Skills4Retail
Building sustainable growth

WP5 D5.1 Communications Strategy

Skills4Retail

26/01/2024 | AOIFE O'DRISCOLL AND KIM SCHIERKE

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About the Skills4Retail project

Skills4Retail is a new European Sector Skills Alliance co-funded by the European Commission's Erasmus+ Programme and closely aligned with the Pact for Skills in Retail. It is led by an international Consortium of 30 Partners, including higher education institutions, training providers, retail industry partners, and communications specialists.

The Skills4Retail project aims to accelerate the 'Triple Transition' — green, digital and resilience — in the retail and wholesale sectors across Europe. It contributes to achieving these goals through a vocational education and training (VET) programme that addresses the growing skills gap in these critical areas, informed by a new market and industry-led retail skills strategy.

Post-Covid-19, the skills gap in green, digital and resilience in retail and wholesale has become more evident, and demand cannot be met by existing education and training programmes.

Skills4Retail will train fresh new talent for the sector through training programmes in VET schools and higher education institutions, and also reskill and upskill the existing and future workforce via work-based learning and short-term modular courses.

The Skills4Retail programme aims to bridge the skills gap and support growth and sustainability in the retail and wholesale sectors, through direct and valuable collaboration between policymakers, businesses, and educators.

The Skills4Retail Consortium

The Skills4Retail project is an Erasmus + Partnerships for Innovation funded project. It is a shared vision between 30 partners in education, industry and national policy, to design a new retail skills strategy and VET training programme to address the urgent skills gap in the key areas of digital, green and resilience.

Partnerships for innovation support projects that aim at achieving systemic impact at European level by having the capacity to deploy the project outcomes on a European scale. They focus on thematic areas that are strategic for Europe's growth and competitiveness and social cohesion. The total funding to be received through this initiative for the Skills4Retail project is €3.9 million

The programme will support European retailers and help the wider industry achieve long-term growth, competitiveness, and sustainability through digital and green transformation.

The project will be market and industry demand-led at its core, continuously adapting and evolving to address current and future industry needs.

No	Partner	Acronym	Country
1	JA Europe	JA Europe	Belgium
2	Junior Achievement-Young Enterprise Latvija	JA-YE Latvia	Latvia
3	Profesionalas Izglitibas Kompetences Centram Rigas Valsts Tehnikums	RSTS	Latvia
4	Matrix Internet Applications Limited	Matrix Internet	Ireland
5	Karlínská obchodní akademie	Karlínská	Czechia
6	Schuman Associates SCRL	Schuman	Belgium
7	Junior Achievement Austria – Unternehmerische Praxis- und Kompetenzbildung	JA Austria	Austria
8	Scoala Superioara Comerciala Nicolae Kretzulescu	SSCNK	Romania
9	Wirtschaftskammer Österreich	WKO	Austria
10	Universitatea din Bucuresti	UB	Romania
11	Digital Technology Skills Limited	DTSL	Ireland
12	Escola Profissional de Vila do Conde	EPVC, Vila di Conde	Portugal
13	Junior Achievement Magyarország Oktatási, Vállalkozásszervezési Alapítvány	JA Hungary	Hungary

14	Aprender a Empreender - Associação de Jovens Empreendedores de Portugal	JA Portugal	Portugal
15	Asociatia Junior Achievement of Romania	JA Romania	Romania
16	Skillnet Ireland Company Limited by Guarantee	Skillnet	Ireland
17	Vállalkozók és Munkáltatók Országos Szövetsége	VOSZ	Hungary
18	Szent Gyorgy Hang - Es Filmmuveszeti Technikum	SZGYF	Hungary
19	Junior Achievement, OPS	JA Czech	Czechia
20	Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Malta Foundation	JA Malta	Malta
21	Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Ireland	JA Ireland	Ireland
22	OTB Europe	OTB Europe	Portugal
23	Accenture SA	Accenture SA	Belgium
No	**Associated Partner**	**Acronym**	**Country**
1	Intel Technology Poland Spółka z ograniczoną odpowiedzialnością	INTEL Poland	Poland
2	JMH, SGPS, S.A.	JerónimoMartins	Portugal
3	EuroCommerce	EuroCommerce	Belgium
4	SPAR Österreichische Warenhandels AG	SPAR	Austria
5	Svaz obchodu a cestovního ruchu České republiky	SOCR CR	Czechia
6	Szegedi Tudományegyetem	USZ	Hungary
7	UNI Europa*	UNI Europa	Belgium

* joined as Associated Partner on Oct. 30th 2023

Partners

Junior Achievement Europe (coordinator): JA Europe is the leading organisation in Europe dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people to succeed in entrepreneurship, work readiness and financial health.

Junior Achievement Portugal: Junior Achievement Portugal is one of the largest and most impactful NGOs dedicated to inspiring and preparing children and young people for the future, promoting conscious and inclusive entrepreneurship.

Junior Achievement Malta: JAM equips young people with the employment and entrepreneurship skills they need right now, and in the future. The organisation prepares young people for the future of work and teaches them how to think entrepreneurially.

Junior Achievement Romania: Since forming in 1993, Junior Achievement Romania has been implementing programmes that help young people develop skills, attitudes and social roles that are essential in the real market economy.

Junior Achievement Latvia: JA Latvia promotes the development of Latvia's national economy by engaging in youth education, promoting entrepreneurship, and building the new generation of entrepreneurs, through practical business education programmes.

Junior Achievement Czech: JA Czech offers young people opportunities to acquire and develop the skills necessary for a successful start in real life and the job market — deepening their economic and business knowledge.

Junior Achievement Hungary: JA Hungary programmes allow students to experience and understand the essence of business life and managerial competencies, either as entrepreneurs or as employees.

Junior Achievement Austria: JA Austria promotes basic economic knowledge and social skills, which will make it significantly easier for young people to get a head start in their future professional life.

Junior Achievement Ireland: JA Ireland inspires and motivates young people to succeed in the changing world of work by equipping them with the skills, knowledge and confidence they need.

Escola Profissional de Vila do Conde: The EPVC is a leading education and training provider, guided by a unique set of principles, attitudes, values, purposes and strategies.

University of Bucharest: With a prestigious history of over 150 years, the University of Bucharest is an institution of excellence in education and research, characterised by creativity, innovation and pragmatism.

Scoala Superioara Comerciala N. Kretzulescu: For over a century, Scoala Superioara Comerciala N. Kretzulescu in Bucharest has been one of Romania's leading commercial high schools, with a long list of nationally renowned alumni.

Vocational Education Competence Centre - Riga Technical College: : Riga Technical College is a state-founded educational institution that combines higher professional education qualifications with secondary vocational education programmes.

Szent György Hang- és Filmművészeti Technikum : Founded in 1988, the Szent György Sound and Film Technical College has more than 1,000 students, a wide range of courses and partnerships with Hungary's leading performance venues, studios and festivals.

Karlínská Business Academy : Karlinska is a leading internationally focused business school that educates young people in the complementary values of entrepreneurship, responsibility, and mutual respect.

DTSL : DTSL helps organisations scale by investing in the up-skilling, competency enablement and leadership development across all industry sectors.

Skillnet Ireland : Skillnet Ireland is a business support agency of the Government of Ireland, responsible for advancing the competitiveness, productivity and innovation of Irish businesses through enterprise-led workforce development.

Out of the Box : Out of the Box is a Portuguese engagement-based language teaching programme with a focus on practical application and informal learning.

WKO WF, Austrian Chamber of Commerce : The WKO is the voice of Austrian business, representing more than 540,000 member companies, and boosting the national economy through comprehensive services.

Matrix Internet : Matrix is a full-service digital agency with offices in Dublin and Brussels. Matrix offers web design, development, digital marketing, and international growth strategy services.

Retail Ireland — Skillnet Ireland: The Retail Ireland Skillnet team works closely with Retail Ireland to ensure current and future skills needs are addressed through work-based training programmes.

Schuman Associates : Schuman is the leading EU business advisory firm in Brussels with over 30 years' experience in European funding and public affairs. The firm serves a broad range of clients, from governments and large multinational corporations to trade associations and NGOs.

Accenture: Accenture is a globally recognised IT and technology consulting services provider, with 740,000 staff, and 9,000 clients in 120 countries worldwide. Accenture specialises in business strategy, change management, digital commerce and more.

Vállalkozók és Munkáltatók Országos Szövetsége : Founded in 1988, the National Association of Entrepreneurs represents privately-owned enterprises in Hungary, before national and local decision-making forums.

Associate & Industry Partners:

University of Szeged : The University of Szeged is one of Hungary's most prestigious higher education institutions, with 12 faculties and a nationally renowned teacher training centre.

EuroCommerce: EuroCommerce is the European organisation representing the retail and wholesale sector. It embraces national associations in 27 countries, sector associations and 35 leading players.

SOCR CR : The Czech Confederation of Commerce and Tourism is the top representative of trade, tourism and services, fight for the predictability, justice and adequacy of legal regulations and the procedure of administrative authorities.

SPAR Austria: Spar Austria is the market leader in the Austrian grocery trade, with over 1,500 stores and sales of €9.05 billion in 2022. Part of the Spar international group of independently owned and operated retailers, with nearly 14,000 stores in 48 countries.

Jeronimo Martins : Jeronimo Martins is a Portuguese-based international food distribution group with a rich 230-years history. The group is a supermarket and cash and carry leader in Poland, a retail store leader in Poland, and a sales leader in neighbourhood stores in Colombia.

Intel: For more than 50 years, Intel has created world-changing technology, driving business and society forward by radical innovation in the design and manufacturing of semiconductors.

UNI Europe: As the European trade union federation for 7 million service workers, UNI Europa speaks for the sectors that constitute the backbone of economic and social life in Europe. Headquartered in the heart of Brussels, UNI Europa represents 272 national trade unions in 50 countries.

WP5: Europe Wide Dissemination & Rollout of Project Outputs to Retailers & Trainers - objectives

The communication and dissemination activities will focus on achieving the following overarching goals:

- Encourage the **adoption of the VET training programme across Europe** and the widespread dissemination of project results and best practice guides, leading to the highest possible uptake and significant impact.
- Ensure the widespread promotion of the **Retail sector as a career choice**, highlighting the numerous job opportunities and the fast-track VET programmes to access the profession from any career starting point or skills level.

This Communications strategy serves as a tool to ensure maximum dissemination facilitate collaboration amongst Alliance partners and provide ongoing promotion of project outputs and updates for the full duration of the project.

Document Control Information

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1	31.11.2023	Aoife O'Driscoll, Matrix Internet	First draft
2	18.01.24	Kim Schierke, Schuman Associates	Review

Introduction

This document presents an integrated communication strategy for Skills4Retail. It defines a clear framework by establishing a common strategy to ensure consistent and coherent communication and dissemination activities throughout the project's lifetime (2023-2027).
The Skills4Retail communications strategy is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Raising awareness about the Skills4Retail project and communicating a set of tailored value propositions towards each key stakeholder group to stimulate engagement.
- Maximising registrations for each intake of the training programme and short courses.
- Ensuring the dissemination of the project outputs and adoption by the respective end-users and other key target groups such as multipliers and other stakeholders.
- Providing the Skills4Retail partners and multipliers with a Communication Package for internal and external use, including brand guidelines and communications materials, tools, and templates to support the Skills4Retail marketing activities and achieve successful results by the end of the project.
- Outline the key performance indicators (KPIs) as per the grant agreement and the promotional activities and campaigns planned at the different stages of the project to achieve the targets.

The Communication Strategy is a living document that will be revised annually and adapted to the needs of the consortium and to ensure promotional targets and project KPIs are met.

Objectives & KPIs

The Skills4Retail Programme will focus on accelerating the 'triple transition' within European Retailers. The project's goal is to design a new Retail Skills Strategy and VET Training Programme that will address the urgent and emerging skills needs of retailers in the key areas of Digitalisation, sustainability and resilience. It will focus on training fresh new talent for the sector through training programmes in VET Schools and Higher Education Institutions, and the reskilling of the existing workforce via work based learning and short-term modular courses.

The programme will be market and industry demand-led at its core, continuously adapting and evolving to address current and future industry needs and supporting European retailers to achieve long term competitiveness and growth through digital transformation, sustainable trading, and team development.

The programme will be designed to appeal to the broadest possible catchment of potential students from across Europe and from many different demographics and cultural backgrounds.

Communications Objectives

To achieve the overall objective of the "Skills4Retail Programme," which is to accelerate the 'Triple Transition' (green, digital, and resilience) in the retail and wholesale sectors across Europe, and to design a new Retail Skills Strategy and VET Training Programme, we have established several communication objectives. Effective communication is crucial in ensuring that the programme reaches its target audience and accomplishes its goals. Communications objectives include:

- **Raise Awareness:** Increase awareness among European retailers, VET schools, Higher Education Institutions, and potential students about the existence and purpose of the Skills4Retail Programme.
- **Engage Stakeholders:** Foster engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders, including retail industry associations, educational institutions, government agencies and policymakers, to ensure their active involvement in the programme's development and implementation.
- **Highlight Benefits:** Communicate tangible benefits of participating in the programme, emphasising how it can address the skills gap and enhance competitiveness in the retail and wholesale sectors. Encourage enrolment in training courses for both new talent and reskilling existing workforce.
- **Target Audience Segmentation**: Identify and segment the target audience based on demographics, cultural backgrounds, and geographic locations to tailor communication strategies and materials accordingly.
- **Promote Market Demand-Led Approach:** Promote the programme's commitment to being market and industry demand-led, showcasing its adaptability to evolving industry needs and its role in fostering long-term competitiveness and growth.
- **Emphasise Inclusivity:** Highlight the programme's inclusivity, making it clear that it is open to a diverse range of potential students from various cultural and demographic backgrounds, encouraging equal participation.
- **Showcase Training Formats:** Communicate the various training formats available within the programme, including VET school programmes, Higher Education Institutions, work-based learning, and short-term modular courses.
- **Demonstrate Alignment with Triple Transition:** Emphasise how the programme aligns with the 'Triple Transition' goals of green, digital, and resilience, and how it supports European retailers in achieving these objectives.
- **Monitor, Evaluate and Adapt:** Establish metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure the effectiveness of communication efforts, and create feedback mechanisms for

continuous improvement. Strategies will be adjusted as needed to ensure they are meeting the objectives, adapting to changing circumstances and audience needs.

- **Promote Long-Term Impact:** Highlight how the programme's outcomes and graduates contribute to the long-term competitiveness and growth of the retail and wholesale sectors in Europe.
- **Partnership Promotion:** Communicate partnerships with industry leaders, educational institutions, and other organisations that endorse and support the programme.
- **Showcase Success Stories:** Share inspiring success stories of individuals who have benefited from the programme to inspire and motivate potential participants.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Advocate for supportive policies at the European level that align with the programme's goals and objectives.
- **Sustainability Messaging:** Emphasise the programme's commitment to sustainability and its role in advancing the green transition in the retail sector.
- **Facilitate Collaboration**: Encourage collaboration among educational institutions, industry players, and other organisations for a unified approach to addressing skills needs.
- **Measure Impact:** Establish clear metrics and KPIs to assess the impact of communication efforts on achieving program goals.
- **Build Credibility and Trust:** Establish the Skills4Retail Programme as a credible and trustworthy initiative, well-supported by industry experts, educational institutions, and policymakers.

These communication objectives will be part of a comprehensive communication plan that includes strategies, channels, timelines, and responsible individuals or teams to ensure effective communication throughout the programme's lifecycle. Additionally, we will regularly review and adjust the communication plan as needed to remain responsive to changing circumstances and audience need.

To meet these goals, a set of communication actions and deliverables will be developed:

- An integrated communication strategy.
- A strong brand identity for Skills4Retail including the visual identity guide and related promotional materials and visual assets (print and web versions).
- A user-friendly website with comprehensive information for each user type.
- Communication tools and promotional toolkits for partners dissemination and coordinated online marketing.
- Coordinated communication campaigns (organic) among the consortium members.
- Social media communication campaigns towards key stakeholder groups at the EU level.
- Coordinated digital public relations and direct emailing campaigns through partners' channels.
- The organisation of online and on-site dissemination events and partner participation in relevant local, national, and EU-wide events to present specific outputs.
- Mass-emailing campaigns via the Skills4Retail Brevo account (email marketing platform).

- External communication toolkit for potential external multipliers including promotional materials to disseminate the project's outputs.

Key Performance Indicators

Skills4Retail communication and outreach activities will be monitored and measured against the following key performance indicators (KPIs) to identify how effectively we are reaching our communication objectives.

Table 1 Key Performance Indicators

Key result	Indicator	Target (M48)
REACH & ACT KPIs		
Stakeholder engagement	Number of stakeholders and individuals sign up to join the Community / Alliance via the website or social media groups	1000
	Number of S4R newsletter issues	1 every second month, starting year 2
	Number of visits (sessions) on the website	Avg. 2000 per month in years 3 and 4
	Number of visitors (users) on the website	Avg. 2000 per month in years 3 and 4

	High level attendees to the Stakeholder conference	200
Social media interaction on Project partners' accounts only.	Engagement on Facebook **	24,000 reach 400 link clicks
	Engagement on Instagram**	24,000 reach
CONVERT & ENGAGE KPIs		
VET Providers/School	Number of VETs in Pilot training	8 VETs by M36
	Number of VETs/Schools supported to implement the programme	80 VETs by M48
Employers	Number of employers in pilot training and employers engaged in mentorship, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, or job placement for the graduates	50 by M36
	Retail sector companies supported to train new or existing employees by end Y4.	40 by M48
Student Uptake	Number of students enrolled or pilot. VET and higher VET Training Programmes.	Min 800 by M36
	Number of new students recruited by the 80 VET providers / schools by Y4.	Min 1000 by M48
Graduation	Number of students who successfully complete S4R	Min 935 by M48
	Number of people who received industry certification	Min 990 by M48

The frequency of the publication of social media posts, news articles, and newsletter issues may vary depending on the availability of relevant information and delivery of the outputs and milestones.

To monitor indicators, Quality Assurance leaders will create a reporting sheet for project partners to collect the appropriate data easily and consistently. The targets presented assume full cooperation and access to communication channels from the full partners of the project.

Additionally, a Matomo account has been set up and paired to the website to collect relevant and anonymised data on visitors. The data collected will be then centralised and analysed by the WP5 leader.

Brand Strategy & Identity

Skills4Retail will be supported by a strong brand to ensure our main target groups fully understand the project objectives, its aims, and benefits, and encourage the uptake and further dissemination of the project results.

The Skills4Retail brand is reflected in the visual identity and all communications materials. To build a strong and relevant brand identity, all Skills4Retail partners have contributed to a collaborative workshop during the Kick Off Meeting in September 2023. Through interactive exercises, we collectively defined the key strengths, brand values, value propositions, aspirations, and brand positioning for Skills4Retail.

This section presents the synthesis of the results and further defines the Unique Selling Propositions (USPs) of the project, to ensure Skills4Retail observes a coherent, consistent, and evolutive rollout of the communication activities.

Brand values and unique selling propositions

Unique Selling Proposition

During our workshop, the partners identified key strengths of the project. Based on those results, we mapped the core values which represent, all together, the unique selling propositions (USPs). The USPs will be leveraged to reach, acquire, convert, and actively engage the target groups.

Holistic Approach: Skills4Retail offers a comprehensive approach by addressing the 'Triple Transition' of Green, Digital, and Resilience in the retail sector. It doesn't focus on just one aspect but covers all three crucial elements, making it a unique and well-rounded initiative.

Tailored Training: Unlike traditional education and training programs, Skills4Retail is specifically designed to meet the evolving needs of the retail sector. It identifies and addresses the precise skills gaps that are unique to this industry, ensuring that the workforce is well-prepared for the challenges ahead.

Fast-Tracking Growth: By offering training programmes in VET Schools, Higher Education Institutions, and through work-based learning, Skills4Retail aims to fast-track the development of a skilled workforce. This means retailers can quickly adapt to changing market dynamics and seize growth opportunities.

Adaptive Reskilling: Skills4Retail recognises that both new talent and existing employees need different approaches to upskilling. Its strategy encompasses training for fresh talent and reskilling for the current workforce, making it adaptable to various skill levels and experience.

Addressing Skills Shortages: The project acknowledges the impending shortage of skilled workers in the retail sector, especially in the domains of digital and green skills. Skills4Retail not only identifies this issue but actively works towards filling the gap, ensuring that retailers have access to the best talent in a competitive job market.

Collaborative Alliance: Skills4Retail brings together an alliance of stakeholders, including educators, industry experts, and policymakers, to collectively design, develop, and implement the Retail Skills Strategy and VET Training Programme. This collaborative approach ensures that the solution is well-informed and supported by industry leaders.

Sustainability Focus: By emphasising sustainability from the start, Skills4Retail ensures that new business models in the retail sector are environmentally responsible. This commitment to sustainability can attract environmentally conscious consumers and help retailers build a positive reputation.

Competitive Advantage: Retailers who participate in Skills4Retail gain a competitive edge by having access to a skilled workforce that is well-versed in the latest digital and green technologies. This advantage can lead to innovation and improved competitiveness within the European retail sector.

Diverse Audience Engagement: Skills4Retail accommodates a wide range of participants, from new talent entering the sector to experienced retail professionals seeking to upgrade their skills. This

inclusivity ensures that the program is accessible to everyone, regardless of their current level of expertise.

EU Support: Highlight the fact that the project is co-funded by the European Union, emphasizing the credibility and support it receives from a regional and governmental perspective.

Immediate Impact: Skills4Retail is not merely a theoretical initiative; it is designed to address urgent and emerging skills needs in real-time, ensuring that the retail sector can adapt and thrive in today's dynamic business environment.

Key Messages for Course Participants

We have also defined 6 key messages for potential course participants as listed below:

- It will give you the skills to succeed in the new world of Retail.
- It will help you shape your long-term career in the sector.
- The training is best in class with cutting edge topics.
- You will feel inspired and empowered to achieve!
- The courses are very accessible and flexible to suit your situation.
- The training is highly practical and hands on.

Figure 1 Key Strengths of Skills4Retail Project

Brand Perceptions and Characteristics

Every organisation has a distinctive Tone of Voice (TOV). The Tone of Voice for Skills4Retail was discussed during the brand workshop, and the general consensus is detailed below. This is important to consider when preparing content for any Skills4Retail communication.

Tone of Voice

- Friendly & Engaging
- Knowledgeable
- Informative

Skills4Retail is a high-level project that relies on excellence and is anchored on 5 key brand values, namely:

Brand Values

- Innovative
- Flexible
- Accessible
- Sustainable
- Inclusive

The stakeholder perceptions can be evaluated at different moments in time to ensure those are aligned with our aspirations. Modifications will be implemented when necessary.

Brand Positioning

During the workshops the team developed a brand positioning statement that can be used as a promotional pitch for the project in both verbal and written communications:

Skills4Retail is a pioneering pan-European training initiative that aims to accelerate the 'Triple Transition' — green, digital and resilience — in the retail and wholesale sectors across Europe. It is a vocational education and training (VET) programme informed by a market and industry-led retail skills strategy.

Brand name and identity

Building a recognisable and impactful brand heavily relies on consistent and coherent use of the project name and visual identity. In this section, we define how to use the project name, acronym and logo, as well as further explain the requirements one must follow when communicating about Skills4Retail.

Full details of the basic brand elements can be found in the Skills4Retail brand guidelines: here

Skills4Retail brand name

"Skills4Retail" is the name of the project. The general rule is to use the name in full, whenever possible.

Find below how to use the acronym “S4R” (always in uppercase letters):

Use the “S4R” acronym, in lengthy written publications. It is to be noted that the acronym should always be introduced in the following manner at the beginning: “Skills4Retail (S4R)”.
Use the “S4R” acronym, when referring to a specific output of the project or product, such as the S4R Strategy, the S4R modules, S4R newsletter — and so on.
Use the “S4R” acronym, whenever space doesn’t allow you to write the full name of the project.

Skills4Retail Visual Identity

Master Logo

Figure 2 Master Logo

Logo variations: The Reverse options

Figure 3 Logo variations: The Reverse options

Logo variations: The Symbol on its own

Figure 4 Logo variations: The Symbol on its own

Logo variations: The Symbol as a container

Figure 5 Logo variations: The Symbol as a container

Logo variations: The repeat pattern

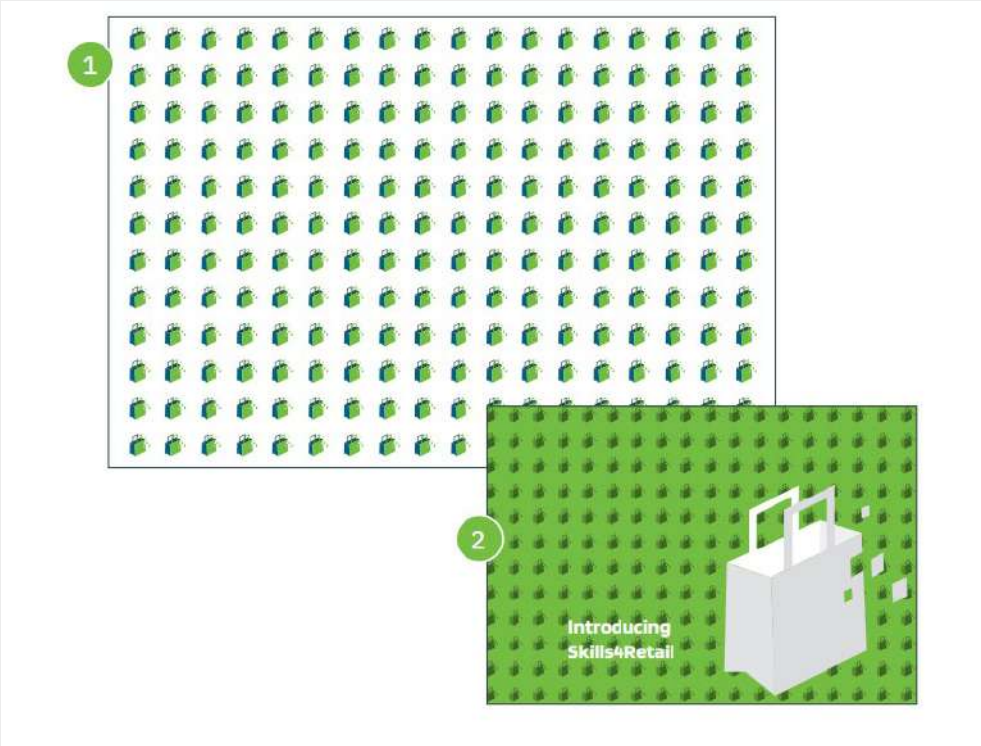


Figure 6 Logo variations: The repeat pattern

Logo variations: The celebration logos

Figure 7 Logo variations: The celebration logos

Colour Palatte

The Primary Colours

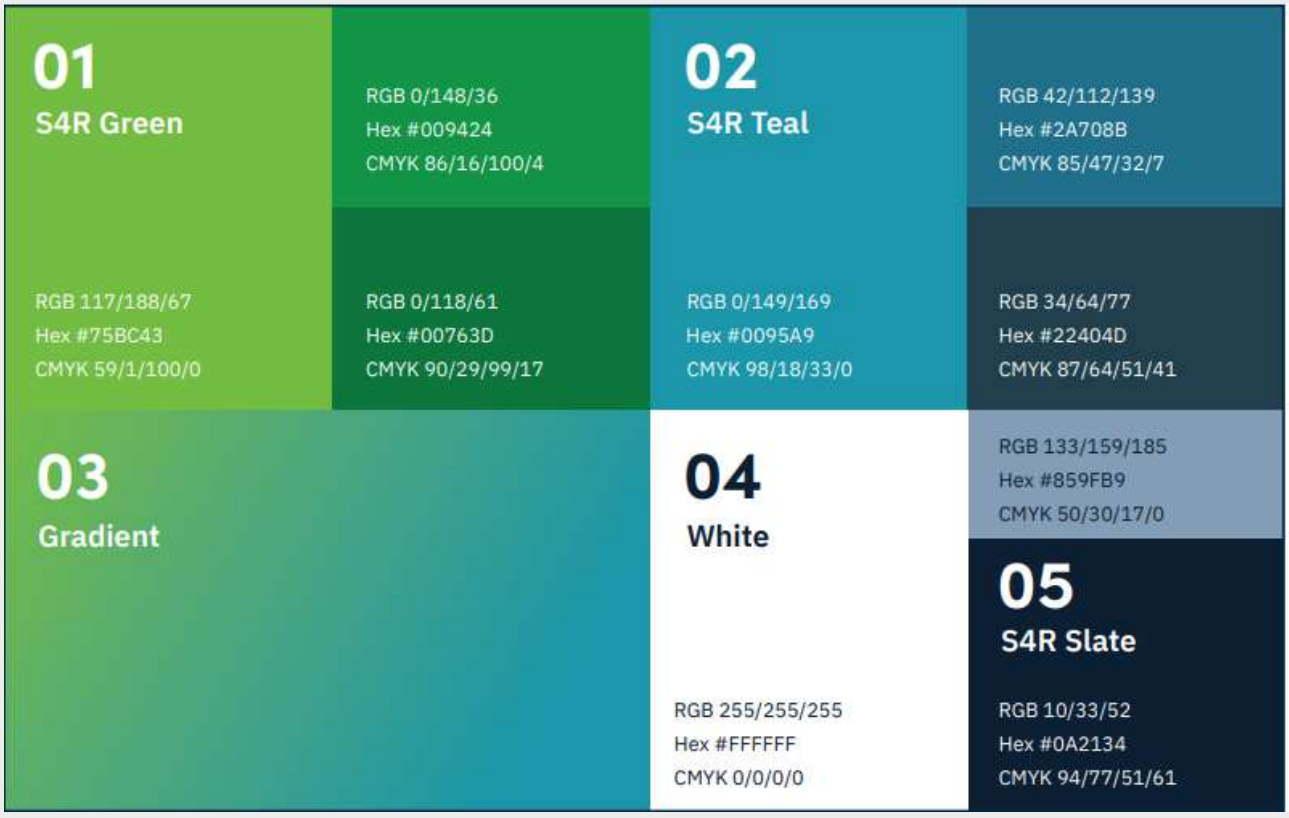


Figure 8 The Primary Colours

The Support Colours

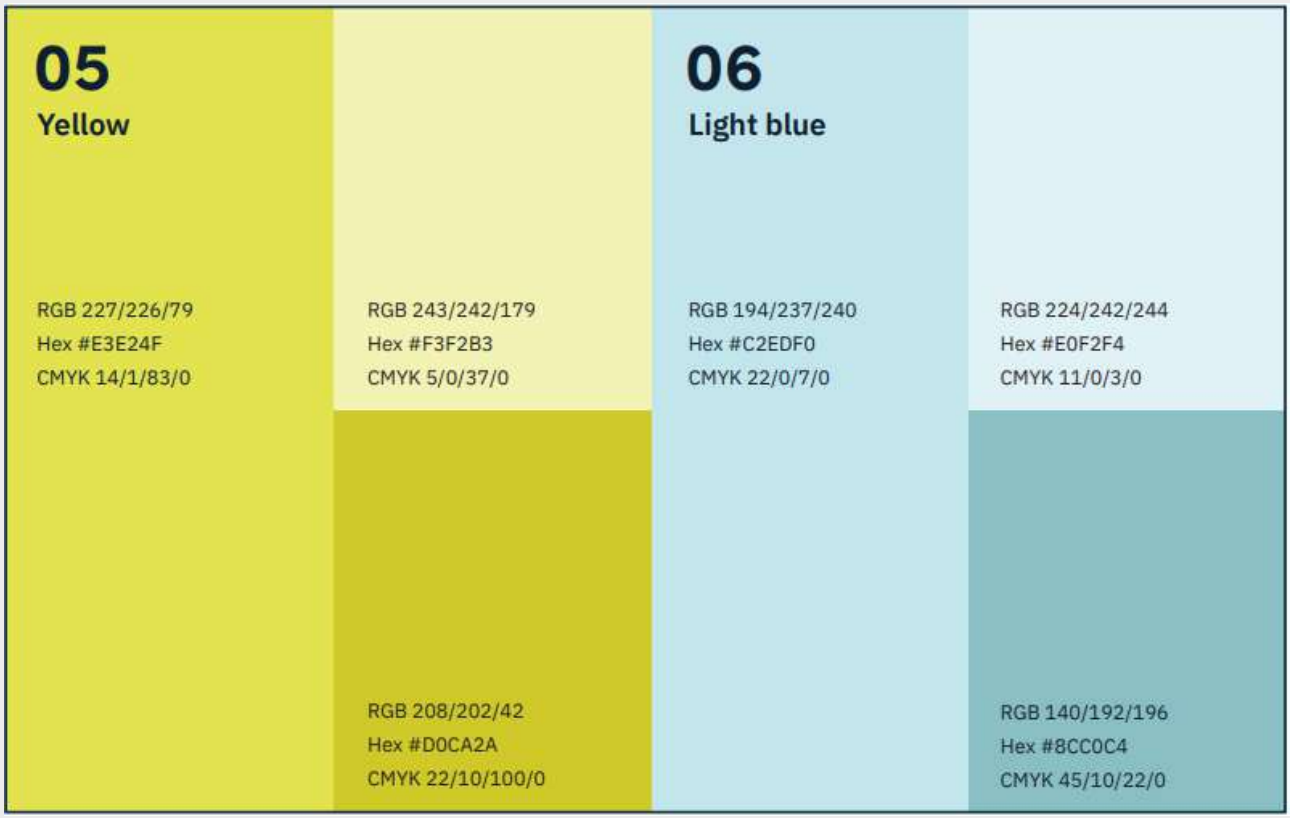


Figure 9 The Support Colours

The Skills4Retail logo should appear on all S4R-related materials — be they reports, visual assets, website, etc. The logo is usually placed at the top left corner. Additionally, all other brand guidelines, as presented in Skills4Retail visual identity manual, should be carefully observed. (Available to partners on Skills4Retail Teams channel)

Matrix Internet, as WP5 leader, will produce the official brand communication materials in English. Whenever relevant, partners are allowed to modify the material and/or localise it by following the visual identity manual.

EU Funding Statement

The Communication and Dissemination Strategy will be aligned with the ERASMUS+ Programme visibility rules and will ensure that each communication activity, publication, or action highlights the EU's support, displaying the European flag (EU emblem), funding statement, and disclaimer, if required, translated into local languages where appropriate. The EU emblem and funding statement will be displayed on all communication materials (brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, publications for media relations, conferences, seminars and workshops), whether printed or in electronic form, via traditional or social media.

Figure 10 Detail from Skills4Retail website display the European flag and funding statement.

Target groups

Skills4Retail brings together diverse stakeholder groups involved in digital skills, including representatives from the education sector, industry professionals, and prospective students who intend to enrol in the programme, along with their employers. Given the wide range of stakeholders with distinct needs and aspirations, it is essential to identify, segment, and prioritise our key target audiences, as outlined below:

Key Target Groups

During our communications workshops we defined the core target audiences for both the training and communications. The figure below presents a summary of the key targets:

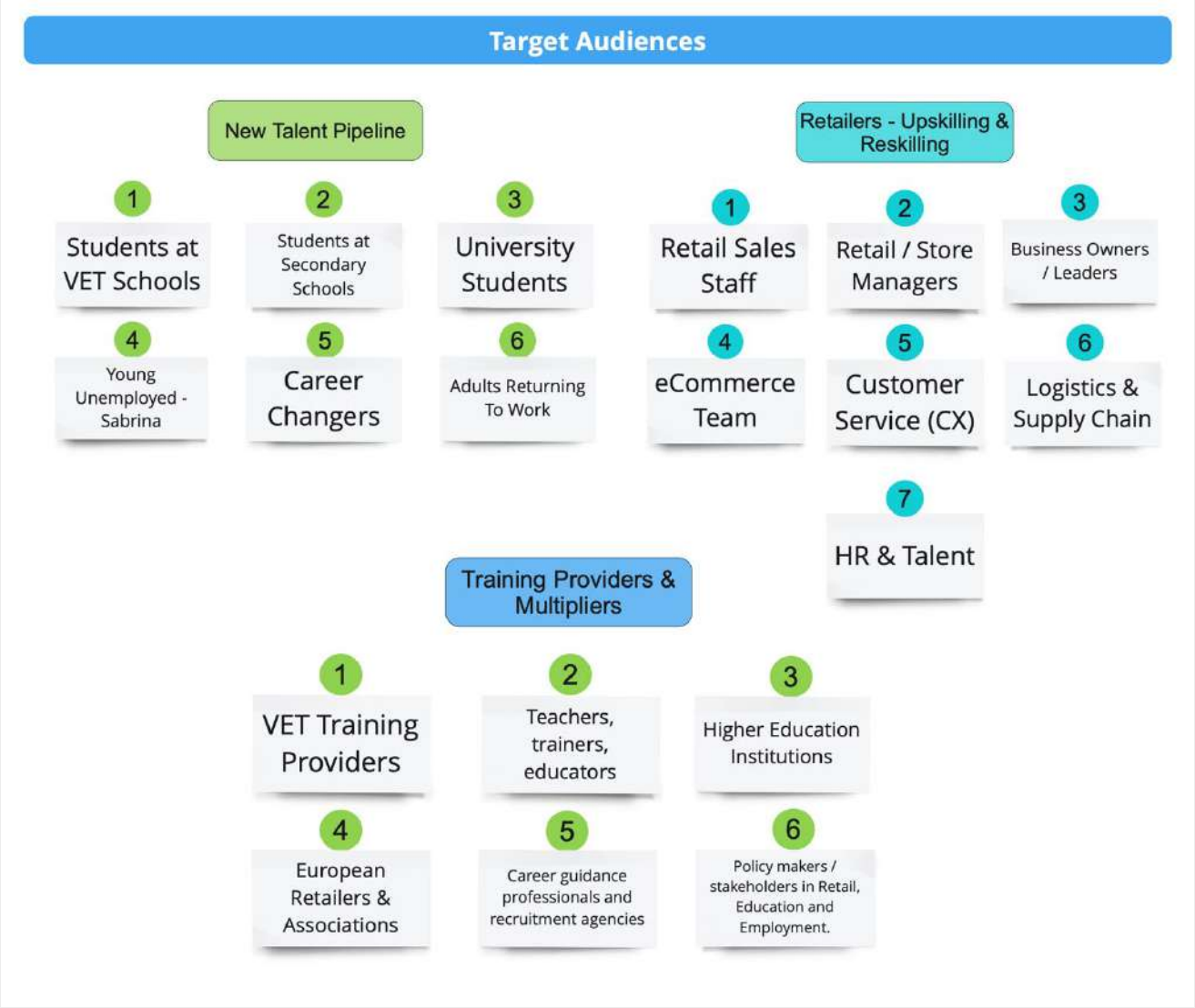


Figure 11 Target Audiences

Based on our preliminary needs analysis and discussions between consortium partners we have defined the following occupational profiles that are in high demand among retailers or will require upskilling / reskilling via this project.

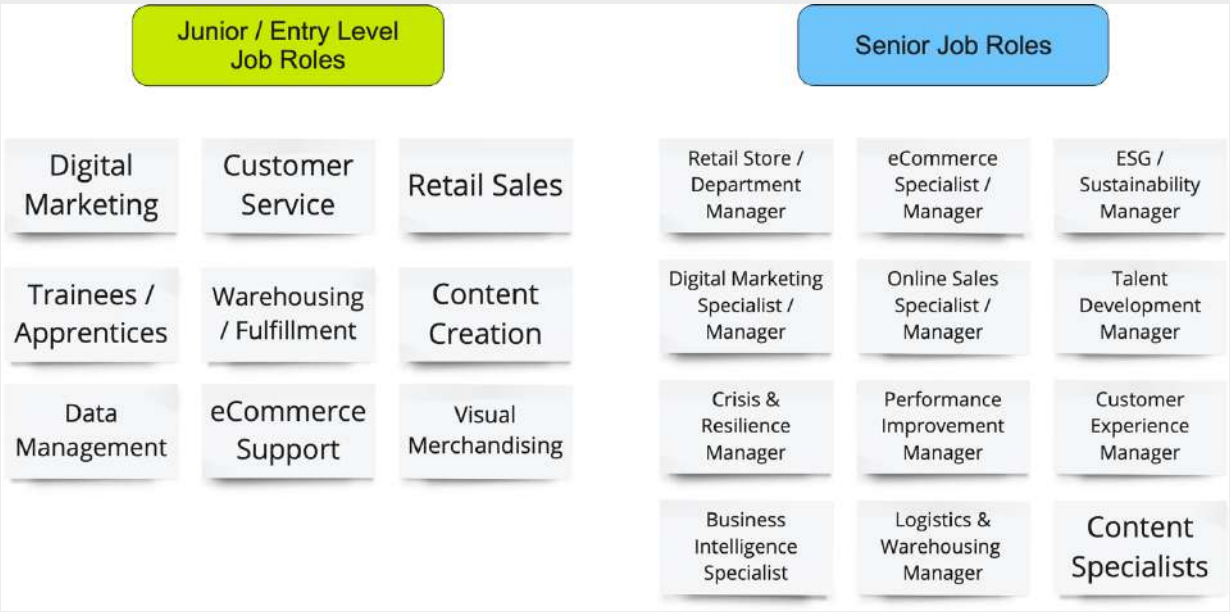


Figure 12 Occupational Profiles of Interest

Customer Personas

During the communications workshops we developed sample customer personas for a selection of the primary target audience groups. The objective was to define the specific needs and motivations of each target audience and their expectations from Skills4Retail. This exercise will help us shape the activities and messages in our communications campaigns and tailor them more effectively to each group. Specific personas will be developed for each campaign, ideally with inputs from representatives of the target audience groups.

Secondary School Students

1. Demographic Information:
    - Age: 16-18
    - Gender: indifferent
    - Income: none
    - Education level: secondary school
    - Occupation: Secondary school students
    - Marital status: single
    - Location: rural area
2. What does this person need, and which problems do they want to solve?
    - Needs direction /guidance for the future.

- A secure job and a clear career pathway.
- Qualifications that will help them get a job or go to college.

3. What solutions can S4R provide?
    - Outline a career path from starter roles to high paid specialist positions.
    - Provide certification to allow them to get a job if needed.
    - Training programmes matched to the job they want.
4. Why will they sign up for the programme? What are the benefits?
    - It will help them get an interesting job in retail once they finish school.
    - It will give them the qualifications they need to further their studies.
    - Sustainable career pathway and improved possibilities for promotion.
    - Help them secure a well-paid job in retail and financial stability.
    - Opportunity to gain a broad skillset and in depth understanding of retail.
5. Where will they find out about S4R?
    - Social media
    - School
    - Targeted campaigns
    - Career guidance teachers and offices

Young Unemployed

1. Demographic Information:
    - Age: 25
    - Gender: indifferent
    - Income: unemployment benefits / none, live with their parents
    - Education level: Secondary level or bachelors
    - Occupation: none
    - Marital status: single
    - Location: rural area
2. What does this person need, and which problems do they want to solve?
    - Needs advice and training to enter the job market.
    - Direction on the skills needed to secure the job they would like.
    - A secure job with career prospects in a stable industry.
    - Reasonably easy access to a starter job with limited skills.
3. What solutions can S4R provide?
    - Training that will lead to a stable job / career in Retail.
    - A broad range of entry level positions are accessible via training.
    - Training in different high demand topics such as digital, green and resilience.
    - Career counselling and support.

- Direct contact with employers in the sector.

4. Why will they sign up for the programme? What are the benefits?
    - A training programme that will help them get a good job in retail.
    - Training is provided free or at low cost.
    - They will have high demand digital and green skills, not just basic retail skills.
    - Career guidance to help them define a career pathway in retail.
    - Education that prepares them for the real job market.
5. Where will they find out about S4R?
    - Social media
    - TV ads
    - Job research platform
    - Local employment or training support agency

Retail Sales Staff

1. Demographic Information:
    - Age: 30
    - Gender: indifferent
    - Income: working class
    - Education level: high school diploma
    - Occupation: Retail store staff
    - Marital status: Divorced with 1 child.
    - Location: urban area
2. What does this person need, and which problems do they want to solve?
    - Better work/life balance
    - Higher potential earnings
    - Future proof skills against changes like self-service check out.
    - Concerned what effect ecommerce and other technologies will have.
    - Would like to progress within the store / company.
    - More responsibilities and career prospects
3. What solutions can S4R provide?
    - Flexible, affordable, and accessible training programmes.
    - Online learning resources they can use in their own time.
    - A career pathway out of floor sales into other roles.
4. Why will they sign up for the programme? What are the benefits?
    - They can get promoted into a better position.
    - Change in tasks / role with better hours.
    - Better work/life balance

- Short term return on investment in terms of better position and salary.
- Structured career progression into digital or green roles.

5. Where will they find out about S4R?
    - Encouraged by the employer.
    - Booklets / newsletter
    - Retail social community / colleagues
    - Social Media

Retail HR Manager

1. Demographic Information:
    - Age: Mid 30s
    - Gender: indifferent
    - Income: Middle-class
    - Education level: Bachelors or Masters
    - Occupation: Head of HR in a supermarket chain
    - Marital status: married.
    - Location: city
2. What does this person need, and which problems do they want to solve?
    - Attract and retain talent.
    - Find people willing to work in entry level jobs with physical effort required.
    - Improve digital literacy of the employees.
    - Improve green skills of employees.
    - Improve soft skills of employees (customer relations, flexibility…)
    - Provide structured skills and talent development.
    - Find specialist for digital and green roles that are difficult to fill.
3. What solutions can S4R provide?
    - Ready to use training programmes that can be adapted by employers.
    - A unique training course that focuses on the digital and green skills they need.
    - Career development pathways and guidelines for different ESCO roles.
    - Case studies, best practice examples and community support.
4. Why will they sign up for the programme? What are the benefits?
    - Skills shortages and difficult job market for employers
    - Keep the company competitive and resilient to changes related to sustainability and digitalisation.
    - They can create an inhouse work force development programme using the content.
    - Upskill and retain key staff while recruiting entry level staff with digital and green skills.
5. Where will they find out about S4R?

- LinkedIn
- Recommendations from counterparts and industry peers
- Observation of competitors

Head of Logistics/eCommerce Fulfilment

1. Demographic Information:
    - Age: Mid 40s
    - Gender: indifferent
    - Income: Middle-class
    - Education level: Bachelors
    - Occupation: Head of logistics in a large retailer / ecommerce company
    - Marital status: married.
    - Location: city
2. What does this person need, and which problems do they want to solve?
    - Attract and retain qualified staff for warehousing, customer service etc.
    - Find people willing to work in entry level jobs with physical effort required.
    - Need a team that is good at problem solving.
    - Recruit people with skills in data analytics and sustainability.
    - Under pressure to implement digital transformation.
    - Green skills are becoming more and more important.
3. What solutions can S4R provide?
    - Professional Training Programme at management level for him.
    - Comprehensive and clear training on digital, green and people skills.
    - Training content and ready to use programme for his team.
    - Solutions to improve efficiency and reduce carbon footprint of logistics.
4. Why will they sign up for the programme? What are the benefits?
    - Progress in their own career and learn new skills.
    - Give them the knowledge they need to implement green / digital projects.
    - Provides a training programme that he can adapt for his team.
    - It will help him reduce costs and carbon emissions.
5. Where will they find out about S4R?
    - In-person network
    - Competitors
    - LinkedIn

Retail Store Manager

1. Demographic Information:
    - Age: Mid 50s
    - Gender: indifferent
    - Income: Middle-class
    - Education level: High school
    - Occupation: retail store manager
    - Marital status: married with kids.
    - Location: city
2. What does this person need, and which problems do they want to solve?
    - Need for contemporary management and customer service skills (related to digitalization, sustainability, and team management)
    - Needs to stay up to date concerning digitalisation and sustainability to keep up with the competition.
    - They need to be able to understand digital and green issues and train up new / existing staff.
    - They need to know how they can implement new digital technologies in the store and reduce waste / carbon etc.
3. What solutions can S4R provide?
    - Management level training programme designed specifically for retail managers.
    - Training in green, digital and people skills for her and her employees.
    - Community of peers she can exchange knowledge and collaborate with.
    - Flexible and accessible training programme she can adapt to her own needs.
4. Why will they sign up for the programme? What are the benefits?
    - Attract, up / re skill and retain employees.
    - Keep up with the competition through innovation.
    - Career development in house or in a new company.
5. Where will they find out about S4R?
    - Internal /colleagues
    - Social interactions with counterparts
    - Newsletters / LinkedIn
    - Retail events / tradeshows

CEO of a large FMCG Retailer

1. Demographic Information:
    - Age: Mid 50s
    - Gender: indifferent

- Income: Executive
- Education level: Masters
- Occupation: CEO of a large FMCG Retailer
- Marital status: married with kids.
- Location: city

2. What does this person need, and which problems do they want to solve?
    - High turnover of staff.
    - Poor quality of talent / very hard to recruit digital or green staff.
    - High levels of competition from outside markets.
    - Lack of innovation and willingness of staff to modernize working methods.
    - Increasing move toward ecommerce and digitalisation.
    - Pressure from shareholder / legislation to implement ESG strategies.
3. What solutions can S4R provide?
    - Portfolio of ready to use training resources for different levels in the company.
    - Access to an Alliance of retail sector partners and peers for knowledge sharing and networking.
    - Advice and support to implement workforce development and skills training.
    - Skills based solutions to digital, green and resilience problems.
4. Why will they sign up for the programme? What are the benefits?
    - Mobilise staff to be more ambitious and embrace new skills.
    - Encourage young people to stay in the business for the long term.
    - Develop / gain access to a new Talent pipeline, especially for green and digital.
    - Create a structured workplace development programme for managers and staff.
    - Improve the image of the company and reputation within and outside.
    - Embrace new digital technologies and keep up with the competition.
    - Implement ESG strategies and comply with legislation and consumer expectations.
5. Where will they find out about S4R?
    - EuroCommerce and JA Europe
    - Their local / national retail association
    - LinkedIn
    - Social interactions with counterparts
    - Retail events and trade shows

Training provider

1. Demographic Information:
    - Age: Mid 30s
    - Gender: indifferent

- Income: variable
- Education level: industry specific certification
- Occupation: training provider
- Marital status: married with kids.
- Location: city

2. What does this person need, and which problems do they want to solve?
    - Need to always adapt their training to current needs and evolutions.
    - Need for clients / students.
    - Need for feedback.
    - Need for visibility.
3. What solutions can S4R provide?
    - A course adapted to modern challenges, ever adapting to the evolutions that the retail sector may encounter.
    - Constant feedback on content, opportunity to collect useful insights from students.
4. Why will they sign up for the programme? What are the benefits?
    - Direct access to clients, among which large retail multinationals which can offer long term and reliable contracts.
    - EU-wide visibility
    - Access to information on the evolution of the market and its needs
5. Where will they find out about S4R?
    - European Jobs and Skills Platform
    - Associations of training providers
    - LinkedIn
    - JA Europe partner network

In addition to the target audiences, we also defined the types of retail industry partners we aim to reach via the communications strategy, as presented in the figure below:

Figure 13 Retail Target Audience

Audience segmentation

Primary /Secondary /tertiary focus

Key Messages

Skills4Retail plans to base its communication and dissemination activities on key messages tailored for each target audience, aligning with the communication objectives and values outlined earlier. The initial version of these key messages, along with the preferred communication channels, is presented in the following table. However, as Skills4Retail instruments and tools progress and achieve tangible results, these key messages will be further refined in practical contexts. This refinement process will ensure that when the time comes to promote them extensively across the European Union and all target groups, the key messages accurately reflect the achievements of Skills4Retail.

Table 2 Key Messaging for Target Audiences

Target Audience		Message	Channel
Who	Secondary school students	– Kickstart Your Journey in Retail with S4R! – School is just the beginning. Plan your future retail career with S4R's pathways from entry roles to top-tier specialist positions. Get certified to seize amazing job opportunities in retail. – Need a certificate to jump into the retail sector? S4R has got you covered. Our certifications pave the way for	• Instagram • Events (education) • School • Targeted campaigns

	your dream job straight out of school. Let's get you job-ready! - What's your ideal job in retail? S4R training is tailored to give you the skills you need to land your dream job in retail. - Looking for an exciting post-school career? Retail is bustling with opportunities. Sign up with S4R and land a job that's not just a pay-check but a passion. - Want to take your education to the next level? S4R's qualifications will help you progress into further education, building a strong foundation for lifelong learning in retail. - S4R's training provides a sustainable and long-term career pathway in retail and enhances your promotion prospects. Ascend the retail ladder with confidence. - A well-paying retail job is within reach with S4R's training. Learn the skills needed for tomorrow's retail sector and reap the rewards in your salary. - You can deep dive into the retail world with S4R. Gain a broad skillset and an in-depth understanding that sets you apart. - Connect with S4R today to start crafting your retail career straight from school. With our guidance, you'll not just find a job; you'll discover a pathway to success. Let's build your retail adventure together!	• Career guidance teachers and offices
Young Unemployed	- Seeking your first big break in retail? S4R offers targeted training that leads to stable and fulfilling careers. Discover our range of courses designed to open doors to the retail industry. - Dive into the retail sector with confidence. S4R provides training that will give you access to a variety of entry-level positions in retail beyond the shop floor, setting the foundation for your career growth. - Sign up for the S4R programme and gain new skills in high demand areas such as digital, sustainability, and resilience. Stand out with skills that go beyond the basics and will shape the future of retail. - Uncertain about your next step? S4R offers comprehensive career counselling and support, guiding young professionals towards a clear and achievable career pathway in retail. - S4R bridges the gap between learning and employment. Our direct contacts with retailers ensure you have a foot in the door of the thriving sector. Connect, learn, and succeed. - Ready to transform your passion into a profession? S4R's training program equips you with the right tools	• LinkedIn • Career fairs • Instagram and TikTok TV ads • Job research platform • Local employment or training support agency

	to secure your dream job in retail. Say yes to growth and opportunity. #RetailJobs #JobReadiness" - Cost should never be a barrier to education. S4R ensures accessibility to our training—free or at low-cost—to empower the next generation of retail leaders with digital and green skills. - Educate yourself not just for any job, but the right job. S4R's training aligns with the real skills needed in the retail sector, preparing you comprehensively for the challenges and opportunities ahead. - Connect with S4R to take the first step towards a rewarding retail career. Our dedicated team is ready to support your journey into the retail world.	
Retail Sales Staff	- Take control of your retail career with S4R's flexible and affordable training programmes. Designed for retail floor staff, these accessible courses offer a roadmap beyond sales floors to promising new roles. - Busy on the retail floor? S4R's online resources mould to your schedule. Upskill at your own pace with convenient online resources and set the stage for a retail career that grows with you. - Imagine a career pathway that stretches beyond the sales floor. S4R provides the stepping stones to navigate into diverse retail roles through high demand digital and green skills training. - Ready for the next step? With S4R training, position yourself for that well deserved promotion and embrace the leadership role you've always dreamed of. - Transition into a new role with S4R that aligns better with your life. Dive into a world where your career compliments your personal time. - S4R's training is not just a stepping stone; it's a leap towards a life where your job supports your lifestyle. Discover how learning can lead to living better. - With short-term gains like a better position and salary in high demand digital and green jobs, S4R is well worth the investment of time and money. - The retail world is changing, and you can be at the forefront. Transition into digital or green roles with structured progression through S4R. Lead the change in retail. - Explore these opportunities and more with S4R – your partner in forging a dynamic and fulfilling career in retail. Connect with us to start your journey.	• LinkedIn • Events (education) • Partners' network

HR Manager	– S4R offers adaptable training programmes to develop your retail workforce. Tailor our materials to fit your organisation's unique needs. – Stay ahead of the curve with a course from S4R that zeros in on essential digital and green skills. Equip your staff for tomorrow's retail environment today. – Unlock career progression for your staff and provide a roadmap for success within your retail chain. – Transform your HR strategies with S4R's case studies and best practice examples. Connect with peers and lead the way in workforce innovation. – The job market is challenging, but S4R equips you to overcome your digital and green skills shortages. Stay ahead in the talent game. – Future-proof your company through skills, keeping your business competitive amidst sustainability and digitalisation shifts. – Create a comprehensive workforce development programme right within your organisation using S4R training resources, growing your team from within. – Upskill key staff and attract fresh talent with S4R's focus on digital and green capabilities. Build a robust team for the future of retail. – Join us at S4R and revitalise your retail chain with the right skills and the best people. Start building your resilient workforce with us today!	• Personal network • LinkedIn • Training Providers • Blogs / Articles • Retail Publications/ Websites
Head of Logistics / eCommerce Fulfilment	– Step into a world of excellence with our tailored Professional Training Programme and propel your logistics management skills to new heights. – Keep pace with an ever-evolving industry by mastering digital efficiency and eco-savvy logistics with S4R's comprehensive training. Prepare to lead your company into a greener, smarter future. – Empower your team with our ready to use training solutions, with content that's ready to deploy for immediate impact in your operations. – Discover solutions that not only streamline your logistics operations but significantly reduce your carbon footprint. With S4R, sustainable efficiency is within reach. – Advance your career and skill set with S4R's specialist digital, green and people skills training for logistics managers. – Gain the expertise needed to spearhead transformative green and digital initiatives. Be the change-maker in logistics innovation.	• Newsletter • Personal network • LinkedIn • Blogs / Articles • Retail Publications/ Websites

	– Benefit from a flexible training programme that moulds to your team's needs. Drive operational excellence across the board. – Join S4R to learn how reducing costs goes hand in hand with cutting carbon emissions. Achieve more with less and lead your operation to a leaner, greener future. – Connect with the S4R community and harness these benefits to propel your logistics career into a realm of greater influence and success.	
Retail Store Managers	– Unlock your potential with our management-level training programme, meticulously engineered for the dynamic world of retail management. – Embrace Sustainability and Digital Transformation! Empower yourself and your team with the skills of tomorrow, honing your expertise in green practices, digital prowess, and unparalleled people management. – Join a vibrant community dedicated to sharing knowledge and fostering collaboration. – Our flexible programmes are thoughtfully designed to meet you right where you are, adapting seamlessly to your unique professional journey. – Upskill your talent pool, boost retention, and attract the best in the business. Invest in your team's growth and watch your retail store flourish. – Steer through the waves of innovation and sail past the competition. With S4R, staying ahead isn't just a goal—it's a reality. – Whether you're deepening your roots or branching out, S4R opens the doors to your continued professional development. Grow within your current role or gain the skills to move on to new horizons. – Be the leader you aspire to be. Register for the S4R programme and transform your vision into impact.	• Personal network • Newsletter • LinkedIn • Workshops & Webinars for Education • Websites
Training Providers	**Transform Your Retail Training with S4R** – As a dedicated Retail Industry Training Provider in the bustling city environment, you stand at the forefront of educating the next wave of retail professionals. Your role demands not only keeping pace with the retail sector's rapid evolution but also anticipating its future direction. With S4R, you gain an ally in this dynamic landscape, offering a program that evolves as swiftly as the market itself. Our collaboration ensures your training materials are always cutting-edge, highly sought after by clients and students alike, for their relevance and impact. – Choosing S4R as your partner amplifies your ability to adapt training content to the ever-changing needs of the retail industry, ensuring that you're not just meeting the	• Personal network • Newsletter • LinkedIn • Retail events / tradeshows • Retail Publications/ • Websites

	current demands but are ahead of the curve. Our program connects you directly with the industry's giants, opening doors to long-term partnerships that can elevate your offerings and secure your position as a leader in retail education. This is about more than just visibility; it's about establishing a reputation for excellence and innovation across Europe. – The essence of S4R lies in its commitment to providing you with a comprehensive, ready-to-use training program that you can tailor to your clients' unique needs. This access to high-quality, in-demand content is paired with an ongoing feedback loop, allowing you to gather invaluable insights from your students to continuously refine your courses. It's this cycle of improvement and adaptation that ensures your training programs not only meet but exceed industry standards. – Discovering S4R and its benefits comes through a variety of channels tailored to your professional environment. From European Skills & Jobs Platforms, which connect education with opportunity, to Associations of Training Providers where educators converge to share knowledge and best practices. LinkedIn offers a space for insights and networking, while our partnership with JA Europe opens doors to a broader educational community across the continent. – By joining S4R, you're not just accessing a training program; you're stepping into a role that shapes the future of retail. We offer the tools, resources, and network to enhance your training impact, ensuring your trainees are not only prepared for today's retail challenges but are equipped to lead tomorrow's innovations. Together, let's create a legacy of excellence in retail education, setting new standards for quality and relevance in an ever-evolving industry	
CEO of a Large Retailer	– Grow your retail business with S4R's comprehensive training resources. From entry-level to executive management, we've got you covered, empowering your team at every level. – Join the European Retail Skills Alliance and connect with the cream of the retail sector. Share insights, expand your knowledge, and grow your professional network. – S4R offers expert advice and support to implement cutting-edge skills training and development strategies. – Tackle digital transformation and sustainability challenges with S4R's skill-based solutions. Get ready to build a future-proof, resilient business. – Propel your staff to new heights with S4R! Ignite ambition and equip them with the latest skills to drive your company forward.	• EuroCommerce and JA Europe • Their local / national retail association • LinkedIn • Social interactions with counterparts • Retail events and trade shows • Retail Publications/. Websites

	_ Invest in the future by encouraging the youth in your company to grow with you. S4R helps foster long-term commitment and career development. _ Craft a tailored workplace development programme with S4R, ensuring your managers and staff evolve together. _ Boost your company's image and skyrocket your reputation both internally and in the market through progressive digital, green and people skills training. _ Stay ahead in the digital game and outpace the competition with S4R's advanced tech training. Embrace change and lead the retail industry. _ Learn how to implement comprehensive ESG strategies with S4R and ensure legislative compliance while aligning with consumer values. _ Join S4R today and revolutionise your approach to industry challenges, talent development, and sustainable growth.	

Promotional Strategy

RACE Approach

The promotional strategy presents the tactics that will be deployed over the lifetime of the project to Reach, Act towards, Convert, and Engage (RACE) each of the target groups; thus, creating widespread awareness and interest in the project.
Furthermore, the tactics presented below inform the definition of the various promotional campaigns that will be implemented to disseminate the project results and activities and serve the short and long-term communication and outreach objectives.

Table 3 RACE Approach

RACE approach		
Stage	Tactic	Key Measure
Reach **Build brand awareness, increase online visibility, grow the audience on multiple channels.**	– Officially launch the website – User-friendly design and easy navigation on the website – Organise stakeholder meetings & events. – Direct emailing and messages via the partners' network – Create and deploy awareness-raising campaigns and content. – Organic social media campaigns – Search Engine Optimisation for the website – Promote external thematic content and events. – Attend/participate in external events to present Skills4Retail. – Prepare launch news pack for the project partners	• Audience volume • Audience quality
Act **Prompt interactions, subscribers and leads, increase the positive sentiment vis-à-vis the project and outputs.**	– Promotion of the project newsletter – Create evergreen and thematic content for the project communication channels. – Direct emailing and messages via the partners' network – Develop engaging and interactive visual content. – Attend/participate in external events to present Skills4Retail. – Prepare launch news pack for the project partners.	• Time on site • Subscribers, likes and shares. • Community sign-ups • Downloads of outputs • Event registrations

	– Promote project outputs and results on the website. – Create and deploy campaigns and content on specific project outputs for different stakeholders	
Convert **Encourage downloads for training packs/ Drive registrations for training programmes, persuade key stakeholders to use the project results, increase brand trust**	– Develop targeted campaigns to recruit students for the training programmes. – Create and deploy campaigns on the benefits of the project outputs for each stakeholder. – Promote positive experiences from each student cohort. – Collect and publish case studies, success stories, impact research results. – Organic social media campaigns – Organise stakeholder meetings. – Encourage website visitors to register their interest for future training courses. – Ask companies, SMEs, VETs, Retail sector companies to participate in the programme. – Direct emailing towards key policymakers – Use strong calls-to-action on the website. – Organise engaging events / webinars / conferences for key stakeholders. – Feed the Community with thematic content	• Conversion • Registrations • LinkedIn Followers • Event Registrations
Engage **Encourage the multiplying effect, reward users, activate the community**	– Provide potential multipliers with a news/comms pack. – Collect and publish adopters' stories, use cases, success stories. – Recycle engaging content and feed it to potential new students / partners. – Direct emailing and messages via multipliers and partners' network – Student support programme for new students. – Encourage the use of the S4R online learning platform tools and features and provide user support.	• Repeat interactions. • Brand satisfaction and loyalty • Advocacy

RACE By Target Audience

The RACE approach will be tailored for each of the primary target audiences to ensure we create targeted campaigns using the right channels and communicating very specific messaging as defined in the Customer Personas above. The RACE strategy for each target audience is outlined in the figures below:

Unemployed Youth

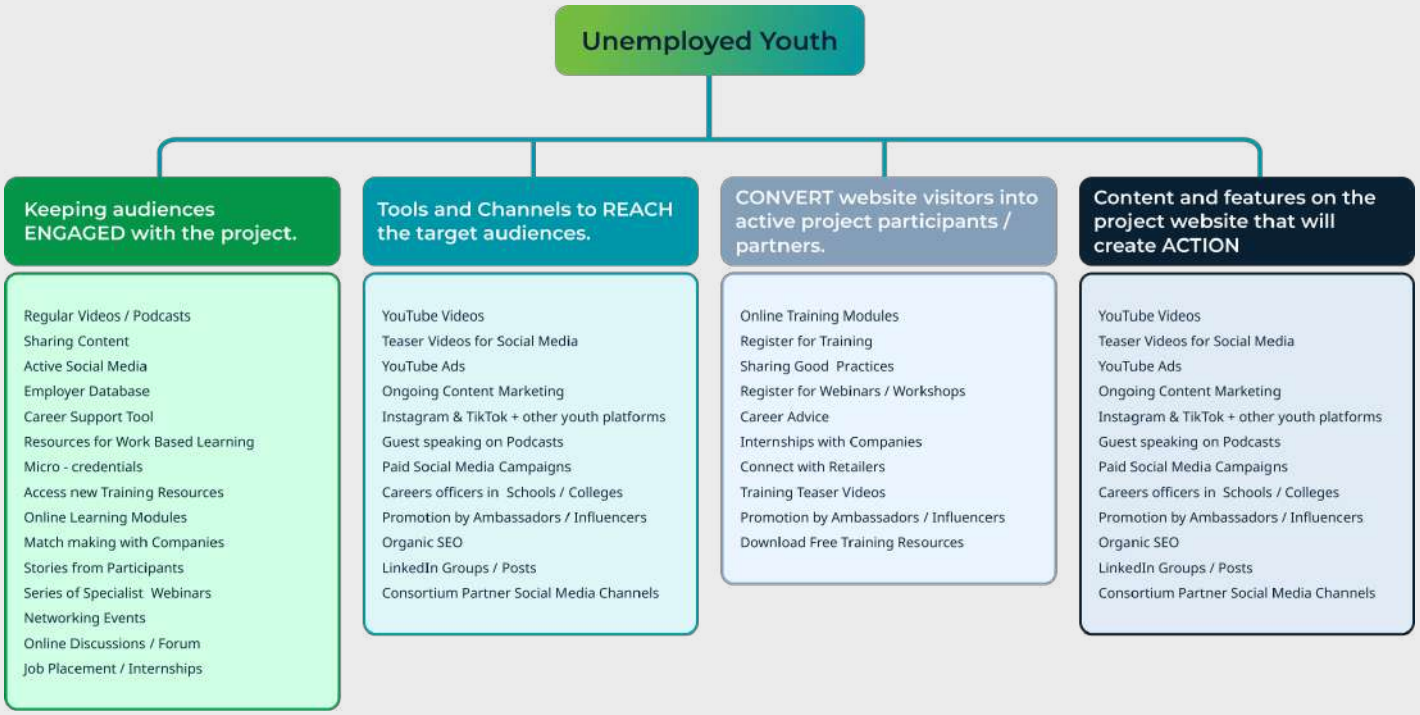


Figure 14 RACE for Unemployed Youth

Secondary School Students

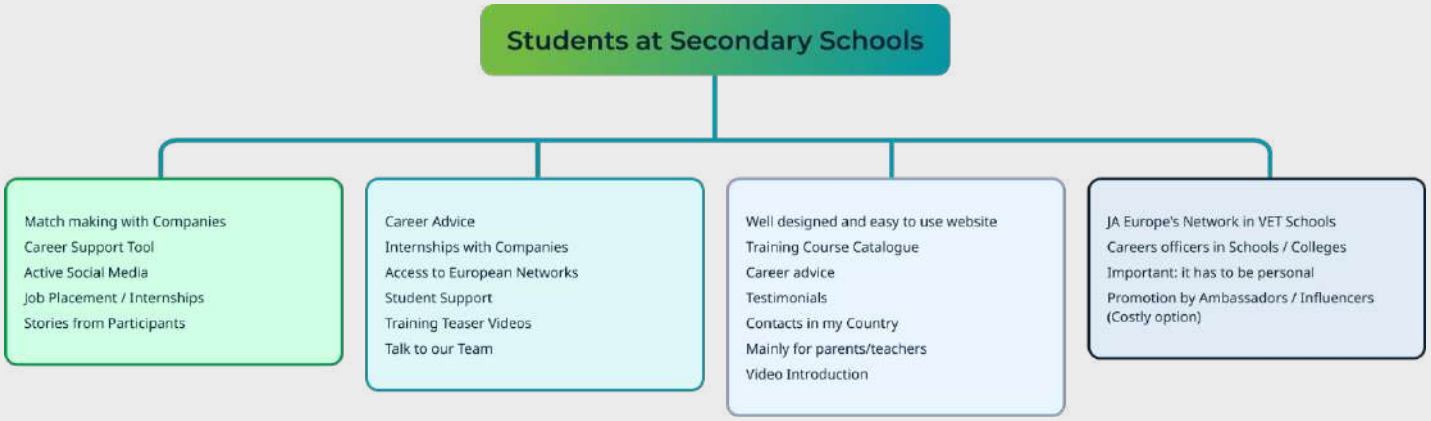


Figure 15 RACE for Secondary School Students

Retail Sale Staff

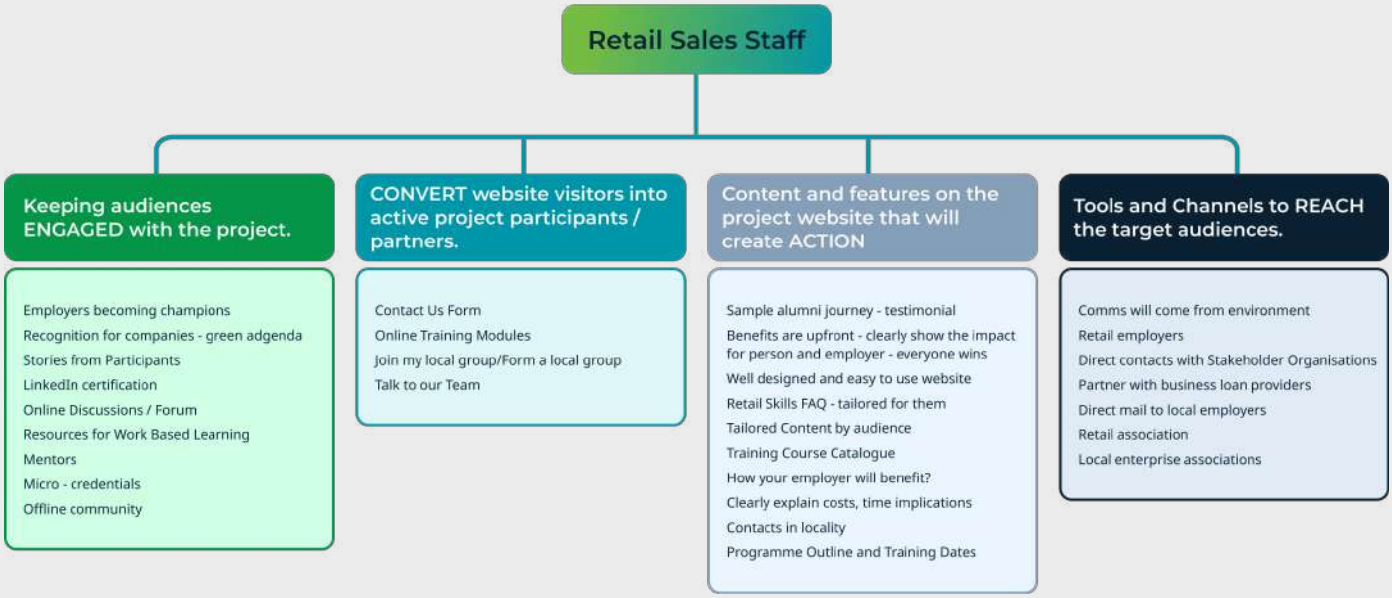


Figure 16 RACE for Retail Sales Staff

Human Resources Worker

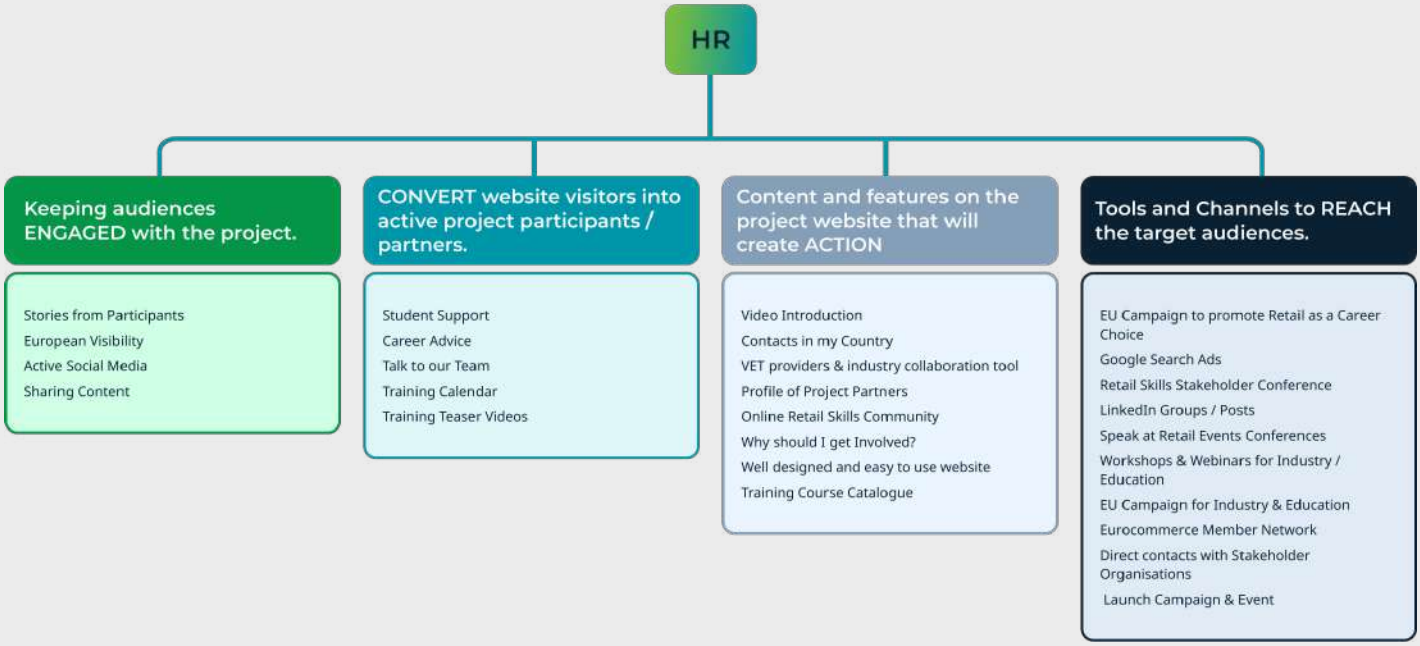


Figure 17 RACE for Human Resources Worker

Existing Retail Worker

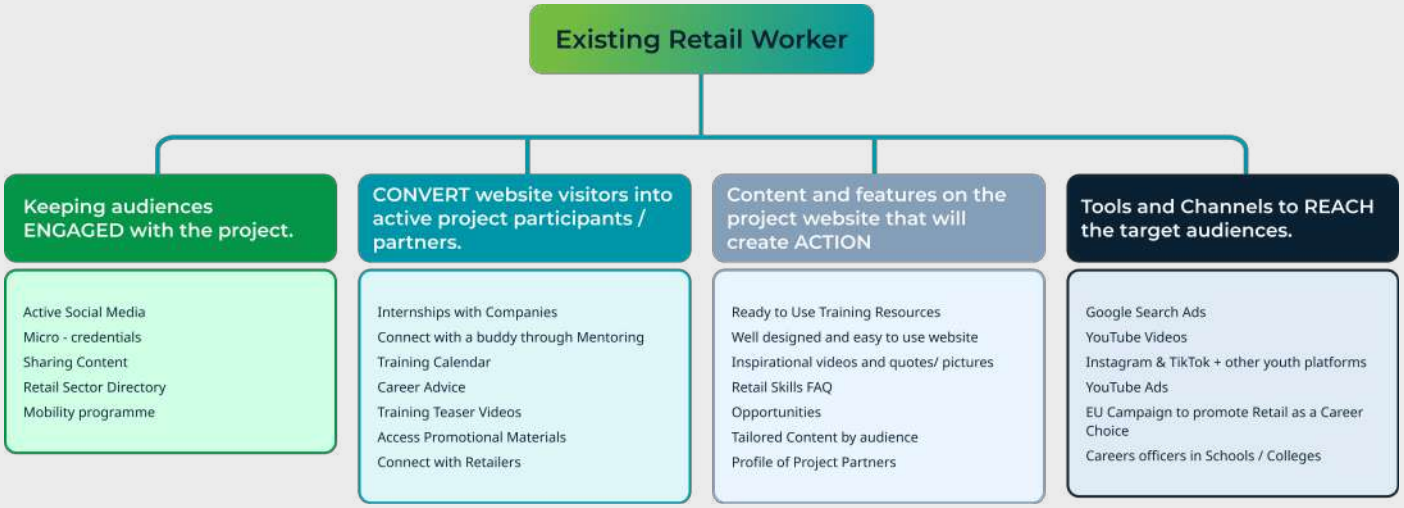


Figure 18 RACE for Existing Retail Worker

Logistics and Supply Chain Worker

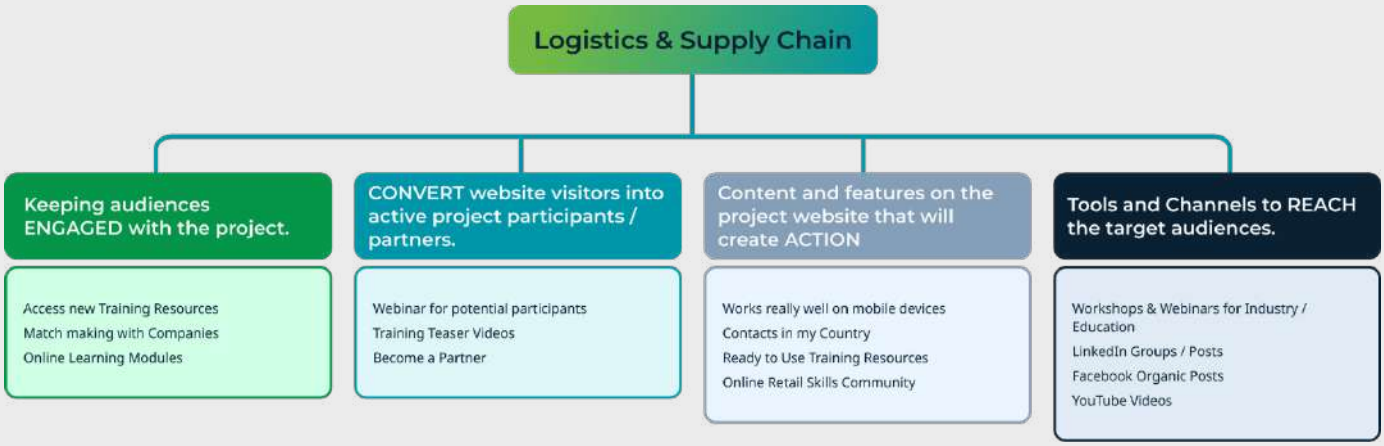


Figure 19 RACE for Logistics and Supply Chain Worker

Business Owners/Leaders

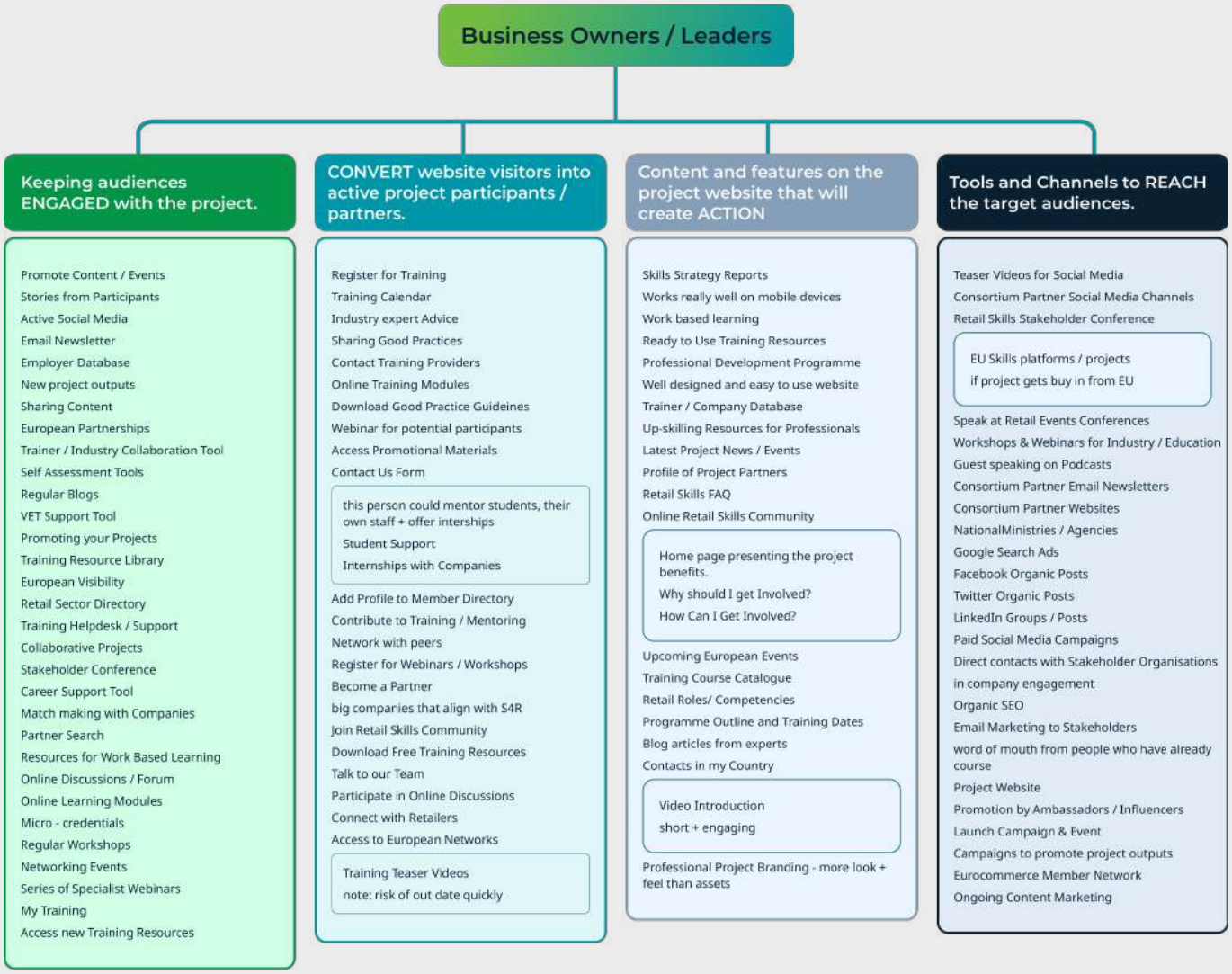
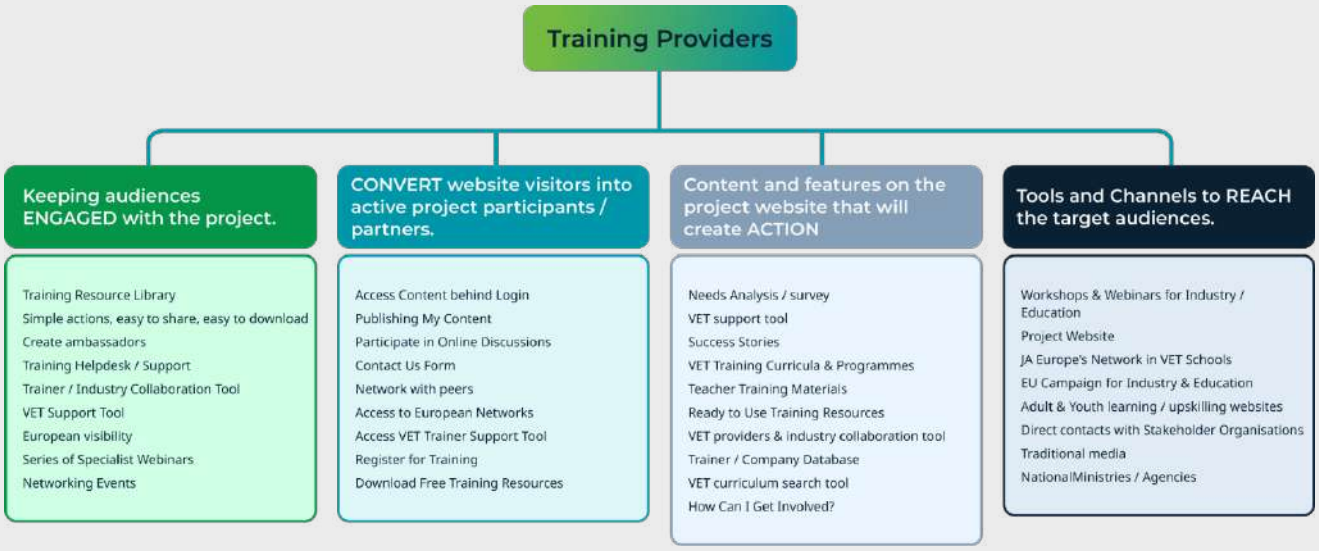


Figure 20 RACE for Business Owners/Leaders

Training Providers



Promotional Campaigns

Throughout the project duration, Skills4Retail will implement several promotional campaigns to reach the communication objectives. These are separated into two categories:

Category	General objective
EU-wide campaigns **Promote the training programme and the key project outputs to specific target audiences.**	• Create follower/subscriber base. • Drive enrolment in the courses • Collect feedback/input. • Recruit partners • Leverage multipliers
Mini campaigns **Promoting project activities, milestones, and results to key stakeholders and the general public.**	• Raise brand awareness. • Attract new followers/subscribers. • Promote success / case studies. • Recruit Partners • Leverage multipliers

EU-wide Campaigns

We will develop and implement 2 types of EU-wide Communications campaigns during the project as outlined in the table below:

Table 4 EU Wide Communications Campaigns

#	1	2
Campaign	**In Industry and Education Campaign to encourage widespread adoption**	**Skills4Retail Launch & Student Recruitment Campaigns**
Target audiences	• European SMEs and Retail Sector companies • VET providers, schools Training & Industry Partners who want to join S4R. • EU / National Digital Skills Stakeholders.	• Retail workers • Students • Unemployed youth • HR staff
Objectives	• Build awareness of the Skills4Retail Training Programme • Showcase the case studies and results. • Recruit new partners for a future phase of S4R as part of the sustainability strategy. • Encourage the employment of S4R graduates.	• Build awareness of the Skills4Retail training Programme • Maximise enrolments on each Skills4Retail training programme intake. • Generate sign ups. • Ensure training and revenue generation KPIs are achieved.

As part of the strategic planning, a Campaign Plan and Communications Pack will be developed before the rollout of each campaign. It will outline the concrete directions, messages, tools and channels used, and timeline for publications.

Each of these campaigns will be coordinated by the WP5 leader, with the proactive support of the project partners, associated partners and active multipliers.

Retailers Campaign

The Retailers Campaign with the Skills4Retail projects aims to engage with European retailers throughout the life cycle of the project. We will encourage them to partake in the programme and to engage with the Skills4Retail for the benefit of their businesses and their employees.

This will be an EU-wide campaign, with materials in English and localised by project partners to suit specific regional needs. The campaign will utilise various communication tools that previously have been presented. It has two main objectives,

1. Continuously foster and enhance ongoing collaboration between training providers and labour market stakeholders throughout the entire Retail Sector, ensuring the gradual implementation of VET training programs across Europe, and establishing feedback mechanisms to refine and enhance the strategy as required.
2. Create and animate a European Retail Skills Community including a wider group of key European stakeholders in an online community,

Table 5 Campaign for Retailers

Campaign activity	Components
Skills4Retail Pledge	Encourage Retailers to join the Skills4Retail pledge by signing up on the website once the training programmes are live. Pledge Members will be expected to actively engage in training initiatives, sharing best practices, and reporting on training achievements. By participating, Pledge members will gain exposure on the website, a badge to display on their own promotional material e.g. recruitment pages, careers pages etc. networking opportunities, and access to educational resources.
EU wide promotion	Engage with retail organisations throughout Europe to create awareness of the Skills4Retail programme Participate in relevant industry events, conferences, and forums to encourage retailers to join the Skills4Retail community.

Industry & Education Campaign

The Industry & Education Campaign within the Skills4Retail project aims to promote the project's outcomes and engage both industry and education providers throughout Europe. It will be an EU-wide campaign, with materials in English and localised by project partners to suit specific regional needs.

The campaign will utilise various communication tools that previously have been presented. Its primary objective is to highlight the project's key outputs, activities, and case studies from the programme to demonstrate best practices.

As part of our sustainability strategy, we will design a long-term action plan for the progressive EU wide rollout of project outputs after this initial 4-year project has finished.

The table below presents the campaign activities and their components:

Table 6 Industry and education campaign activities

Campaign activity	Components
Hybrid networking events	Plan and host hybrid online/offline networking events that bring together industry and education stakeholders
	Include presentations, panel discussions, and interactive sessions focusing on the project's achievements and outcomes
	Create opportunities for networking, collaboration, and partnerships between businesses and educational institutions
Multimedia content	Produce engaging content, testimonials, and success stories showcasing the impact of the project
	Develop informative articles, posts, and press releases highlighting key project milestones and achievements
	Utilise social media platforms and the project website to disseminate content and engage with the target audience
EU wide promotion	Engage with stakeholders to create awareness and gain support for the project's outcomes
	Participate in relevant industry events, conferences, and forums to present the project's achievements and foster collaboration

Through this comprehensive and targeted Industry & Education Campaign, the Skills4Retail project seeks to disseminate its achievements, inspire collaboration, and create a lasting impact on the digital skills landscape in Europe.

Communication Channels & Tools

The below table provides an overview of the main communication tools that will be used for the dissemination and outreach activities of the Skills4Retail project as well as their respective characteristics of communication.

Table 7 Comms Tools and Channels

Tool	Channel	Characteristic
Skills4Retail Website	Portal for LMS	Official, informative, welcoming
	Blog articles	Semi-formal, informative, narrative, engaging
Social media	LinkedIn**	Professional, informative, visual, engaging, interactive
	Twitter **	Semi-formal, informative, interactive
	Facebook**	Informal, informative, visual, engaging
	Instagram**	
Mailing	Project email newsletter	Official, informative, narrative, promotional
	Partners' email newsletter	
	Direct mailing/message	Informal, informative, promotional
Press & media	Press releases	Official, informative, storytelling
	Press articles	
Events/Webinars	Project events	Official, informative, storytelling, promotional
	External representations	
Visual assets	Online and offline communications	Official, informative, visual, engaging
Partner comms channels	Social media, websites and email newsletters.	Official, informative, narrative, promotional

These tools are presented in more detail in the below sections while developing the rationale, objectives, contents, and use.

** Dissemination will be on partner platforms initially with S4R channels created as required.

Skills4Retail Website

The Skills4Retail website is available at www.Skills4Retail.eu. The website has two main purposes:

- Informative: it informs stakeholders about the project — through a narrative-based user experience — make all public project results available.
- Collaborative: it will host/link to the Skills4Retail Digital teaching resources for students and trainers.

The website uses a WordPress CMS to allow content updates and collaboration across the consortium partners.

The website will be developed in two phases:

- Light version: static website with basic pages, a contact form and blog posts. (launched 17/01/2024)

Figure 21 Skills4Retail Website on several devices

Figure 22 Screenshot from partner page on Skills4Retail.eu

- Full version: integration of the resource section (due date: dependant on completion of course content)

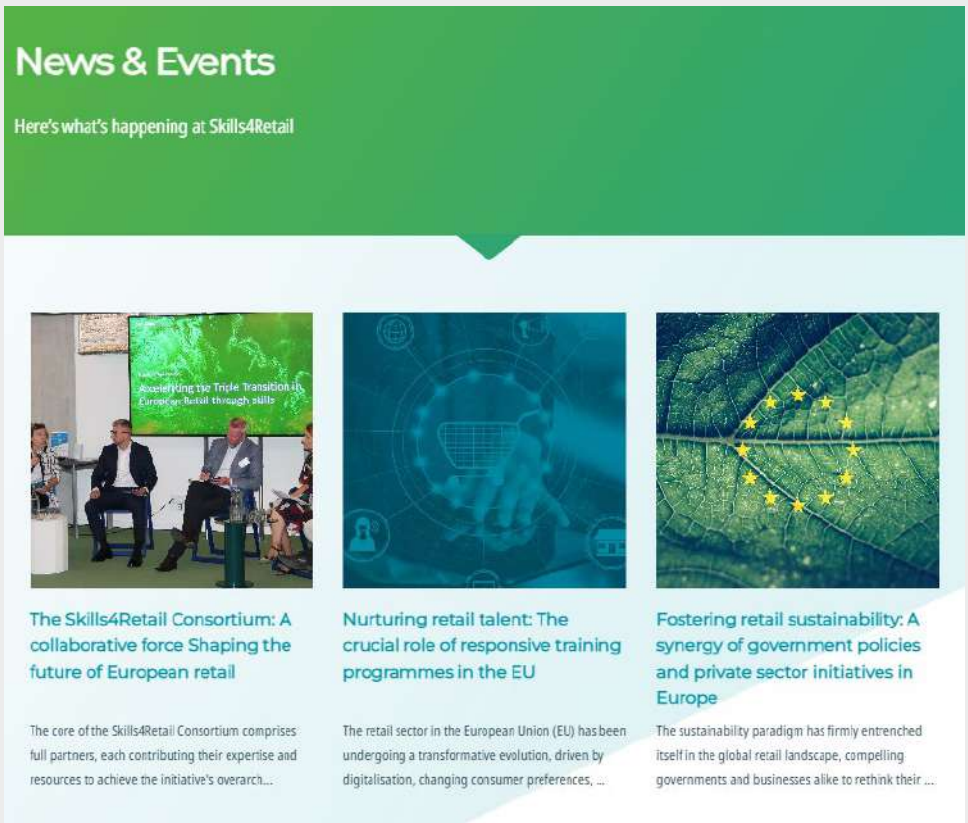


Figure 23 News and Events Section on www.skills4retail.eu

The website's blog, a.k.a. News & Events section, is the one-stop-shop for the latest updates on the project and related topics — positioning Skills4Retail as leader and expert in its field. It will include:

- Informative articles on the project's milestones, outputs progress/release, and activities
- News on related European projects and initiatives
- Announcement of all Skills4Retail events
- Evergreen content and hot topics content on retails skills, digital transformation and the 'Triple Transition' — green, digital and resilience skills

Social Media

Skills4Retail will communicate on partner channels initially, until the training programme is at recruitment stage.

Skills4Retail will launch a LinkedIn, Facebook, or Instagram account, if required when recruiting for the first cohort of students commences. Prior to the launch of the official channels, social media presence on Facebook and Instagram will be ensured via the partners' social media channels (see here) and active multipliers — respectively to reach out to education and training professionals and potential learners, more specifically students.

Social media Engagement Strategy

Resources will be allocated to specific actions to create an active community of followers on Skills4Retail social media accounts:

- Regular flow of publications and interactions with Skills4Retail' ecosystem
- Promotion of Skills4Retail accounts via the project email newsletter
- Promotion of Skills4Retail accounts via partners' social media channels and email newsletters
- Promotion towards targeted audiences with the use of sponsored content
- Use of relevant hashtags

Studies showed that social media communications including hashtags are more likely to draw engagement. Thus, Skills4Retail channels will leverage existing popular hashtags:
#DigitalSkills #RetailSkills #GreenSkills #ResilienceSkills #RetailTraining #VETProgramme #WorkBasedLearning #SkillsDevelopment #RetailEducation #FutureOfWork #CareerDevelopment #Upskilling #RetailInnovation #EuropeanRetail #TalentDevelopment #SustainabilitySkills #DigitalTransformation #SkillsGap #TrainingProgramme

In parallel, partners will use a common hashtag #Skills4Retail to improve brand awareness and facilitate the tracking and impact assessment of Skills4Retail communications.

WP5 leader manages the Skills4Retail social media accounts to ensure a regular flow of information and editorial consistency. Partners are encouraged to submit interesting and related content directly to Aoife O'Driscoll, (aoife@matrixinternet.ie) such as:

- Partners' own content related to the topics of the project.
- Third-party content that partners find suitable and interesting for Skills4Retail target audiences (e.g., evergreen content, hot topics content).

Mailing

The official Skills4Retail newsletter is set up on Brevo. It will be issued every second month — starting from year 2 — and in an ad-hoc manner, when needed. It will be used to communicate about the project progress and results and key related topics.

WP5 leader manages the Skills4Retail newsletter editorial line to ensure consistency. Partners are encouraged to submit interesting and related content directly to Aoife O'Driscoll (aoife@matrixinternet.ie) to be promoted on the newsletter.

- Partners' own content related to the topics of the project.
- Third-party content that partners find suitable and interesting for our target audiences (e.g., evergreen content, hot topics content)

All partners can already subscribe to Skills4Retail newsletter. To promote the newsletter, partners are encouraged to share it with their network.

Website visitors can subscribe to the newsletter via an embedded form on the homepage.

Figure 24 Newsletter sign-up on homepage of www.skills4retail.eu

For some specific communication and outreach purposes such as surveys, event invitations, or establishing the first contact for further communication and support, consortium partners will reach out to stakeholders and potential multipliers via direct mailing. This includes:

- Sending emails to individuals and organisations by consortium representatives
- Using partners' mailing lists/contacts to target specific target audiences.

All mailing lists will be managed respecting GDPR norms.

Press and media

Press releases will be published throughout the project. These aim to enhance the visibility of the Skills4Retail project and share the most relevant outcomes of the project with the press. The following press release has already been produced:

- Press release on the launch of the Skills4Retail (September 2023)

Each project partner will distribute the press releases to their respective networks and media contacts. Project partners will also be encouraged to host the press releases on their website and share them via their newsletters and social media channels.

Visual Assets

Several visual assets will be produced by the WP5 leaders to serve the communication and outreach activities throughout the project lifetime. The visual assets will be produced in English. Partners can themselves choose to localise these assets.

Figure 25 Sample Visual Asset for Instagram

Figure 26 Sample Visual Asset for LinkedIn

Figure 27 Sample Visual asset for X/twitter

The table below presents the initial assets that will be provided to the partnership:

Table 8 Visual Assets

Asset	Use for/on
Email marketing template	Email marketing, direct emailing
Online banners	Skills4Retail EU-wide and mini-campaigns, social media posts, email marketing
Flyer/brochure	Online/on-site events, project website
Infographics and branded graphics	Websites, social media posts, email marketing
Roll-up banner	Physical events
Official PPT presentation	Online/on-site events, direct emailing
Partnership logos image	Online/on-site events, social media posts
Visual identity manual & communication toolkit	Localisation and creation of own content

Events/Webinars

As part of the Industry & Education campaign we will organise a stakeholder Conference in year 4 to secure high-level adoption of the VET curriculum and training programmes by EU and National Education policy makers and encourage integration into national skills strategies and VET curriculum. The conference will aim to present and review the lessons learned from the pilot training programmes and generate buy-in to roll out the strategy and further VET Training Programme pilots at a national level across all programme countries.
The conference will be attended by key project stakeholders from the European Commission, National Education and Employment Ministries, and Education and Industry Representative Bodies and Social Partners at EU and national level. The objective is to create a 'top-down' dissemination of the programme and integrate the new VET Curriculum and Training Programmes into national policy and training initiatives.

All partners are also encouraged to organise/host events for their key audiences to support the communication efforts both at national and EU level. This can take the form of:

- A standalone local, national, or pan-European (online/on-site) event: this format of events can be used to promote the project at large or specific outputs to a large audience.
- A multi-stakeholders meeting: this format can be interesting to create a personalised relationship with key stakeholders, in smaller committees, and promote the project, the outputs, and/or recruit new multipliers and associated partners.

- A workshop or presentation embedded into partners' flagship events: this format is lightweight and interesting for partners to raise awareness about the project and its outputs towards their organisations' key stakeholders.

In any event, partners can rely on the WP5 leader to support them in their event-based dissemination efforts — be it by directly contributing to the content of the event or creating supporting material (visual assets, invitations, etc.)

Over the duration of the project, all partners can participate and contribute to (large-scale) strategic external events to boost the project dissemination and impact.
E.g. Shoptalk Europe, EuroShop trade fair, EuroCIS, Fruit Logistica, Food Expo Greece, ISM Cologne, PLMA 'World of Private Label', Shoptalk Europe.

The preliminary mapping of interesting events will be further developed over the duration of the project by the project partners.

Case Studies and Good Practices

The development of case studies and good practice examples aim at showcasing the effectiveness and impact of the Skills4Retail programme. We will create electronic documents and video case studies in English, with the possibility of localising them as needed to ensure relevance and accessibility across different regions.

The objective of developing case studies and good practice examples is to provide tangible evidence of the program's success in strengthening competitiveness, delivering societal benefits, and driving positive change in the digital skills landscape. Through surveys, interviews, and feedback aggregation, we aim to gather valuable insights from industry partners, host companies, and students to evaluate the program's effectiveness and identify areas for ongoing improvement. Additionally, we will analyse the impact of the program in promoting gender equality, ethnic diversity, creating educational opportunities, and reducing unemployment among disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

The table below presents the output of case studies and promotion of project results:

Table 9 Case studies and good practices

Activity	Elements
Survey and interviews	Conduct surveys and interviews with industry partners, host companies, and students to collect feedback on the program's outcomes and effectiveness

	Evaluate the extent to which the program has contributed to strengthening competitiveness and delivering benefits to society Get recommendations for ongoing improvement to enhance the program's impact and relevance
Case Studies and Good Practice Examples	Develop case studies that showcase successful outcomes Document the impact of industry-education collaborations Highlight good practices that can serve as inspiration for future initiatives
Video / multimedia content for promotion	Using visual storytelling techniques to highlight success stories and program benefits Use visual storytelling techniques to highlight success stories and program benefits
Impact analysis	Perform an analysis of the collected feedback to assess the program's impact on increasing gender equality, promoting ethnic diversity, and creating new educational opportunities Evaluate the program's role in reducing unemployment among disadvantaged and vulnerable groups Identify key success factors and challenges in achieving these objectives and use them as a basis for improvement

By developing case studies, good practice guidelines, and multimedia content, we aim to effectively communicate the achievements and impact of the programme. These resources will serve as valuable tools for promotion, sharing knowledge, and inspiring future initiatives.

Processes, implementation, and reporting

The consortium agreed to implement internal communication processes to facilitate the implementation and reporting of the communication and outreach activities. The below sections present these processes and their strategic value.

Campaign planning

Starting from when, the promotional strategy will be translated into a clear campaign plan — an actionable document defining the communication and dissemination activities to be performed.
There will be four iterations in total:

Delivery phase	Active period	Campaigns	
Phase 1	M1-M24	• Launch of S4R branding and website	• S4R Launch campaign. • Brand launch • Website and Landing Page Launch

Phase 2	M36-M48	• Launch of Skills4Retail and campaign to promote the new Retail Skills Strategy and maximise participation in the urgent training courses.	• EU wide campaign focused on recruiting VET and students for training programme. • Teaser Campaign • Social Media Campaign • Email Marketing Campaign
Phase 3	M36-M48	• Campaign to maximise enrolment for S4R VET training programmes in each target country.	• EU wide campaign focused on recruiting students and retail sector companies. • Teaser Campaign • Social Media Campaign • Email Marketing Campaign
Phase 4	M24-M48	• EU wide campaign focused on Industry and Education • EU wide campaign promoting benefits of pursuing a career in the Retail sector and the resultant opportunities afford	• EU wide campaign focused on Industry and Education • Webinars and hybrid online / offline networking events, highlighting key outputs, activities, and case studies. • Social Media Campaign

Campaign planning loop

To create and validate the quarterly strategic plannings, the following cycle will be observed:

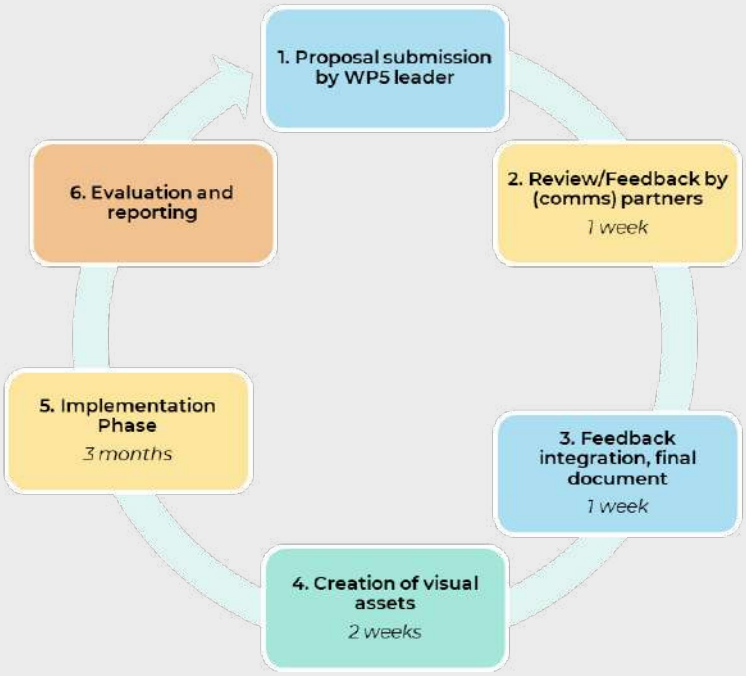


Figure 28 Campaign planning loop

Phase 1: WP5 leader delivers the campaign proposal in M-2 of its effective start date.

Phase 2: Partners review and give feedback on the proposal. They should add any other elements that they deem important — including completing the event mapping and speaking opportunities.

Phase 3: WP5 leader integrates the feedback received and liaises with the relevant partners to finalise the campaign planning. If any event and/or speaking opportunities are listed, WP5 leader will contact the potential speakers/contributors within the consortium.

Phase 4: WP5 leader creates the supporting visual assets, in English. Partners can themselves choose to localise these assets. In the latter case, they can ask the WP5 leader for the designer files.

Phase 5: During the 3-month campaign period, all partners commit to implementing the strategic planning through their own communication tools and channels.

Phase 6: Partners will be invited to report on their past 3-month activities at the end of each cycle. Example: In Feb 2024, partners will report on the past 3-month implementation phase, covering the period from 01/11/2023 to 31/01/2023.

Tools and practicalities

The consortium agreed to use Teams as its main tools for internal communication. In this light, several communication channels have been created/highlighted and agreed to be used in the following respect:

Channel	Used for
Communication thread **Teams posts**	• Announcements and updates • Document sharing • Knowledge sharing • Notifications and reminders
Repository **Teams files**	• Document storage and organisation • Collaborative editing • Document sharing, templates, and resources
Event calendar **Teams calendar**	• Event planning • Deadline management • Reminders and notifications

Figure 29 Internal communication tools in Skills4Retail

All partners appointed a person, within their organisation, who will be the main contact person for all communication and dissemination related activities. In turn, this should greatly support the high level of quality and impact of the project communication activities.

Reporting and evaluation

As presented in the quarterly campaign planning loop (see **Phase 6**), partners will report every 3 months on their past activities. All the reporting will be centralised via a google form or Excell Sheet on Teams, and the data processed by the WP5 leader.

The data collected will be used for:

- Providing the necessary information to the WP1 leader to fill in the project internal reports (interim, final reports)
- Assessing, in a continuous manner, the impact of the communication activities to reach the project KPIs.
- Being able to adapt future communication strategic planning.

In addition, the communications activities and progress towards KPIs will be actively monitored and reported via the quarterly flash reports.

Review

Work Package No/Name	WP5 Dissemination & European Impact
Deliverable Name	D5.1 Communications Strategy & Package of Comms Materials
Partners involvement	Matrix Internet & Schuman Associates
Submission Deadline (As per Annual Work Plan)	

Rate	1	2	3	4	5
Quality Parameter	very low/strongly disagree	low/disagree	moderate/ neither nor	high/ agree	very high/strongly agree
1. The work performed corresponds to the requirements and methodological standards of the project.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Insert text here...Insert text here...					
2. The drafting and structuring of each deliverable include the contribution of all relevant experts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Insert text here...Insert text here...					
3. Deliverables use clear and easily understandable language in the text and the design is professional and in line with the project brand identity, guidelines, and document template.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Insert text here...Insert text here...					
4. The output is in line with the standards adopted by the European Commission.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Insert text here...Insert text here...					
Name of the WP Leader	Aoife O'Driscoll and Kim Schierke				
Submission Date	26/01/2024				

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