agree

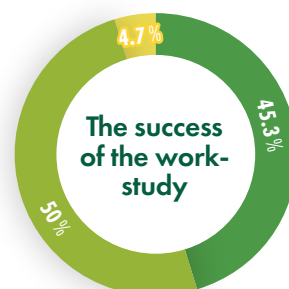
Agree

Disagree

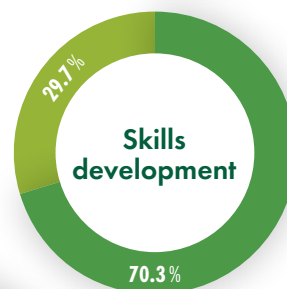
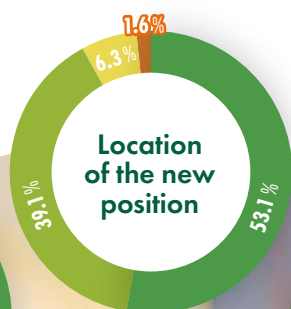
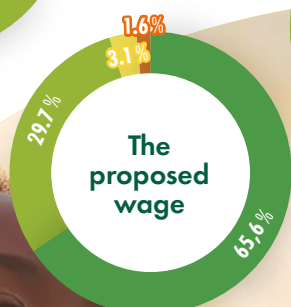
Strongly disagree

THE VIEWPOINT OF LOCAL HR MANAGERS AND APPRENTICESHIP MASTERS

It's important to bring the work-study program to a close, to mark the end of the assignment with **an off-boarding process**. However, while this is a common feature of companies, it is not systematically applied. Only **64.3% of local HR managers and apprenticeship supervisors are familiar with it**, and it has been introduced to fewer than one in two alternating students (39.2%).



CRITERIA USED BY ALTERNATING STUDENTS TO STAY WITH THEIR COMPANY



5 THE 4 GOLDEN RULES FOR TRANSFORMING THE WORK-STUDY EXPERIENCE



COMMUNICATING ON PROCESSES

Once recruited, work-study students need to be monitored and supervised to ensure that they are acquiring skills and putting into practice in their companies what they learn during their training. **While the organization of regular meetings between alternants and their apprenticeship supervisors is a widespread practice, it has to be said that not all companies have formalized processes** in place, and that these processes, if they do exist, are not universally known.

DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF ONBOARDING AND OFFBOARDING PROCESSES FOR ALTERNANTS

	RECRUITMENT	HOME	FOLLOW-UP	OFFBOARDING	AVERAGE
Yes	64 %	48.1 %	50 %	44.4 %	51.6 %
In part	32 %	37 %	40.9 %	38.9 %	37.2 %
No	4 %	14.9 %	9.1 %	16.7 %	11.2 %

51.6% of local HR managers and apprenticeship supervisors are only partially familiar with the onboarding and offboarding processes. Among these processes, onboarding and offboarding are known by less than half of local HR managers and apprenticeship supervisors. It should be noted that more than 2/3 of the companies surveyed (70.3%) report having an ethics charter covering the onboarding and offboarding processes for alternants.

Formalizing processes and regular communication between the various players involved in onboarding and offboarding would appear to be a lever for disseminating and sharing processes widely between stakeholders.

Honestly, I was in total discovery mode. I had an integration day with all the work-study students and trainees, so that gave me a chance to get to know the other work-study students and trainees. You can see that there are other people in the same situation. So you're not alone. It helps to create a small group when you first arrive. After that, I had a 2-week integration course. It's a way of getting to know everyone and introducing yourself. In the end, it makes it easier to get to know people afterwards.



Noé MAISONNEUVE, Student-Apprentice
LOUIS VUITTON

An induction process exists within the company. It begins before the start of the work-study program, so that the apprentice's supervisor can specify in advance any equipment requirements and practical details (computers, detailed timetable, etc.) so that - on arrival - the apprentice has an e-mail address, a computer set up and ready, etc. All work-study students and trainees are received at the beginning by the apprentice's supervisors. There's also a slot at the beginning with people from the general services department of the Saint-Gobain Tower to explain day-to-day operations (security, occupational medicine, the 3 canteens, the gym, the bicycle garage, the computer kiosk and the media library...). We introduce them to their new working environment, with team members and an overview of our history, our products, our vision with our sustainable growth objectives and Saint-Gobain's "raison d'être": "making the world a better home".



Bertrand NEYRET, Apprenticeship Manager





EVALUATING PROCESSES

Evaluating the various onboarding and offboarding processes is an issue raised by all stakeholders. There is little evaluation of this kind (Table 2), even though it would help to ensure the effectiveness of the work-study program, from recruitment through to the end of the work-study period.

EVALUATION OF ONBOARDING AND OFFBOARDING PROCESSES FOR WORK-STUDY STUDENTS

	RECRUITMENT	HOME	FOLLOW-UP	OFFBOARDING	AVERAGE
Processes are evaluated	8 %	7.4 %	4.8 %	4.8 %	6.3 %
It would be useful to evaluate the processes	86 %	80 %	85.7 %	88.4 %	85 %

85% of respondents are in favor of regular process evaluation. In terms of recruitment, we need to ensure that the "right" alternant is recruited for the "right" position. In terms of induction, the alternant must feel expected and have a good "first impression". In terms of follow-up, it's important that the work placements meet the company's expectations and enable the student to develop his or her skills. Finally, **it's at the offboarding stage that we can "retain" the student and offer him or her a job with the company.**

One way of assessing these processes is to set up in-house e-learning booklets, as can be done in Centres de Formation par Apprentissage, particularly for the induction, follow-up and offboarding phases.



From the very first day, the apprentice has a welcome meeting with an HR department member to go over the welcome booklet that was given to him or her by computer prior to arrival. With the HR department, the apprentice reviews this welcome booklet. On this occasion, we share information on the company's mission and strategy, as well as on HR policy and the working environment (including safety and well-being), which in fact enables him to ask any questions he may have.



Madeleine DEBY, HR

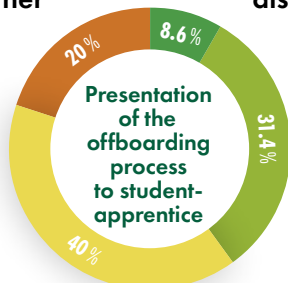
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CLOSING THE ALTERNATION

Offboarding is a stage in the work-study program that should not be underestimated. **The care and interest taken at the end of the work-study period will determine whether or not the apprentice wants to stay with the company that took him or her on.**

It has to be said that, although the Onboarding process is present in companies, it is far from being systematized, as 64.3% of local HR managers and apprenticeship supervisors point out. Fewer than one in 2 (39%) apprentices are aware of this process.



Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

One way of informing the alternating student of all the onboarding and offboarding processes is **to organize a joint induction day for all the company's alternating students**. A second lever is **to take time out for regular discussions and debriefings** before the end of the work-study period.

PRESENTATION OF THE OFFBOARDING PROCESS TO ALTERNATES



The areas for improvement within the company concern off-boarding. Indeed, it is often frustrating to have invested for one or two years in supporting a young trainee and then not be able to offer him or her a permanent position due to stop & go on external recruitment.



Loïc LASSAGNE, HR



This opportunity to see the world from 360° and touch so many different things made me want to stay. Because I knew that in this company I'd be able to develop a lot of skills and grow too. After that, the international opportunities offered by the company weighed in the balance. Knowing that a lot of positions are open in different countries, where they encourage internal mobility and that they try to encourage and bring out their talent or their young people made me want to stay. There was also a really nice, friendly team with whom I got on well, so I decided to stay.



Rodrigue BRANCHET FAUVET, Student-Apprentice





TRAINING LOCAL HR MANAGERS AND APPRENTICESHIP SUPERVISORS

Training local HR managers and apprenticeship supervisors in the entire onboarding and offboarding process is becoming a prerogative, in order to provide **better support for alternants**. It seems that training is present in companies for 52.4% of respondents, and that it concerns all processes to varying degrees .

ONBOARDING AND OFFBOARDING TRAINING FOR ALTERNATES

	RECRUITMENT	HOME	FOLLOW-UP	OFFBOARDING	AVERAGE
Trained	40%	48.1%	71.4%	50%	52.4%
The need for training	73.3%	71.4%	85.7%	55.6%	71.5%

Thus, **71.4% of local HR managers and apprenticeship supervisors consider themselves trained in the process of welcoming alternants**. This figure drops to 50% for offboarding and 48.1% for the onboarding process. This is hardly surprising given that less than 50% (48.1%) of local HR managers and apprenticeship supervisors have detailed knowledge of this process. Only 40% have been trained in the recruitment process. **Over 70% of respondents feel that it would have been useful for them to have been trained, even though this was not the case**. The process that seems to be most decisive in this question of training seems to be follow-up.

Offering specific training courses for local HR managers and apprenticeship supervisors on monitoring and support techniques is a first lever that companies can put in place. Involving them systematically in the various phases, particularly recruitment, can be a very useful way of training them and making the process more efficient.

“

I was trained over 4 days. We began by covering the theoretical aspects and the different types of contract we can have in a company (professionalisation and alternance), then we discussed the monitoring of alternants and the posture of the training supervisor. There were plenty of opportunities to share best practices, in particular on how to conduct interviews, and how to remobilize or remotivate a work-study student overburdened by his or her school, personal and professional schedules. We also exchanged views on the tasks and deadlines that can be set for alternants, and in particular on the importance of taking into account exam dates and projects to be carried out as part of their training.



Jérémy VEIRMAN, Master Trainee

CHEP
A Brandeise Company

6 BEST PRACTICES

Integrating an intern involves organizing an onboarding process that begins with recruitment, continues with welcoming and support, and concludes with an offboarding process. More than just a fixed-term contract, **an internship or apprenticeship is a true collaboration that must be mutually beneficial for both the company and the intern.**

Thus, **a well-executed intern onboarding is key to success**, just as a well-prepared and anticipated offboarding is essential. The following best practices will help you effectively orchestrate the onboarding and offboarding processes to ensure a successful internship experience.



TRAIN

**HR MANAGERS AND APPRENTICESHIP
SUPERVISORS IN CLOSE COLLABORATION**



IMPLEMENT

**TARGETED ACTIONS SPECIFICALLY
FOR INTERNS**



ADAPT

**THE TASKS TO THE PACE
OF THE INTERNSHIP
OR APPRENTICESHIP**



ADHERE TO

**THE TASKS AND
RESPONSIBILITIES DEFINED
DURING RECRUITMENT**



CREATE

**A COMMUNITY
OF YOUNG TALENTS
(INTERNS AND APPRENTICES)**



FORMALIZE

**THE ONBOARDING AND
OFFBOARDING PROCESSES**



EVALUATE

**THE ONBOARDING AND
OFFBOARDING PROCESSES**



FOSTER

**A POSITIVE WORK
ENVIRONMENT**

PTV GROUP

servicenow.

EOL

sopra steria
next

Citwell
Accélérateur de transformation

SprintProject

BearingPoint.

**THEY MAKE
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The Positive Way
WAVESTONE



TO STAY CONNECTED



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ISBN 978-2-915311-14-3
EAN 9782915311143