



A photo taken at Birajekli Carpet, a Syrian company in the south region of Turkey that produces carpets and strings

## The Skill Gap in Displaced-driven SMEs in The South Region of Turkey

**spark**  **SIAD**





**11 Nov 2018**

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# **The Skill Gap in Displaced- driven SMEs in The South Region of Turkey**

# 1. Foreword

This study is based on an analysis of the observations made by SPARK and SIAD about the skill gap in displaced-driven SMEs in the southern region of Turkey. It is an initial output of a SPARK vision to support economic empowerment for the displaced in Turkey and was conducted by the Syrian Businessmen and Entrepreneurs Organization (SIAD) in cooperation with STICHING SPARK. The study was led, designed, prepared and written by Samer Haffar, an SME Consultant and a PhD candidate at Gaziantep University, under the 2015-2018 SIAD board, chaired by Khaled Babli. The study was supervised by SPARK team, Mohammed Skaik and Ola Batta.

This study was conducted and completed between May 2018 and July 2018. All trademarks mentioned in this report, such as Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office, are a property of their respective owners.

## About SPARK

SPARK develops higher education and youth entrepreneurship so that young ambitious people are empowered to lead their post-conflict societies into prosperity. SPARK does so by building the capacity of local economic and educational organisations and institutions. The general objective of this study is to explore the need and opportunities for SPARK to initiate and support greater access to economic empowerment, SME development, youth entrepreneurship & employment activities for displaced youth in south-east Turkey.

## About SIAD

SIAD is an association of Syrian businessmen and entrepreneurs operating in Turkey and abroad. It was established in 2015 with the aim of empowering Syrian businessmen and entrepreneurs and forming a Syrian economic power that contributes to the success and advancements of all Syrian businesses in the region. SIAD has over 300 members who are business people, operating in various sectors including Textile, Real Estate Development and Construction, Foods and Beverages, Plastics, Technology and Education.

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A photo taken at Birajekli Carpet, a Syrian company in the south region of Turkey that produces carpets and strings



## 2. Executive Summary

The goal of the study is to improve employment opportunities for Syrians and increase available job opportunities. The study also discusses the potential for entrepreneurial projects in the region.

### 2.1 Methodology, Targeted Segment and Key Findings

The findings of this study are the result of the analysis of data collected over a two-month period from 130 Syrian SMEs. These surveyed businesses are based in Gaziantep, Hatay, Mersin and Konya, and mainly operate in the following sectors: Foods/Beverages, Real Estate/Construction, Textile, and Plastic. The data was collected by a team of researchers who conducted interviews and systematically completed surveys designed for this study's purposes.

**Below is a summary of the key findings of this study:**

**Organizational Structure:** Syrian SMEs generally have three types of organizational structure: function-based, product-based and simple. The allocation of tasks and duties among departments is dynamic in as much that it changes to suit the needs of the business.

**Recruitment:** Only 32% of the surveyed businesses have systematic recruitment procedures. The usual procedure mainly consists of four stages: announcement, shortlisting, trial and hiring.

**Salaries:** The average salary paid to employees is 1,785 TRY (330.6 EUR); the average salary paid to administrative staff and technicians is 2,485 TRY (460.2 EUR).

**Internships:** 73% of surveyed businesses said they accept interns. Some businesses pay salaries to skilled interns and following the internship offer jobs, but others don't. Among requirements that businesses insist on for accepting interns are minimum daily working hours and that the intern has some level of experience in the work they will be assigned.

**Computer Skills:** 74.3% of surveyed businesses said that basic computer skills are extremely important; 80.6% said that knowledge and understanding of the Microsoft Office suite of applications is important, along with experience in emailing and correspondence.

**Personal Skills:** 89.7% of businesses want employees with various personal skills such as Critical Thinking, People Management, Problem Solving, Professional Etiquette and Manners, Teamwork, Time Management, and Working under Pressure. More than 90% of those businesses interviewed also said that an understanding of Arabic and Turkish is important.

**Finance Skills:** 91% of the surveyed businesses said that finance employees should know Turkish labour and tax regulations, as well as accounting practice; 78.9% of the surveyed businesses said that knowing an accounting software package is important.

**Marketing Skills:** 60.6% of surveyed businesses said that an understanding of Online Advertising and Marketing is important, (Facebook is considered to be the most important online marketing platform).

**Procurement Skills:** 65.4% of surveyed businesses said that experience in Export, Negotiation, and Sourcing are important for procurement employees.

**Production Skills:** 66.2% of surveyed businesses said that employees working in the production department should know how machines are operated; 80.6% said that Production Planning is important.



**Sales Skills:** 76.4% of surveyed businesses said that employees working in Sales should be skilled in networking and persuasion and should have a solid background knowledge of the product they are selling, such as product specifications, features, competitive advantage, raw materials used and its production process.

**Warehousing Skills:** 59.7% of surveyed businesses indicated that Inventory Management and Stock-control are important.

**Maintenance Skills:** 60.6% of the surveyed businesses said that Problem Diagnosis and Solving is extremely important. It was found that businesses aren't interested in hiring full time maintenance employees; they prefer hiring a freelance technician only when necessary.

**Sector-based Skills:** Several businesses reported the need for skills that are specific to their sector, especially Textile, Machinery, Chemical, and Real Estate/Construction.

## 2.2 Summary of Key Recommendations

Following the analysis of this study's findings, several actions are believed to be possible to help improve employability for Syrians in Turkey. Furthermore, the study results may serve as a foundation for various entrepreneurial projects targeting Syrian SMEs in Turkey.

**Employability** can be supported by offering vocational training programmes to train employment candidates on important job skills.

**Remedial courses** can be offered to university-graduates to address issues surrounding a poor education.

**Internship opportunities** can be developed and offered to university students, both during study and after graduation, because businesses prefer hiring candidates with relevant experience.

**Entrepreneurial projects.** Syrians with an entrepreneurial spirit can start businesses that offer services to Syrian SMEs in areas where they don't usually prefer hiring full-time employees. Entrepreneurs can start businesses in the most prominent sectors in the region, namely Information Technology, Computer Systems, Foods/Beverages, Textile, and Agriculture

**Moral issues** have been reported by businessmen (such as carelessness and abuse of corporate assets by workers) that could be addressed by offering courses in work ethics and job skills for workers and business owners.

**Effectiveness of training courses** courses needs to be increased by choosing the right trainers, utilisation of suitable curriculums and constantly monitoring training activities to ensure high quality.

### 3. Introduction

This is a report on the results and findings of a study that was conducted to better understand the labour market needs and the potential for entrepreneurial projects. The goal of this study is to improve the employment opportunities of Syrians and increase available job opportunities. To achieve this goal this study was conducted with three objectives - to investigate the skills and qualifications that are needed by and that are important to employers, to establish whether employers are willing to offer internship opportunities for students and new-graduates (and understand their requirements and conditions for accepting interns), and to better appreciate the work environment and recruitment dynamics of businesses. By understanding this information, actions can be taken to help Syrians get hired in positions that are suitable for their skillsets and aspirations.

This report consists of four main sections, namely: 4 Methodology, 5 Targeted Segment, 6 Results and Findings, and 7 Recommendations.

The Methodology section contains information about this study's objectives, methods of data collection, analysis and reporting as well as considerations and assumptions that were adopted in the making of the study.

The Targeted Segment section describes various details about the businesses that were surveyed within this study.

The Results and Findings section presents the study's results, findings and interpretations. There are two main topics addressed in this section - the business environment of Syrian SMEs and the skills needed by businesses in the labour market.

**01**

***The business environment of Syrian SMEs***

**02**

***The skills needed by businesses in the labor market.***

The Recommendations section contains several recommendations that are suggested based on the study's findings. In addition to the four main sections, a listing of the most important data that the study was based on is annexed to the report. This data can be used by job candidates and other members of the community to make their own reviews, studies, analyses and recommendations.

**This report consists of four main sections**



**Methodology**



**Targeted Segment**



**Results and Findings**



**Recommendations**



It is respectfully suggested that the report should be reviewed with the following reading flow in mind: first the reader reads the section on Methodology to understand the methodology of data collection and analysis that was adopted to compile the results and findings. Then reads the section Targeted Segment to understand the businesses that participated in the survey and the work environment and context of their operations. After that, the reader reads any part of the section Results and Findings to learn about this study's findings in any particular area of skills that is important to the reader. The reader can then read and understand the recommendations that are directed towards job seekers, students and the community that intend to contribute to the study's goals.



A photo taken at Birajekli Carpet, a Syrian company in the south region of Turkey that produces carpets and strings

## 4. Methodology

This section explains this study's goal and objectives, methods utilised in the preparation of the study, and the assumptions and considerations that were adopted in the making of the study. It is suggested that the reader reviews this information first to be best able to read the results and findings of this study and understand them as intended.

### 4.1 Study Goal and Conduct

The main goal of this study is to help Syrians find jobs that best fit their skillsets and qualifications. Three main objectives were set for this study - to better understand the skills needed by the labour market, to understand whether employers are willing to offer internships for students and new-graduates and to be informed about HR information about the labour market, such as wages and recruitment arrangements.

The study was conducted as follows: first, two detailed surveys (a full survey and a minimised survey) were designed with the purpose of understanding a variety of information about each surveyed business, in alignment with the study's objectives. A team of data collectors interviewed key personnel representing the surveyed businesses and completed the full survey based on their answers. The data collection interviews were made mostly with business managers and owners. Often the manager of the business is either the sole owner or a partner in the business. In addition to personal interviews, representatives of surveyed businesses were invited to group events where they completed the minimised version of the survey. After completing the data collection and analysis, a focus group meeting with several business people was held to validate the study's results and findings and to note their suggestions on possible actions based on the study.

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#### Steps of study preparation



#### Types of questions

Questions about skills.

Questions about work.



## 4.2 The Surveys

Two surveys were utilised in the collection of data for this study, being a full version and a minimised version. The full version consisted of several questions that can be categorized into two types - questions asking for information about the surveyed business, and, questions asking information about the skills that the surveyed businesses need. The purpose of the first types of question is to provide a comprehensive sense of the nature of the surveyed businesses, such as their sectors, products, services, the nature of their operations, and their business environment.

This information has two objectives, namely setting the correct context to help enable an accurate reading of the study results and findings and to give job candidates and students a better understanding of the business environment so they can channel their expectations and work-related activities in the right direction. The second type of questions (the ones that ask about the skills needed by the surveyed businesses), are intended to collect detailed information about what the surveyed businesses need. These questions were of two types - questions that inquire about a predetermined set of skills and questions that allow the businesses to best express their needs. For each skill the surveyed business was asked to choose how important that skill was to them and the level of experience required for that skill.

A minimised version of the survey was created and used in the data collection from a portion of the surveyed businesses instead of the full one. This version was created based on a preliminary analysis of the data collected from the businesses that were surveyed with the full version. The minimised version of the survey helped encourage more business people to participate in the survey and provide the needed information. The total number of businesses surveyed with the full version of the survey is 72, while the total number surveyed with the minimised version is 58. The following chart shows the proportions of the surveyed businesses that were interviewed using the full survey and the ones that were interviewed using the minimised version.

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**Businesses surveyed using full and minimized versions of surveys**



## 4.3 Data Processing and Reporting

After the data was collected it was thoroughly reviewed and filtered for incomplete or inaccurate answers and repeated data was omitted. The data related to the needed skills was processed as quantitative and qualitative in nature. The quantitative data is the answers to the questions that allowed the surveyed businesses to choose their needed skills from a predefined set of skills. The qualitative data is the answers to the questions that allowed the surveyed businesses to report the skills that they need that were not mentioned from the predefined set of skills.

To determine the skills that are needed by the surveyed businesses it was assumed that if the skill was reported by two thirds (60%) of the surveyed businesses to be extremely important, then that skill was needed in the labour market. For the purpose of making the review of findings easier and more readable, percentages have been rounded to the nearest number.

During interviews it was noticed that the surveyed businesses have various internal naming schemes for and allocations of various functions and tasks to departments. For example, one surveyed business considers the export and logistics tasks to be those of Sales personnel instead of Procurement personnel. Many factors contribute to the tasks and functions that each department does; these factors include the nature of the business, the customers, and the qualifications of staff. In this study, the standard duties and responsibilities of departments were adopted and the surveyed businesses' answers were adapted to match the standard departments.

### 4.3.1 Skill Levels

During the interviews, surveyed businesses were asked about the level of knowledge that is needed for each of the skills that are important to them, namely, skills in Computers, Personnel, Language, Finance, Marketing, Procurement, Production, Sales, Warehousing and Maintenance. Upon an analysis of the required skill levels, it was found that the majority of the surveyed businesses require an intermediate level of all the skills that are important to them. The following chart shows the number of surveyed businesses that chose the intermediate level of knowledge as what they need in the skills that are important to them.

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#### Skills covered by the study





The fact that the intermediate level of knowledge is the most requested can be linked with the fact that the majority of surveyed businesses are SMEs that don't require an expert level of knowledge for carrying out their work.

#### Required level of knowledge of all skills

**27.87%**

**Beginner**

**41.11%**

**Intermediate**

**29.02%**

**Advanced**



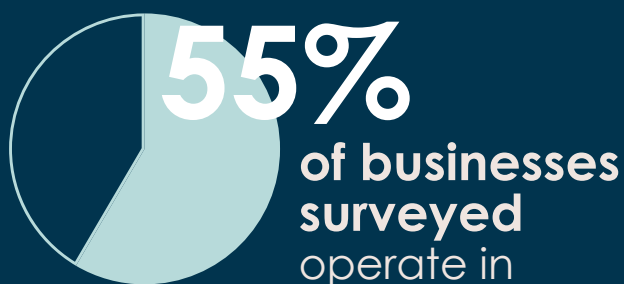
A photo taken at Omm Alqura, a Syrian company in the south region of Turkey that produces chickens and eggs

## 5. Targeted Segment

This section describes the businesses that were surveyed for this study. The results of this study are based on their answers. This section is intended to give an overview of details about these businesses so that the results and findings are better understood in their right context.

The total number of businesses surveyed for this study is 130 Syrian SMEs (all are SIAD members). The selection of businesses for participating in the study was primarily based on the sector that these businesses work in. Based on SIAD's internal data, most Syrian businesses in Turkey operate in Foods/Beverages, Textile, Real Estate/Construction, Plastic, and Distribution/Retail and most of the surveyed businesses (55.25% of all surveyed businesses) operate in these sectors. Businesses operating in a variety of other sectors were also targeted to make sure the findings and results of this study represent the needs of the entire labour market. (Please refer to section Targeted Sectors below for all sectors. Also, to learn about the locations and sizes of targeted businesses, please refer to sections Locations of Targeted Businesses and Sizes of Targeted Businesses, respectively.)

**130** total number of  
businesses surveyed



Foods/Beverages

Textile

Distribution/Retail

Real Estate/Construction

Plastic





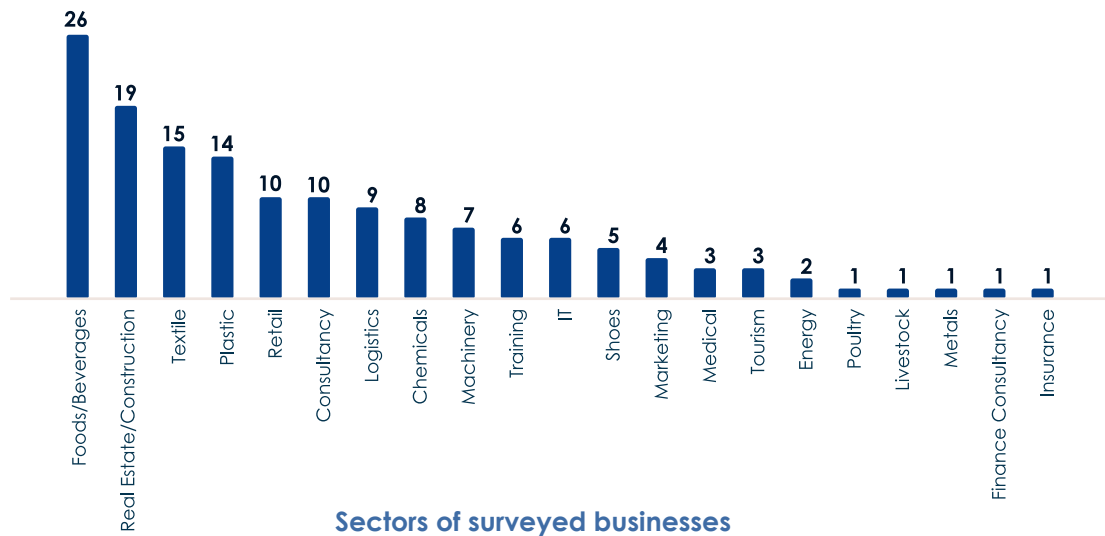


A photo taken at Birajekli Carpet, a Syrian company in the south region of Turkey that produces carpets and strings



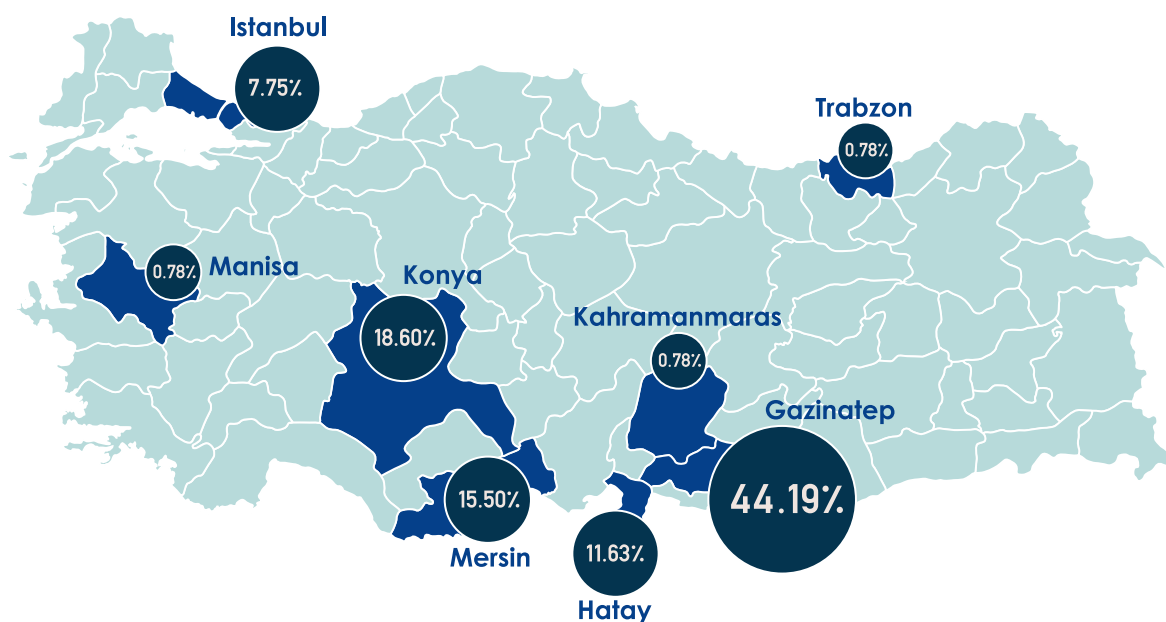
### 5.1.1 Sectors

The surveyed businesses work in a variety of sectors with some working in more than one sector. A large portion of the surveyed businesses work in the following sectors: Foods/Beverages (17.2%), Real Estate/Construction (12.5%), Textile (9.9%), and Plastic (9.2%). The following chart shows the sectors of all surveyed businesses.



### 5.1.2 Locations

The surveyed businesses are primarily distributed across the following Turkish states: Gaziantep, Hatay, Konya, and Mersin. The following chart shows the numbers of businesses surveyed in each state as a percentage of the total number of surveyed businesses.



### 5.1.3 Enterprise Sizes

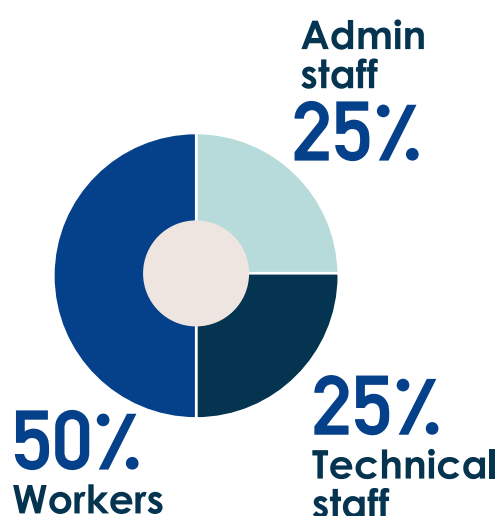
The businesses surveyed for this study are all Syrian SMEs operating in Turkey. The reason why the study was made with SMEs is because most Syrian businesses in Turkey are either small or middle sized, with only a small number being large enterprises. The following provides information about the size of these businesses' operations that were surveyed.

The average number of employees working for the surveyed businesses is 21 employees, (the largest of the surveyed businesses have a total of 150 employees, and the smallest employs only 1).

A company that has only one employee is usually either a startup or a small business in which the owner carries out all functions.

The employees working for an average company are typically distributed as follows - 5 perform administrative tasks, 5 perform technical tasks and the rest, (average of 10) are workers. The following are two charts, the first shows the distribution of employees based on their type of function, and the second shows the minimum and maximum number of employees hired by businesses as well as the average. Another graph below shows the total number of employees working as workers, administrative staffers and technicians.

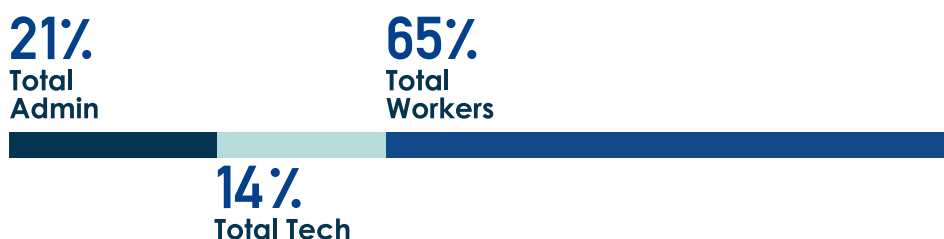
**Distribution of staffers based on their function**



**Number of employees working in the surveyed businesses**

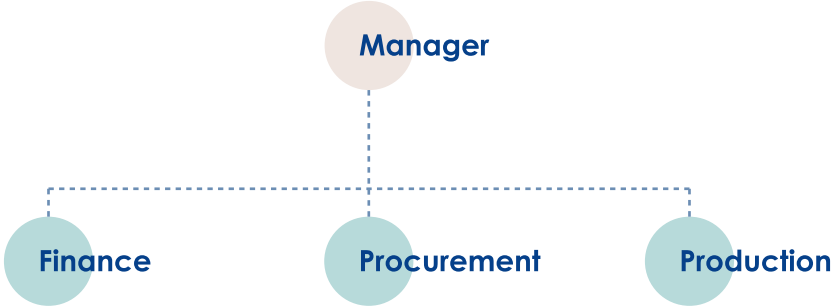


**Total number of employees working for the surveyed businesses categorized by their function type**



The average number of departments is 4 with each department consisting of one or more employees. In the case where more than one employee are in a single department, the employees are usually structured as follows: a manager is responsible for performing all the tasks and one or more assistants doing whatever tasks assigned to them by the department manager. A typical manufacturing company has these basic departments: Production, Procurement, and Accounting/Finance. All these departments and their staff report directly to the General Manager, who is typically the owner of the business. In the case of multiple shareholders of a business, each of the shareholders usually handles one aspect of the business.

**Typical organizational structure of a Syrian business.**



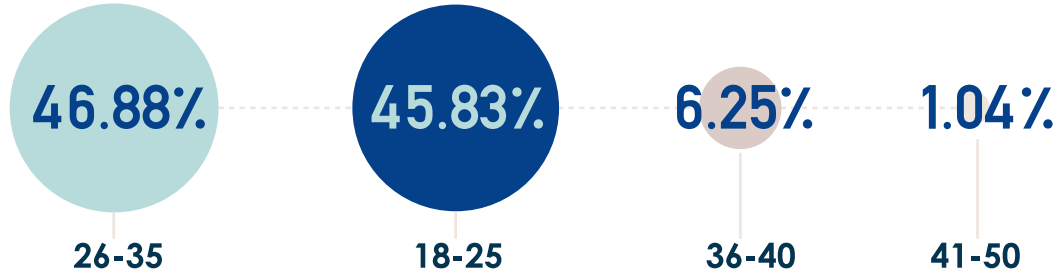
The following chart shows the minimum, maximum and average number of departments in the surveyed businesses.

**Average number of departments in the surveyed businesses.**



Most of the employees working for the surveyed businesses are young (their ages ranging between 18 and 35 years). The following chart shows age ranges of employees.

**Age ranges of the workforce of the surveyed businesses.**







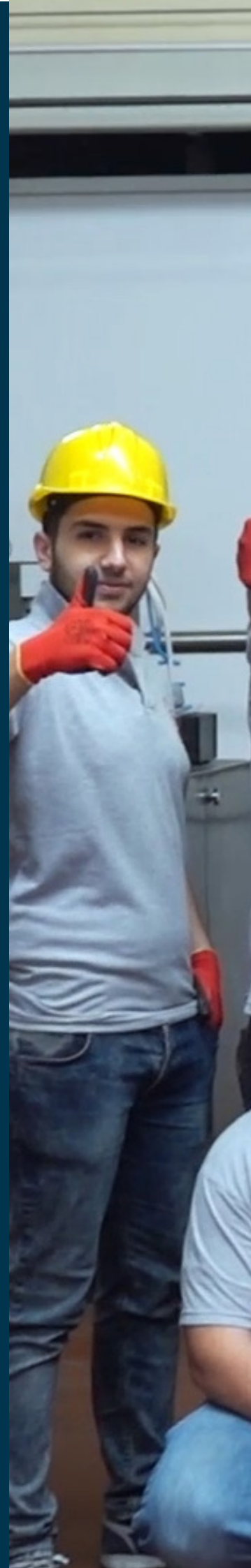
A photo taken at Zirve Makina, a Syrian company in the south region of Turkey that manufactures snacks and packaging machines

## 6. Results and Findings

This section of the report presents the results and findings of the labour market study. The findings consist of two main components: business environment and needed skills.

### 6.1 Business Environment

This section of the report is intended to help familiarise job candidates with the business environment of Syrian small and midsize businesses. Essentially this section enables job candidates to better understand the corporate structures and departmentalisation schemes, human resource arrangements and hiring requirements of Syrian businesses. Through a better understanding of these needs of employers, job candidates can better channel their self-improvement efforts and better prepare themselves to be fit for working in Syrian businesses.







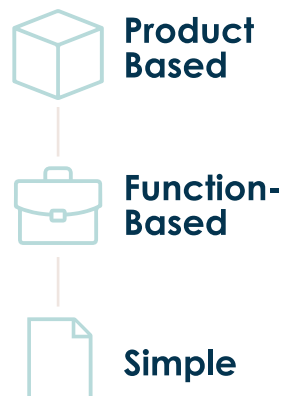
A photo taken at Zirve Makina, a Syrian company in the south region of Turkey that manufactures snacks and packaging machines



### 6.1.1 Corporate Structures

Findings from our survey and observations indicate three basic types of corporate structures: product-based, function-based, and simple. A few of the surveyed businesses have several departments dedicated to production activities, each department handling one stage of the production process. However, it is noted that the surveyed businesses do not approach departmentalisation in a systematic manner. Rather, the allocation of tasks, duties and responsibilities as well as the determination of the role of managers, subordinates as well as their relationships is done in a casual (but effective) way that aims to achieve the most suitable operational effectiveness and efficiency. This indicates a dynamic structure able to rapidly change when needed.

#### Observed types of corporate structures



#### Product-based Corporate Structures

In product-based corporate structures, businesses structure their work and communication/reporting relationships around the products/services that they produce. Each product/service has a separate department with employees performing tasks relevant to that product. In some businesses a few departments/employees, (such as accounting and finance) can offer services to all departments. Key departments reported by the surveyed businesses include: *Maintenance, IT, E-Trade, Retail, Wholesale, M&E, Capacity Building, Programing, Training, Consulting, Photography, Shipping, Graphic Design, Printing (Flex, Ambalaj), Translation, Auditing, Studies, and Tax Consulting.*

#### Function-based Corporate Structures

In function-based corporate structures, businesses structure their work around the administrative functions of the businesses such as HR, Finance, and Production. Departments work together to produce/offer a business's products and services. Most notable departments reported by the surveyed businesses include: *Branch/Factory, Public Relations, Project Management, Marketing, Accounting, Procurement, Engineering, Assembly, Inventory/Warehousing, Foreign Sales, Sales, Design<sup>1</sup>, Electronics & Mechanics<sup>2</sup>, Laboratory, Maintenance, Marketing, Production, Human Resources, Secretarial, and Distribution.*

1. Reported by businesses operating in these industries: Shoes, Clothing, Machines, and Carpets.  
2. Reported by businesses operating in the Machinery sector.

## Simple Corporate Structures

In the simple corporate structures, businesses don't have a traditional and professional style of corporate structure. In such businesses the owner is a sole decision maker and may casually assign the handling of few matters to the business employees. Employees (administrative employees, technicians, workers, etc.,) report directly to the business owner and receive instructions from him/her.

### 6.1.2 Recruitment

One of the objectives of this study was to better understand the surveyed businesses human resources arrangements - such as recruitment procedures, recruitment criteria, recruitment requirements and wages. Also, the study was intended to clarify whether surveyed businesses accept interns and what conditions or requirements they have for accepting interns. The surveyed businesses were further asked if they are interested in starting a department where they get to perform business development activities in a systematic manner.

When asked whether or not they have a systematic recruitment procedure, 32% of all surveyed businesses said that they do. When asked in a focus group about a typical recruitment procedure one businessman said that the recruitment starts with an announcement on social media<sup>3</sup> (such as on Facebook groups) and across acquaintances of the business staff. Then, several candidates send their CVs that are reviewed, and the best of the candidates are shortlisted and interviewed. Then, a portion of the interviewed candidates are hired for a probation period of about 10 days following which, a portion of the candidates enter a further probation period of 2-3 months before the best are officially hired.

#### A typical recruitment procedure in a Syrian business.



A key reason why most businesses don't have a systematic recruitment process is because Syrian businesses typically do not have a systematic organisational approach in their operations.

#### Numbe of businesses reported to have a systematic recruitment process



3. Businesses don't usually rely on professional job posting platforms (such as LinkedIn, Monster and Kariyer). They instead post their job announcements on Facebook.

The average salary paid to an employee is about 1,785 TRY (330.6 EUR)<sup>4</sup>, the minimum salary is 1000 TRY and the maximum salary reported is 4000 TRY. The average salary paid to an administrative or technical employee is about 2,485 TRY (460.2 EUR).



Some of the reported salaries are paid to part-time employees. Also, some employers have a composite compensation scheme, where an employee's wage consists of two components; one is a fixed monthly salary and the other is an amount that is calculated based on the employee's performance. This scheme is most common in Sales jobs, where employees are often paid a percentage of their sales' profits.

The surveyed businesses were asked about the possibility of hiring a candidate that has all the skills and qualifications that they need - the average score was 3.8/5 - which means that the potential of hiring someone with the requested qualifications is high. When asked whether or not businesses are interested in establishing research and development departments to improve their work, the average score of all surveyed businesses' answers for that question was 3.5/5.



When asked about the amount of job openings available at the time of the survey, the total number of open vacancies reported by all surveyed businesses is 211 (an average of 3 openings per business). The average hiring rate of all surveyed businesses is 5 employees.

*Most businesses said they are likely to hire someone having the qualifications they reported to be important to them.*

In a focus group meeting, many participants supported two important points –

- that experience is extremely important when hiring a new employee. To best meet this requirement job candidates (especially new-graduates) are recommended to enroll in internship programmes to gain experience in a specific sector before attempting to find a job working inside this sector. Further, an intern that demonstrates passion for work and self-improvement abilities often get paid a salary and eventually get hired.
- that SMEs prefer hiring someone who is multi-skilled to enable them to work on various tasks instead of hiring an expert for each of the tasks needed. The logic is that hiring an expert for each business activity increases production costs to a level that the product becomes uncompetitive. An SME is more interested in hiring a single employee able to work in sales, procurement and marketing than hire three employees, expert in each of these functions.

*Many businesses are interested in establishing research and development departments in their companies to suggest and supervise the development and improvement of their products and businesses as a whole.*

4. Exchange rate: 1 EUR = ~ 5.4 TRY



### 6.1.2.1 Our Observations in Recruitment

It's been observed that in Syrian businesses, key business functions are usually allocated to relatives or people of trust. The reason for this could be a lack of trust in the standard legal processes that regulate such matters as contracting and the determination and protection of rights and responsibilities. Syrian businesses tend to rely on a Syrian workforce rather than the local workforce, because, according to them, Syrians are more qualified and hard-working than locals.

### 6.1.3 Internships and Employment Opportunities

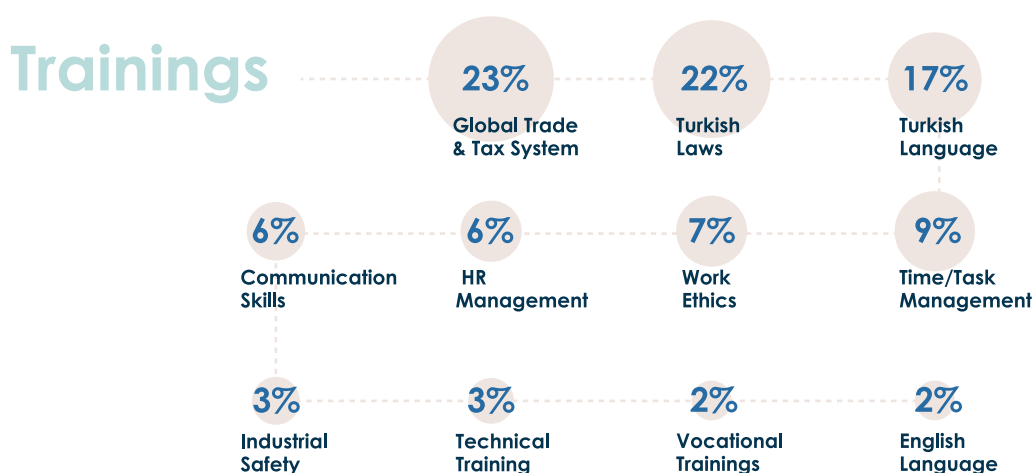
When asked about the possibility of offering internships to students and new-graduates, 73% of the surveyed businesses said they accept interns. The average number of internship opportunities offered by each surveyed business is 3 (the largest number of opportunities is 10 and the smallest is 1). The total number of internship opportunities is 183. When asked about their conditions for offering internships, the surveyed businesses reported that no salary would be paid to an intern (some money could be paid if the intern was found to have potential), minimum daily working hours would be required, and the intern should have experience in the surveyed business's field of work.



## 6.2 Required Trainings

The surveyed businesses were asked to choose what training courses they think are needed for employees including both their existing employees and potential candidates. The surveyed businesses made their selections from a predefined list of course titles. The course titles were Global Trade & Tax System, Turkish Laws, Turkish Language, Communication Skills, HR Management, Work Ethics, Time/Task Management, Industrial Safety, Technical Training, Vocational Trainings, and English Language. The chart below shows the results of the surveyed businesses selections.

Importance of training courses, according to surveyed businesses.



## 6.3 Needed Skills

This section presents the results, findings and analysis of this study regarding the skills that are most needed by the labour market. These skills are categorised into four main categories: general skills, functional skills, sector-specific skills and other skills. The general skills are the skills needed by the labour market regardless of sector and/or area of specialisation. The functional skills are the skills that are needed in a particular function in an organisation. The sector-specific skills are those required by a specific sector, and, the other skills are those not explicitly requested but are understood to be needed by the labour market.

Types of skills  
needed  
by the labor  
market

General  
Skills

Sector-  
specific  
Skills

Functional  
Skills

### 6.3.1 General Skills

These skills can be utilised in any area and/or sector. There are three types of general skills: computer skills, personal skills, and language skills. Each one of the three general skill types is addressed in a separate section below.

#### General Skills



Computer  
Skills



Personal  
Skills



Language  
Skills



A photo taken at Zirve Makina, a Syrian company in the south region of Turkey that manufactures snacks and packaging machines

### 6.3.1.1 Computer

The surveyed businesses were asked about their needs concerning a variety of computer-related skills. Skills required included those in effectively targeting businesses operating in the IT sector as well as some more general (can be needed in any context). Additionally, businesses operating in other sectors than IT were asked whether they were interested in hiring a full time employee with Computer Programming background. Based on the survey results, the information below was found:

76.4% of the surveyed businesses reported that Basic Computer Use is extremely important for their operations. Basic computer use means the ability to sufficiently carry out such tasks as using the computer, using a specific software application and obtaining some information from the Internet.

When asked about the importance of Emailing and commercial correspondence, 60.6% of the surveyed businesses reported that Emailing (the use of email apps, such as Outlook) is extremely important, while commercial correspondence (etiquette and standards of correspondence with local and international business associates) was reported to be extremely important by 79.2% of the surveyed businesses.

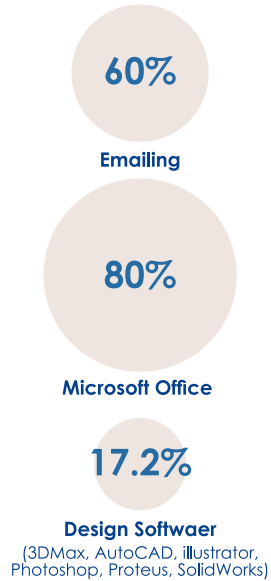
The surveyed businesses were also asked about the Microsoft Office suite of applications, considered by many to be the most important software applications relevant to Basic Computer Use. 80.6% of the surveyed businesses reported that Microsoft Office applications were extremely important to them.

The survey also covered the following software applications as well: 3DMax, AutoCAD, CorelDRAW, Illustrator, Photoshop, Proteus, and SolidWorks. When asked about the importance of these software applications, an average of only 17.2% of the surveyed businesses said that these applications are extremely important, while an average of 70.7% of all surveyed businesses said that these applications are not important.

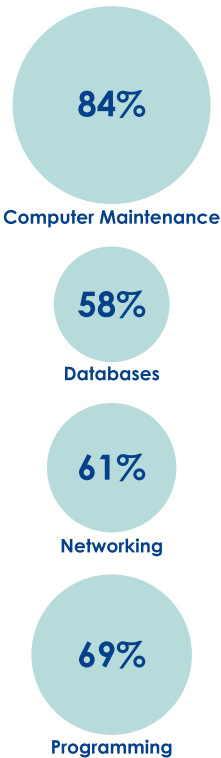
This result is unsurprising since these applications are specialised and are primarily used by companies operating in sectors such as IT and Marketing.

The surveyed businesses were asked whether the professional aspect of computers was important to them. In other words, the businesses were asked whether they're interested in having employees with expertise on the professional aspect of computers. Based on our findings, the businesses didn't express interest in that matter, with 84.7%, 58.4%, 61.1%, 69.5% of the surveyed businesses saying that the following skills, Computer Maintenance, Databases, Networking, Programming, respectively, are not important to them.

#### Important Computer Skills



#### Important Computer Skills



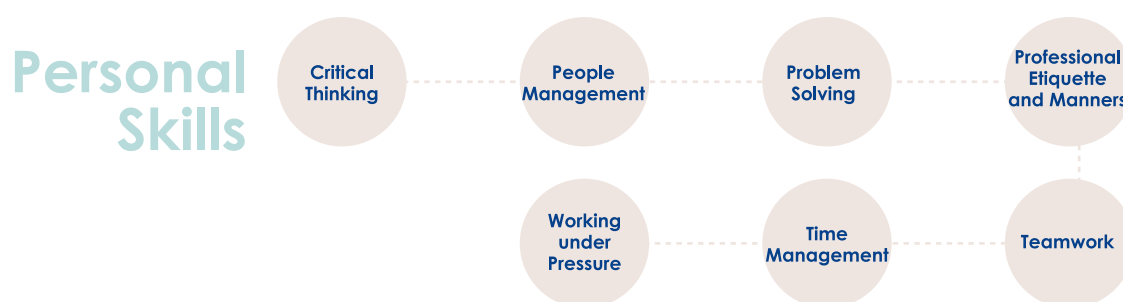


In a focus group meeting, it was argued that the use of computer, the Internet and Office applications are extremely important and that no business can operate without them. When asked about the skill levels required, the surveyed businesses needed an intermediate<sup>5</sup> level of knowledge and expertise.

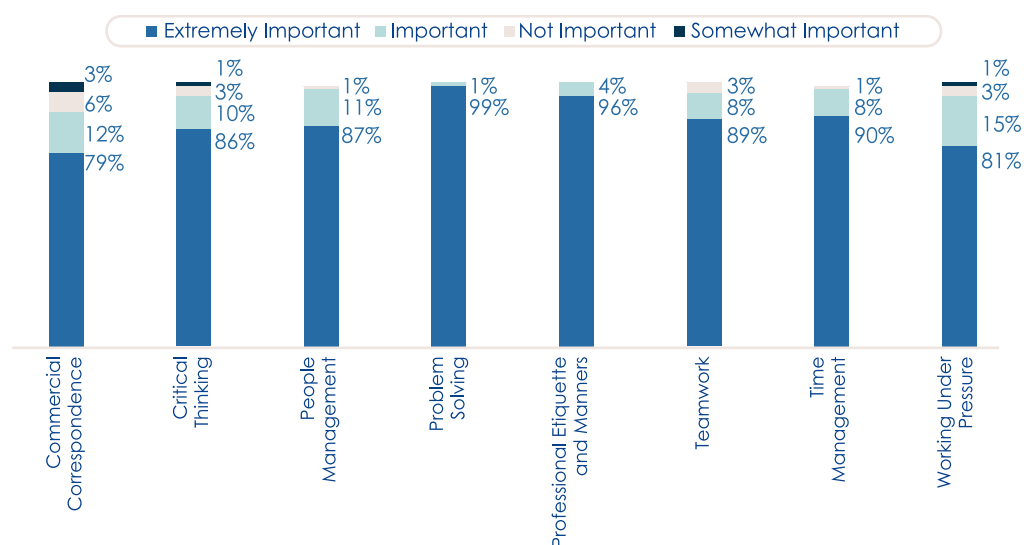
### 6.3.1.2 Personal

The surveyed businesses were asked about the personal qualities that they desire to have in their employees. The personal qualities businesses were asked about were, Critical Thinking, People Management, Problem Solving, Professional Etiquette and Manners, Teamwork, Time Management, and Working under Pressure. Many of the surveyed businesses mentioned a variety of skills that are important in general. These skills were reported as answers when the businesses were asked about the skills currently lacking from their staff and the skills they desire to have in their business. These skills include Project Management and Team-Leading.

#### Surveyed Personal Skills



Almost all businesses said they desire all those qualities in their employees and/or job candidates, with an average of 89.7% of the surveyed businesses saying that these qualities were extremely important to them. When asked about the skill level for these qualities, an average of 52.3% of the surveyed businesses reported that it's enough to have an intermediate level. This can be interpreted as an acceptance that employees be average in terms of their personal qualities. Additionally, during interviews, many of the surveyed businesses also stressed the importance of Quick Learning and Self-Confidence in employees. The chart below shows the exact answers submitted by surveyed businesses.

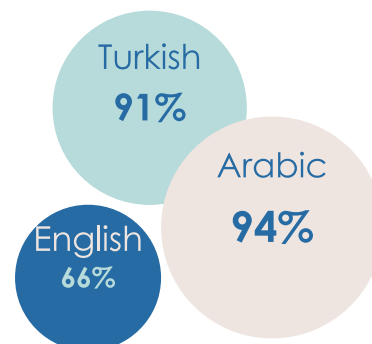


5. Please refer to section Skill Levels for a thorough discussion about required skill levels.

### 6.3.1.3 Language

The surveyed businesses were asked the importance of the most commonly used languages in the Syrian business environment, namely: Arabic, English and Turkish. The reason why these languages are common is because Arabic is the native and most widely spoken language by the employees of the surveyed businesses, Turkish is the language of the country in which these businesses operate, and English is usually used in foreign sales and procurement. Almost all businesses reported that Arabic and Turkish are of equal importance and are both extremely important (94.5% and 91.6% of the surveyed businesses reported that Arabic and Turkish, respectively are extremely important). English was found to be less important than Arabic and Turkish with 66.7% saying it's extremely important.

#### Importance of Languages



### 6.3.2 Functional Skills

This section presents the study's results and findings on functional skills. Functional skills are the skills needed by businesses in a particular function of their work, such as finance and production. This section addressed the important skills of seven organizational functions that are most commonly found in businesses, namely: Finance, Marketing, Procurement, Production, Sales, Warehousing and Maintenance.

#### 6.3.2.1 Finance

The surveyed businesses were asked about the importance of the financial skills most common to any finance department, namely: accounting and financial management. Additionally, since businesses are currently operating in Turkey, a country that has few fundamental and unknown legal differences from the more familiar Syrian environment, they were asked about the importance of familiarity with the Turkish labour and tax laws and regulations. Almost all surveyed businesses expressed that all of the mentioned skills are important, with an average of 91% of surveyed businesses saying that these skills are extremely important.

**91%**  
**of surveyed businesses consider**  
**"familiarity with Turkish labor and tax Laws"**  
**to be important**

*91% of the surveyed businesses said that accounting, financial management, familiarity with the Turkish labor and tax regulations Not italicized important.*

The surveyed businesses were also asked about the importance of knowing how to use an accounting software package, specifically the Ameen Accounting Package (the most widely used in Syria). 78.9% of the surveyed businesses reported that this skill is extremely important.

The importance of being skilled in an accounting software package was also reaffirmed during a focus group meeting by all businessmen that attended the meeting. The surveyed businesses were asked whether they need to hire an accountant and if they do, how many qualified/experienced staff they need, the years of experience required and the number of job openings.

An average of 19.6% of the surveyed businesses said they need to hire 1-3 staffers, each having 3-5 years of experience. The surveyed businessmen were also asked about their hiring interests of legal advisers and public relations officers - 8.7% of the surveyed businesses said they'd hire 1-3 staffers with 3-5 years of experience of any age.



**Surveyed businesses  
that consider knowing  
accounting software  
to be importance**



**of businesses  
surveyed  
need to hire  
1-3 Accountant**

In a focus group meeting, it was discussed that there are many accountants in the job market. However, these accountants lack the experience and the skill, don't speak the Turkish language efficiently (for professional purposes), and are not familiar with relevant laws, policies and regulations. It was found that there is considerable demand in the job market for a skilled accountant with enough professional Turkish language and knowledge of relevant laws and regulations who can help his/her employer take advantage of opportunities and incentives and avoid illegal activity.

### **6.3.2.2 Marketing**

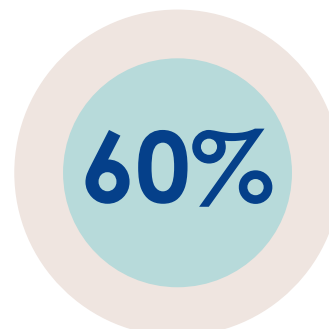
The surveyed businesses were asked about the most important online marketing skills, with a focus on the most widely used services in that area, namely: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube. The reason for focusing on online marketing is because this form of marketing is the most cost efficient and businesses questioned believe achieves the highest and fastest outreach to their targeted segment of customers. Online marketing has gained an increasing interest and importance from the business community and has now become a fundamental part of any marketing department's strategy. Despite the importance of online marketing and the fact that many Syrian businesses are aware of its importance, it's been observed that they haven't yet utilised online marketing to its full potential and benefits.

Based on our findings, 60.6% of the surveyed businesses said that understanding Online Marketing and Advertising are extremely important. As for the online marketing services and platforms, Facebook was found to be the most important with 57% of the surveyed businesses saying it's extremely important. The other platforms, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube were found to be not as important, with only an average of 25% of the surveyed businesses saying they are extremely important.

The surveyed businesses were asked about other online marketing skills, namely Graphic Design and Printing, Photography, and Website Design and Management. The intention was to understand whether the surveyed businesses would hire a full-time employee to perform tasks relevant to these skills but an average of only 51.4% of the surveyed businesses said that these skills are extremely important. This can be interpreted as businesses preferring to hire 3rd parties to carry out relevant tasks whenever needed rather than hiring full time employees for that purpose.

Also, based on our findings, the level of knowledge required by the surveyed businesses is generally at a beginner's level, with an average of 59% of surveyed businesses saying that the level of knowledge required for marketing skills is at a beginner's level. This can be interpreted as businesses not wanting to risk a huge investment in online marketing, and instead choosing to try out the area with the least cost and exploring its potential and benefits. The surveyed businesses were asked whether they needed to hire marketing/e-marketing specialists and graphic designers and 15.3% said they are looking for 1-3 staffers aged 20-40 years with 3-5 years of relevant experience.

The survey indicates that there is a high demand in the job market for possible employees with experience in marketing, especially in the field of online marketing and advertisement. This has been confirmed in a focus group discussion meeting, where demand for Designers in the Syrian and the Turkish job markets was discussed. A professional Designer in a specific design area (such as Shoe Design, Fashion Design, Carpet Design, etc.,) tends to enjoy a high pay-grade.



**of surveyed businesses consider Online Market to be important**



**57%**

**of surveyed businesses consider Facebook as an online marketing tool to be important**



**25%**

**of surveyed businesses consider LinedIn, youtup and Twitter to be important for marketing**



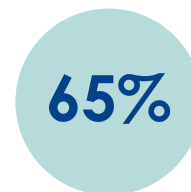
**51%**

**of surveyed businesses consider graphic design, printing, photography and web design to be important for marketing**



### 6.3.2.3 Procurement

The surveyed businesses were asked about the following skills that are usually needed in a typical procurement department - Export, Import, Local Shipping, Negotiation, and Sourcing. The purpose of surveying these skills was to understand which of them are important to the surveyed businesses' operations and which are not. Based on our findings, an average of 65.4% of all surveyed businesses said that Export, Negotiation and Sourcing are extremely important.



of surveyed businesses consider negotiation and sourcing to be important for a Procurement staffer.

Skills in Import and Local Shipping were found to be not as important, with only an average of 38% of all surveyed businesses saying these skills are extremely important. That result can be interpreted as businesses purchasing most of their raw materials and services from local suppliers, and that using local shipping isn't complicated and can be easily taught to new staff.

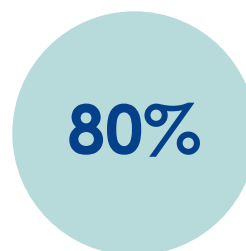


of surveyed businesses consider import and shipping to be important for a Procurement staffer.

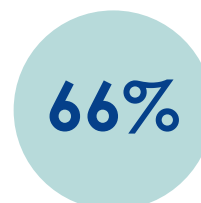
In a focus group meeting, it was discussed that the English language is important to someone working in procurement. It's also important to have a solid background knowledge about the product (how it's made, the raw materials used, etc.). Moreover, a procurement staffer is expected to try and improve the product by researching such things as new raw materials, new technologies and new machines. The level of knowledge required for procurement skills is intermediate, with an average of 55% of all surveyed businesses saying that an intermediate level of knowledge in these skills is sufficient.

### 6.3.2.4 Production

The surveyed businesses were asked about the generic skills most commonly required in a typical production department, such as Control, Forecasting, Machine Operation, and Production Planning. The skills Machine Operation and Production Planning were found to be important with 66.2% and 80.6% of the businesses saying these two skills, respectively, are extremely important. The importance of knowing Machine Operation was also reaffirmed in a focus group meeting. This result can be interpreted as businesses believing that it's extremely important for all staff to understand how machines are operated (or at least have some sense of how machines work), regardless of their role in the company. Further, they believe the reason why Production Planning is desired because it is seen as increasing efficiency by reducing issues such as machine idle times.



of surveyed businesses consider production planning to be important in Production



of surveyed businesses consider machine operation to be important in Production

Forecasting was also found to be important, but not as much as Machine Operation and Production Planning with 58.4% of surveyed businesses saying that it's extremely important. The reason for that can be because most of the surveyed businesses have a sense of seasonal market fluctuations that they have developed over their years of experience in their sectors. For that reason, they don't think that there's a need for a systematic way of forecasting demand.

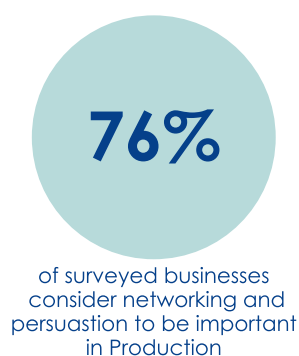
Production Control was found to be the skill least important to the surveyed businesses, with only 35.2% saying it's important. This can be interpreted as businesses not being interested in that skill because of the fact that the majority of these businesses carry out their production activities in a casual manner. In other words, these businesses don't have a systematically developed and documented production process that controls production activities.

In addition to being skilled in Production Planning, Machine Operation and Forecasting, it's also important for someone working in production to have a detailed background knowledge of how the product is manufactured, its specifications, and the raw materials used in its production. The skill level required for Machine Operation was reported to be an advanced level by 59.2% of the surveyed businesses. For all other skills, an intermediate knowledge was found to be sufficient, with an average of 41.8% of all surveyed businesses saying that no more than an intermediate level of knowledge is required.

Few of the surveyed businesses reported that it's important to have someone familiar with the International Standards Governing the Specifications and Production of a business's product. Also, several businesses reported that the administrative staff must always have an overall sense of their employers' products (e.g. specifications, features, production process, raw materials, etc.). These were answers when the businesses were asked about the skills currently lacking from their staff and the skills they desire to have in their business.

### 6.3.2.5 Sales

The surveyed businesses were asked what skills are important to a Sales Representative. The surveyed skills are Networking<sup>6</sup>, Persuasion and Contracting. Most of the surveyed businesses reported that Networking and Persuasion are important, with an average of 76.4% saying these two skills are extremely important. The skill Contracting, however, was found to be less important, with 55.6% of surveyed businesses saying it's extremely important. This can be due to the fact that these businesses don't usually rely on contractual agreements in their business deals. Instead, it's observed that products and services are usually provisioned with a casual agreement including few conditions with the customer. It's worth mentioning that in the Syrian culture, reputation and a verbal promise (being a man of his word) of a businessman are two of the most important factors that are considered in business dealings. If a businessman has a bad reputation and doesn't keep his/her promises other businesses will not do business with them.



6. Called "Connection Building" in the survey to avoid confusing it with Computer Networking.

Surveyed businessmen also reported that it's important for Sales Representatives to be sufficiently familiar with the details of the product they're selling such as raw materials used, the detailed specifications, the production process, and any unique features of the product in comparison to competing products.

The level of knowledge required from a Sales representative with the above skills is intermediate, with an average of 47.8% of all surveyed businesses saying that an intermediate level of knowledge is enough for their sales operations. The businesses were asked if they need to hire a Sales Representative and 16.3% of the surveyed businesses reported that they need to hire 1-3 sales representatives, with 3-5 years of experience.

*16.3% of the surveyed businesses reported that they need to hire 1-3 sales representatives, with 3-5 years of experience of any age.*

In a focus group meeting, it was discussed that not everyone can work as a Sales Representative because that position requires many personal skills such as giving a good first impression, etiquette and manners, charisma and good appearance. Further, a Sales Representative must have advanced professional language skills because he/she may be involved in negotiations and persuasions that require utilising certain expressions that contribute to closing a deal. Working as a Sales Representative requires mastering a variety of skills that are usually taught at college to students majoring in Business Administration. Additionally, any person having charisma and positive personal traits can work in Sales after taking professional training courses on the topic.

### 6.3.2.6 Warehousing

The surveyed businesses were asked about the two most commonly required skills that are needed in a typical warehousing facility, namely stocking and inventory management. Almost all surveyed businesses reported that both skills are important, with an average of 59.7% of all surveyed businesses saying they are extremely important. The skill level required for both is intermediate, with an average of 62.6% of all surveyed businesses saying that an intermediate level knowledge of these two skills is sufficient.

In the Syrian business environment, warehousing doesn't involve complicated analysis and planning. The tasks done are usually those of recording incoming/outgoing stock as well as knowing the storage locations of various items. Therefore, the level of skill required for such work isn't very high and it is generally assumed that anyone can carry out warehousing tasks. Moreover, warehousing tasks are usually carried out by employees already performing other tasks, such as finance and/or production.

59%

of surveyed businesses consider stocking and inventory management to be important in Production

62%

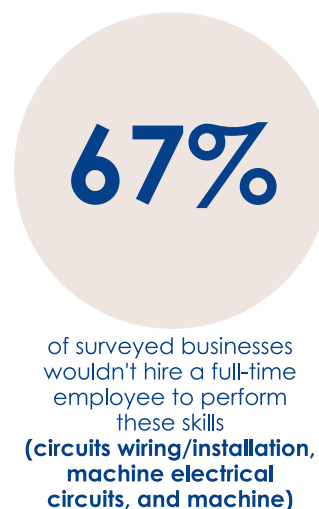
of surveyed businesses reported that an intermediate level of knowledge in these two skills is sufficient



### 6.3.2.7 Maintenance

The businesses were asked about the skills that are usually needed in any typical maintenance activity. Maintenance activities include diagnosing problems, fixing problems and also performing machine installation and preparation tasks. The intention was to understand whether or not the surveyed businesses would be interested in hiring full-time technicians for performing maintenance tasks. The businesses were asked about Electrical Circuits Wiring/Installation, Machine Electrical Circuits, Machine Electronics, and Problem Diagnosis & Solving.

It was found that the surveyed businesses aren't interested in hiring full-time technicians because an average of 67.15% of them said that the skills such as Electrical Circuits Wiring/Installation, Machine Electrical Circuits, and Machine Electronics are not important. However, 60.6% of the surveyed businesses said that Problem Diagnosis and Solving is extremely important. The results can be interpreted as businesses preferring to out-source Maintenance tasks by hiring freelance technicians or maintenance companies whenever there's a problem to be fixed. Further, it's desired for them to be able to have a basic understanding of what causes a problem when it occurs so that the process of hiring a technician becomes faster.



The surveyed businesses were asked whether they are interested in hiring mechanical engineers, electrical engineers and technicians but only an average of 2.2% of all surveyed businesses expressed their interest in doing that. Regarding the skill and background required for maintenance work, graduates of Electrical/Electronic Engineering as well as those with a Diploma in a relevant field are usually sufficiently qualified. Moreover, anyone who would like to start a career as a maintenance technician can enroll in standard training courses (those usually offered by Chambers of Industry) to receive the required training and qualification.

### 6.3.3 Sector-based Skills

During survey interviews businesses expressed their interest in a variety of skills and expertise that are specific to their own sectors. These skills and expertise were reported by them in the form of answers to several questions that asked them to identify the skills that are lacking in their current staff and the skills they desire to have in their staff. The most important sector-specific skills reported by the surveyed businesses are in Textile, Machinery, Plastic, Food/Beverages, Chemical, Real Estate/Construction, and IT sectors. Additionally, surveyed businesses were asked about their hiring interests. Understanding all the skills listed in this section gives job candidates and/or students a sense of what existing businesses expect their employees to know when hiring.

**Sector-specific skills were reported by surveyed businesses working in these sectors**



### 6.3.3.1 Textile

Several Textile businesses reported that Sewing, Fashion Design, Use of Printing Machines, Carpet Machine Maintenance, and Textile Design & Printing Techniques are important skills to them. They also reported that two software applications, Adobe After Effectives & Autodesk 3DMax, are important to their work. When businesses were asked about their hiring interests of Fashion Designers only 2.3% of reported an interest in hiring 1-3 Fashion Designers with 3-5 years of experience.

### 6.3.3.2 Machinery

Several businesses in the Machinery sector reported that it is important for employees working for them to be familiar with Machine Design, Machine Design Deployment, and the SolidWorks application. Other businesses in the Machinery sector reported the following skills are important - VGA Card Maintenance, Programming for Medical Devices, Electrical Control Panels' Design, Industrial Networking and Robot Programming for Factories. A few businesses, specialising in the production of Filling and Packaging Machines, reported that it's important for employees to be familiar with the Designs, Models and Principles of this type of machinery. When businesses were asked about their hiring interests of Electrical Engineers, Electricians, Mechanics, Mechanical Engineers, Programmers 10.9% reported interest in hiring 1-3 staffers with 3-5 years of experience.

**11%**

of surveyed businesses  
are interested in hiring  
3-1 staffers with 5-3  
years of experience

### 6.3.3.3 Chemical

Several businesses operating in the Chemical<sup>7</sup> products sector reported that their employees must understand creating Chemical Mixtures as well as the Fundamental and Basic Principles of Chemicals. The main objective from this knowledge is to decrease the costs of manufacturing, without compromising product quality (efficiency and effectiveness). When businesses were asked about their hiring interests of Chemists, 3.3% said they would hire 1-3 staffers with 3-5 years of experience.

**3%**

of surveyed businesses  
are interested in hiring  
3-1 staffers with 5-3  
years of experience

### 6.3.3.4 Real Estate/Construction

Businesses in the Real Estate/Construction sector believe it is important that employees understand the principles and techniques of construction and suggested that new-graduates should take supplemental courses on the topic of construction to advance their knowledge beyond the basics. Businesses were asked about their hiring interests of Civil Engineers and Architects and 9.8% were interested in hiring 1-3 staffers of any age.

**10%**

of surveyed businesses  
are interested in hiring  
3-1 staffers of any age

7. Detergents, cosmetics, and chemical materials.

### 6.3.3.5 Foods/Beverages

Several of the businesses that are operating in the Foods/Beverages and Plastic sectors said that their employees need to know the use and operation of Automatic Packaging Machines.

### 6.3.3.6 Plastic

Some businesses in the Plastic sector reported that employees need to understand the principles of Injection Molding Machines as well as how Raw Material Mixtures are formed to manipulate the features/specifications of plastic products.

### 6.3.3.7 IT

A business operating in the IT sector reported that iOS and Android Development are important for any employee working in the field of IT.

## 6.4 Reported Challenges

During interviews, the surveyed businesses were asked about the problems, obstacles and challenges they are having in their businesses. They were also requested to address the problems they are having with their staff as well as the skills they think are lacking. The logic behind these questions is that when job candidates can help businesses overcome these challenges their chances of getting hired would increase. Moreover, if businesses can overcome costly challenges and obstacles, this could accelerate their expansion and competitiveness, which would increase job openings. The reported problems/challenges can be categorised into three types - business-related, staff-related, and problems that are related to both business and staff.

The reported business-related challenges are difficulties with the legal registration of foreign employees, lack of knowledge with relevant laws, difficulty in selling to Turks because the businesses are Syrian, high turnover of employees, sales on credit and procurement in cash, and fluctuations in prices and currency exchange rates. Also, businesses reported that their factories are not working to their full capacity, that they have troubled financial plans, that there's too much work pressure on employees as well as long working hours (12-hours work days). Additionally, businesses reported that sometimes customers don't understand the uniqueness of their products very clearly.

### Challenges reported by surveyed businesses

**Legal registration of foreign employees**

**Lack of knowledge with relevant laws**

**Difficulty in selling to Turks**

The reported staff-related challenges are time waste and delays, poor task and time management, workers not organised when performing their tasks, workers/employees don't respect work rules and regulations, staff don't have the motivation to improve themselves and take responsibility. Many of the businesses reported that they are having trouble with staff due to moral issues such as lack of honesty, negligence and carelessness, lack of loyalty, and abuse of company assets.



## 7. Recommendations

There are plenty of actions that can be taken to achieve this study's goal, which is to help Syrians be better prepared for employment and to get hired in positions most suitable for their skills. In this section, various suggestions and recommendations are made based on the study's findings as well as other facts observed in the field. There are four key things that can best support the goal of this study, namely supporting employment, freelance work and entrepreneurship, addressing moral issues and improving the effectiveness of training programmes. Each of the sections below address several recommendations in each of these areas.

### Actions that support increased recruitment and entrepreneurship.

**Supporting  
employment**

**Freelance  
work and  
entrepreneurship**

**Addressing  
moral issues**

**Improving  
training  
effectiveness**



A photo taken at Omm Alqura, a Syrian company in the south region of Turkey that produces chickens and eggs

## 7.1 Supporting Employment

### 7.1.1 Vocational Training

The study findings indicate there are many generic and sector-specific skills that are important to the job market. To better equip job candidates with these skills we recommend the provision of training programmes that teach those skills. The training programmes we recommend are based on better practice in that they involve businessmen in the preparation of curriculums and practical exercises so that the content and training are channeled towards the actual skills that are needed in the job market. The programmes we suggest can be in the form of vocational training offered to existing employees and potential candidates. This training can be on the skills that are deemed important by the surveyed businesses, such as - Computer Skills, Personal Skills, Languages, Marketing, Finance, Production, and Sales. Improving the capacity of existing employees is expected to both increase their income while also equipping them with skills most needed in the job market.

### 7.1.2 Supporting University Students

There are two ways minimised to improve the employability of university students through providing them with remedial/practical courses to strengthen their knowledge in their areas of specialisation and the second is enrolling them in high-impact internships.

#### 7.1.2.1 Remedial Courses

Based on our observations in the field and discussions with university students, it is observed that the students' knowledge and skillsets in their specialisations are not enough for the job market's needs. The main reason for this is that they are not receiving high-quality education at their universities. Students told us<sup>8</sup> that they don't have access to good internship opportunities due to language and cultural barriers. To address this issue, it is recommended that remedial and supplemental courses be developed and offered to university students in their own specialisations.

---

8. During a training program that we offered to university students002E

### 7.1.2.2 Internships

It's been observed that refugee students don't have the same access to high-quality internship opportunities as their local peers do. There are many obstacles preventing that access, including those of a legal, lingual and a cultural nature. To address this issue, we recommend establishing a body that facilitates access of Syrian students to internship opportunities. Such a body would have connections with high-profile businesses and a registry of skilled students to enable them to best match skilled students with suitable internship opportunities.

Based on the study findings, the surveyed businesses have an interest in starting a department for research and development activities as well as a willingness to accept university students and new-graduates as interns. Based on this we recommend that a program be established to help students and new-graduates enroll onto internship programmes at established businesses and cooperate with the businesses to dedicate the interns' time to finding new ways of improving the business and to support them with whatever knowledge and information they need to do that.

Many of the surveyed businessmen recommended that students take the initiative to enroll in internship programmes both during their study and after graduation. By doing so, students would gain experience in a real business environment, specialise in a specific sector or area of work and practice the theoretical knowledge that they learn at university. The businesses stressed that university knowledge only provides the basics that are never enough to satisfy businesses when hiring new employees.

## 7.2 Freelance Work and Entrepreneurship

The surveyed businesses reported that although some skills are important, they often do not want to hire full time employees to carry out the tasks that require those skills. Instead, they prefer outsourcing such tasks to 3rd party companies/individuals that can be an opportunity for job seekers to choose to work as freelancers or to start their own businesses to perform these tasks.

In addition to outsourced services, entrepreneurial projects can be started in a variety of sectors. The most prominent sectors to start a business are sectors supported by governmental SME and entrepreneurship organisations and grants, sectors in which Syrians have a good reputation and sectors like those in the host community. Among these sectors are Information Technology, Computer Systems, Foods/Beverages, Textile, and Agriculture.

## 7.3 Addressing Moral Issues

Many of the surveyed businesses reported they are suffering from poor morality in the work place. This matter causes losses and additional costs and also reduces competitiveness. Overcoming moral issues can improve teamwork, reduce costs, increase competitiveness and therefore increase employment opportunities. Poor morality can be observed in staff behavior with examples including workers/employees abusing corporate assets, having no loyalty to their employer and carelessness and negligence of their



duties and responsibilities when there's little monitoring. To address this problem, we recommend developing and offering ethics and social responsibility courses to students, new-graduates and existing employees of businesses. In these courses, staffers should learn how to be understanding and cooperating with their coworkers, learn workplace manners and norms, and master the techniques of best dealing with bad coworkers and their bad influence on the workplace.

## 7.4 Improving Training Effectiveness

During a focus group meeting with several businesses the effectiveness of existing training programmes was discussed. The agreed rationale was that if students and job candidates were to be taught courses to equip them with the skills that are needed by the labour market, the following should be done to increase the effectiveness of those courses and ensure substantial impact.

Efficient criteria should be established to choose the right students for training. The criteria should ensure that students chosen for any training program have a passion to learn, an interest in improving themselves and are hardworking and should filter out students who are careless and have no passion in self-improvement. Criteria should also be established for choosing the right trainers who are enthusiastic about ensuring that their students master the skills they are attending the training to learn. Further, criteria should choose trainers who are willing to demonstrate the dedication and effort that it takes to equip students with the skills that they need. The criteria should include a thorough examination of trainers to ensure they have the expertise and the skills needed to deliver the training. The criteria should help filter out trainers who are good at promoting themselves but have poor skills.

Training should be monitored constantly to ensure that training objectives are being met. Further, effort should be taken to re-allocate students to other courses if their orientation and skills are found unfit for their current course. It was reported that it's usually the case that if a person has the right qualifications, self-improvement abilities, and good morals that person can attract job offers from many businesses, both Syrian and Turkish.

## 8. Annex A: Listing of Study Data

In this part of the report, the key raw data that this study was based on is listed. The purpose of listing this data is to help readers and other members of the community make their own studies and conclusions about the topic.

**Table of Surveyed Skills**

Surveyed Skills	Extremely important	Important	Not important	Somewhat important
<b>Computer</b>	<b>%37.82</b>	<b>%10.90</b>	<b>%48.72</b>	<b>%2.55</b>
Basic Computer Use	%76.39	%16.67	%5.56	%1.39
Computer Maintenance	%11.11	%4.17	%84.72	%0.00
Databases	%26.39	%11.11	%58.33	%4.17
Emailing	%60.56	%25.35	%12.68	%1.41
Networking	%26.39	%6.94	%61.11	%5.56
Programming	%26.39	%1.39	%69.44	%2.78
<b>Finance</b>	<b>%90.94</b>	<b>%5.92</b>	<b>%2.09</b>	<b>%1.05</b>
Accounting	%91.67	%6.94	%1.39	%0.00
Familiarity with Labor Law	%94.44	%2.78	%1.39	%1.39
Familiarity with Turkish Tax Regulations	%95.77	%1.41	%1.41	%1.41
Financial Management	%81.94	%12.50	%4.17	%1.39
<b>Language</b>	<b>%84.19</b>	<b>%10.23</b>	<b>%2.79</b>	<b>%2.79</b>
Arabic	%94.44	%5.56	%0.00	%0.00
English	%66.67	%20.83	%6.94	%5.56
Turkish	%91.55	%4.23	%1.41	%2.82
<b>Maintenance</b>	<b>%25.27</b>	<b>%12.81</b>	<b>%56.94</b>	<b>%4.98</b>
Electrical Circuits, Wiring and Installation	%20.00	%10.00	%62.86	%7.14
Machine Electrical Circuits	%9.86	%16.90	%69.01	%4.23
Machine Electronics	%10.14	%14.49	%69.57	%5.80
Problem Diagnosis and Solving	%60.56	%9.86	%26.76	%2.82
<b>Marketing</b>	<b>%43.36</b>	<b>%15.03</b>	<b>%35.66</b>	<b>%5.94</b>
Facebook	%56.94	%25.00	%13.89	%4.17
Graphic Design and Printing	%58.33	%11.11	%27.78	%2.78
LinkedIn	%23.94	%12.68	%57.75	%5.63
Online Marketing and Advertising	%60.56	%15.49	%18.31	%5.63
Photography	%40.28	%12.50	%41.67	%5.56
Twitter	%21.13	%14.08	%54.93	%9.86
Website Design and Management	%55.56	%19.44	%19.44	%5.56
YouTube	%29.58	%9.86	%52.11	%8.45
<b>Personal</b>	<b>%88.35</b>	<b>%8.87</b>	<b>%2.09</b>	<b>%0.70</b>
Commercial Correspondence	%79.17	%12.50	%5.56	%2.78
Critical Thinking	%86.11	%9.72	%2.78	%1.39
People Management	%87.50	%11.11	%1.39	%0.00
Problem Solving	%98.61	%1.39	%0.00	%0.00

Professional Etiquette and Manners	%95.83	%4.17	%0.00	%0.00
Teamwork	%88.73	%8.45	%2.82	%0.00
Time Management	%90.28	%8.33	%1.39	%0.00
Working Under Pressure	%80.56	%15.28	%2.78	%1.39
<b>Procurement</b>	<b>%54.49</b>	<b>%15.73</b>	<b>%26.40</b>	<b>%3.37</b>
Export	%63.38	%7.04	%29.58	%0.00
Import	%40.85	%11.27	%43.66	%4.23
Local Shipping	%35.21	%22.54	%33.80	%8.45
Negotiation	%66.67	%19.44	%11.11	%2.78
Sourcing	%66.20	%18.31	%14.08	%1.41
<b>Production</b>	<b>%60.14</b>	<b>%12.24</b>	<b>%23.78</b>	<b>%3.85</b>
Control	%35.21	%8.45	%49.30	%7.04
Forecasting	%58.33	%23.61	%12.50	%5.56
Machine Operation	%66.20	%5.63	%28.17	%0.00
Planning	%80.56	%11.11	%5.56	%2.78
<b>Sales</b>	<b>%69.44</b>	<b>%14.35</b>	<b>%8.33</b>	<b>%7.87</b>
Connection Building	%79.17	%15.28	%2.78	%2.78
Contracting	%55.56	%15.28	%15.28	%13.89
Persuasion	%73.61	%12.50	%6.94	%6.94
<b>Software</b>	<b>%31.30</b>	<b>%10.33</b>	<b>%55.56</b>	<b>%2.82</b>
3DMax	%10.14	%4.35	%85.51	%0.00
Ameen Accounting Package	%78.87	%14.08	%5.63	%1.41
AutoCAD	%8.45	%4.23	%85.92	%1.41
CorelDRAW	%25.00	%18.06	%50.00	%6.94
Illustrator	%26.39	%16.67	%52.78	%4.17
Microsoft Office	%80.56	%13.89	%2.78	%2.78
Photoshop	%33.33	%19.44	%40.28	%6.94
Proteus	%5.71	%0.00	%92.86	%1.43
SolidWorks	%11.43	%1.43	%87.14	%0.00
<b>Warehousing</b>	<b>%59.71</b>	<b>%5.04</b>	<b>%30.22</b>	<b>%5.04</b>
Inventory Management	%60.00	%5.71	%30.00	%4.29
Stocking	%59.42	%4.35	%30.43	%5.80



## 9. Annex B: Questions of the Full and Minimized Versions of the Survey

### 9.1 Questions of The Full Version of The Survey

Each of the businesses surveyed with a personal interview answered all of the following questions.

1. **Sector(s)**
2. **Products/Services**
3. **Location(s)**
4. **Targeted areas**
5. **Headquarters city**
  - Turkey
  - Syria
  - Middle East
  - North Africa
  - Other:
6. **Corporate structure**
  - Describe the company's departments, positions and reporting structure.
7. **Number of departments**
8. **Brief description of each position's duties and responsibilities and required qualifications**
9. **Total number of employees**
10. **Employee age ranges**
  - 18-25 years
  - 26-35 years
  - 36-40 years
  - 41-50 years
  - 51-65 years
11. **Number of administrative staff**
12. **Number of technicians**
13. **Number of workers**
14. **Average annual hiring rate**
  - The number of jobs created every year
15. **Number of present job openings**
  - The number of jobs created every year.
16. **Do you have a standard hiring process? Does it include posting job openings online (job search engines, own website, social media, etc)?**
17. **Median net salary in Turkish Liras**
18. **Median net salary for administrative and technical staff in Turkish Liras**
19. **Brief description of production/service process(s)**
  - Describe the production process steps with a focus on the manpower required at each step and their qualifications.
20. **What skills do you think your staff is lacking?**
21. **Briefly describe the problems/challenges you're facing with your staff.**
22. **What vacancies do you currently have open?**
23. **If we provide you with skilled candidates for the open vacancies and pay for whatever training you might need them to have, would you hire them?**
  - Yes
  - No
  - Other

## 24. Marketing Skills

Describe the importance of the following skills to your business.

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Extremely important	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Facebook							
YouTube							
Twitter							
LinkedIn							
Online Marketing and Advertising							
Website Design and							
Graphic Design and Printing							
Photography							

## 25. Sales Skills

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Extremely important	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Persuasion							
Contracting							

## 26. Procurement Skills

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Extremely important	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Export							
Import							
Sourcing							
Local Shipping							
Negotiation							

### 27. Production Skills

	Not important	Not important	Important	Extremely important	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Planning							
Forecasting							
Control							
Machine Operation							
Negotiation							

### 28. Finance Skills

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Extremely important	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Familiarity with Turkish Tax Regulations							
Familiarity with Labor Law							
Accounting							
Financial							

### 29. Warehousing Skills

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Extremely important	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Inventory							
Stocking							

### 30. Maintenance Skills

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Extremely important	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Electrical Circuits, Wiring and Installation							
Machine Electrical Circuits							
Machine Electronics							
Problem Diagnosis and Solving							



### 31. Computer Skills

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Extremely important	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Basic Computer Use							
Networking							
Computer Maintenance							
Emailing							
Databases							
Programming							
Graphic Design and Printing							
Photography							

### 32. Software Applications

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Extremely important	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Microsoft Office							
AutoCAD							
3DMax							
SolidWorks							
Ameen Accounting Package							
Photoshop							
Illustrator							
CorelDRAW							
Proteus							

### 33. Personal Skills

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Extremely important	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Commercial							
Critical Thinking							
Professional Etiquette and Manners							
Problem Solving							
Working Under Pressure							
Time Management							
People Management							
Teamwork							

### 34. Language Skills

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Extremely important	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Arabic							
Turkish							
English							

**35. What other skills are your employees required to have? How many years of experience do you expect them to have?**

**36. What industry-specific knowledge/skills are your employees required to have?**

**37. Comments made and skills suggested by an expert in the field and based on the data provided.**

**38. Are you able to offer internships for students?**

Yes

No

Others:

**39. If yes, how many 4-months internship opportunities are you able to provide per semester?**

**40. What requirements or conditions do you require for offering the internships?**

**41. If you were supplied with staff that fit your required skills, how likely are you to hire them**

	5	4	3	2	1	
Extremely likely						Not likely

**42. Are you interested in launching a new department concerned with improving existing operations and suggesting new products and/or product improvements?**

	5	4	3	2	1	
Very interested						Not interested

## 9.2 Questions of The Minimized Version of The Survey

The businesses that were invited to group events were surveyed using the survey questions below.

**1. Location**

Gaziantep  
Antakya  
Mersin  
Konya

**2. Years of Operation in Turkey**

**3. Sector(s)**

Foods/Beverages  
Real Estate/Construction  
Textile  
Plastic  
Retail  
Consultancy  
Logistics  
Chemicals  
Machinery  
Training  
IT  
Shoes  
Marketing  
Medical  
Tourism  
Energy  
Poultry  
Livestock  
Metals  
Finance Consultancy  
Insurance



#### 4. Job Openings

	Age Ranges			Level of Experience			# Job Openings		
	30-20	40-31	All	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	3-1	8-4	15-9
Accountant									
Architect									
Chemist									
Civil Engineer									
Cost Accountant									
Electrical Engineer									
Electrician									
E-Marketing Expert									
Fashion Designer									
Graphic Designer									
Legal Advisor									
Mechanic									
Mechanical Engineer									
Production Accountant									
Programmer									
Public Relations Officer									

- 5. Other Job openings (please specify)**
- 6. Required Trainings**
  - Global Trade & Tax System
  - Turkish Laws
  - Turkish Language
  - Communication Skills
  - HR Management
  - Time/Task Management
  - Work Ethics
  - Industrial Safety
  - Technical Training
  - English Language
  - Vocational Trainings
- 7. Briefly describe the obstacles and challenges you have.**
- 8. Have you managed to address some of those challenges? How?**
- 9. What are your lessons learned working in the Turkish market?**
- 10. Other notes**

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