

INTRODUCTION

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have to react quickly to the changes of economic situation and market's expectation in still-changing and turbulent surrounding.

SMEs are close to their clients and that is why they can quite easily identify and shape their needs as well as other stakeholders. On the other hand their weak point is an inability of managing trainings in a strategic way both young and newly employed workers as well as people with long experience. This emerges from the lack of ability to predict future needs and the lack of concrete action programs. The lack of ability to analyse organisation's internal structures, its organisational culture and strategy through predicting and defining educational and training needs can expose the company to danger of losing the ability of overcoming crises and stop company's development. It cannot also lead to the effective competition and to the building of competitive advantage in a continuous way.

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES OF RESEARCHES

1. Research issues:

A questionnaire research, in frames of international Leonardo da Vinci Project '**SMEs Training Plans**', has been conducted in May and June 2002 on a chosen group of Small and Medium Enterprises belonging to four different sectors:

- Advertisement agencies
- Furniture companies
- Printing houses
- Footwear companies

The companies were chosen according to the planed, within the project, future action concerning cooperation network between the Academy of Humanities and Economics in Lodz and chosen companies (from particular sectors) in order to raise graduates competences and skills and help them to find a job in mentioned professions.

The research included 20% of companies from each sector that have their quarters in Lodz and lodzkie voivodship – this percentage was assumed as the necessary minimum for conducting such researches.

2. The profile of chosen research technique:

The questionnaire used in this research had been created by Italian partner – Servindustria - in English, the official language of the project, and has been translated into mother tongue of each organisation taking part in it. The questionnaire is not anonymous, it consist of three parts: company's data: personal data of person who conducted the research, company's name, date of filling-in, questionnaire code and comments of a person who conduct the questionnaire concerning the research, thematic section and comments of the company's representative on the merit quality of the questionnaire and the way of conducting it, etc.

3. General profile of examined group in frames of particular line sectors:

The research had a partial character – it was conducted on a part of examined community called a "trial group." Seventy two Small and Medium Enterprises were examined what makes 20% of the whole amount of companies in particular sector acting in lodzkie voivodship:

- Advertisement agencies – 30 companies
- Furniture companies – 29 companies
- Printing houses – 13 companies
- Footwear companies – 7 companies

4. The strategy of researches:

The companies were selected according to such resources as: "Polish Telephone Books, Lodz and lodzkie voivodship 2002/2003", "Telephone Book, Companies, Institutions and Individual Clients 2002", "Panorama of Companies 2003" – this resource was the basis for companies' data verification. The discrepancy between particular researches was caused by four factors that appeared during the researches:

- the possibility of reaching a company from particular sector (some of the companies finished their business although their data were still present in the resources);
- the readiness of companies' representatives to participate in the research;
- the amount of companies' data, from particular sectors in lodzkie voivodship (the greatest index was noticed among advertisement agencies, and the lowest one among footwear firms).
- Time dedicated to researches that was limited by the project guidelines concerning project's stages and financial resources. But the basic criterion of 20% was fulfilled – this was helpful for data verification.

4.1 Indicators describing the structure of statistical set:

Statistical data can be described in a concise or detailed way. This depends partly on the data profile and partly on the aim of using them (Domański, 1991). For these particular research the concise way is necessary with use of two well known profiles: arithmetical average and weighted-average that were used in these researches.

The arithmetical average is a value of characteristic that each unit of a set would possess if the division of a sum of characteristic's values is equal, i.e. by each unit of the set the same value of characteristic is present. It is defined as a sum of measurable characteristics' values divided by the amount of units belonging to the finished statistical set (Domański, 1991).

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n x_i}{n}$$

For divergent series so called formula of arithmetical weighted-average is applicable:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^k x_i n_i$$

5. Description of sections:

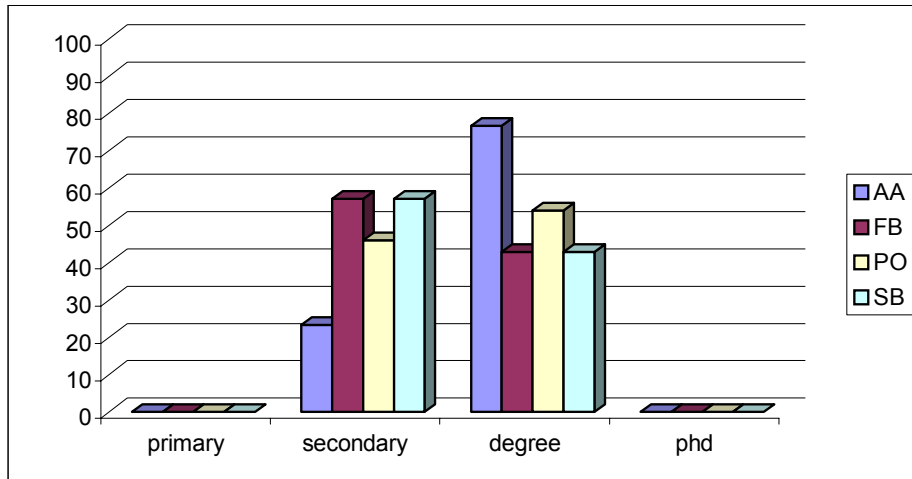
- **Section A** – concerns personal data of interviewed who are authorised to fill in the questionnaire
- **Section B** – regarding general information about the company
- **Section C** – information about the customers
- **Section D** – competition of the chosen trade
- **Section E** – relations between sector associations and the company board
- **Section F** – company promotion activities
- **Section G** – regarding training requirements

5.1 Section A:

5.1.1 Education level of interviewed.

Four indexes were taken into account to measure the level of education: primary education, secondary education, higher education and doctorate. The diagram below shows the percentage distribution of educational level of the interviewed.

Diagram. 1 Percentage distribution of educational level of the interviewed



Explanation of abbreviations:

AA – Advertising agencies

FB – Furniture branch

PO – Printing offices

SB – Shoe branch

Source: own analysis

As shown in the diagram, no respondents in the analysed branches have primary education or doctorate level. The most numerous group with higher education level is represented by advertising agencies (76,67%), in other branches it distributes into: 54%-printing houses and 42,86%-furniture companies and shoe companies. The second largest group is represented by secondary education level:

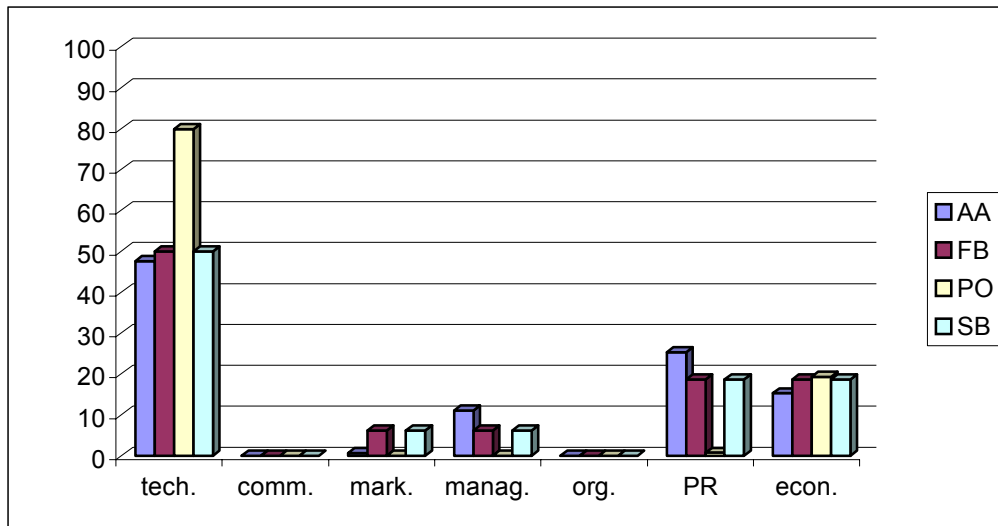
- 23,33% - advertising agencies
- 57,14% - furniture companies
- 46% - printing houses
- 57,14% - shoe companies

5.1.2 Types of education (A3)

Following types of education were taken into account within the research:

- Technical
- Commercial
- Marketing
- Managing
- Organisational
- Public Relations
- Economic

Diagram 2. Percentage distribution of respondents' type of education



Explanation of abbreviations:

AA – Advertising agencies

FB – Furniture branch

PO – Printing offices

SB – Shoe branch

Source: own analysis

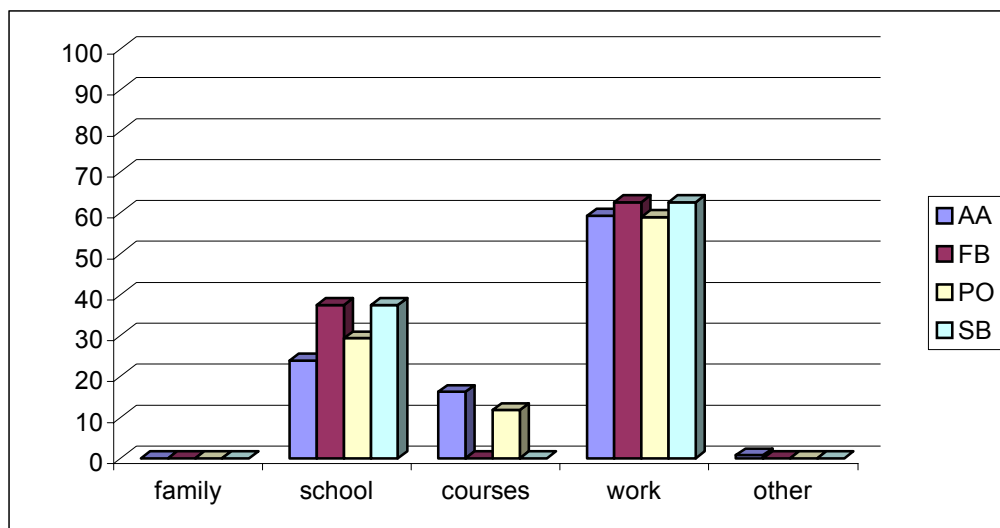
Most respondents in all branches have technical education: advertising agencies – 47,67%, furniture and shoe companies - 50%, printing houses – 79,6%. Another popular type of education is economic one: advertising agencies – 15,3%, furniture and shoe companies - 18,75%, printing houses – 19,33%. Then interviewed declared following types of education:

- Public Relations – 25,3% (AA), 18,75%(FB,SB) oraz 0,77%(PO)
- Managing – 11,06%(AA), 6,25%(FB,SB) oraz 0%(PO)
- Marketing – 0,67%(AA), 6,25%(FB,SB) oraz 0%(PO)

As far as commercial or organisational areas as types of education are concerned there were no interviewed with this type of education in any branches.

5.1.3 The way of gaining job competences needed to work in the sector (A4).

Diagram 3. Percentage distribution of respondents' way of gaining their job competences



Explanation of abbreviations:

AA – Advertising agencies

FB – Furniture branch

PO – Printing offices

SB – Shoe branch

Source: own analysis

The research shows that most respondents in all branches gained their job competences at work: 59,3% of the advertising agencies representatives: 62,5% of the furniture and shoe company representatives and 58,94% of the printing house representatives. Another factor that influenced gaining job competences was school, where the percentage distribution is as follows: advertising agencies – 23,8%, furniture and shoe companies - 37,5% and printing houses – 29,3%.

5.2 Section B:

5.2.1 Number of employees. (B2)

The number of employees within analysed branches distributes as follows:

Table 2. Number of employees percentage distribution in analysed branches.

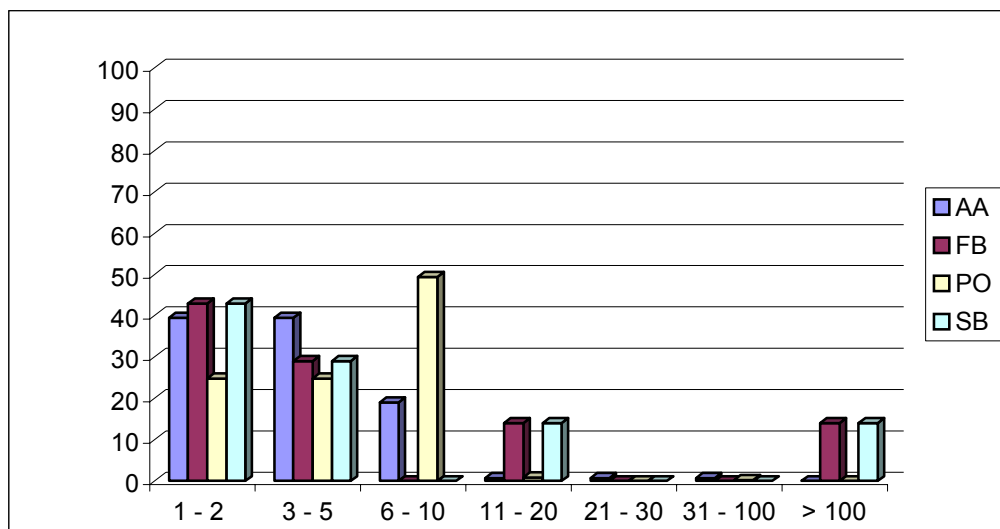
Firm	1-2	3-5	6-10	11-20	21-30	31-100	> 100	Σ
AA	39,5	39,5	18,96	0,68	0,68	0,68	0	100
FB	43	29	0	14	0	0	14	100
PO	24,8	24,8	49,33	0,82	0	0,25	0	100
SB	43	29	0	14	0	0	14	100

source: own analysis

As it is shown in the above table, most of the analysed companies employ 1-2 employees: advertising agencies – 39,5%, furniture and shoe companies - 43%, printing houses – 24,8%. The range: from 3 to 5 employees is the second largest one: advertising agencies – 39,5%, furniture and shoe companies - 29%, printing houses – 24,8. Printing offices usually employ 6-10 employees – 49,33% of the companies declared such personnel strategy. The smallest percentage regards the range from 21 to 30 employees while 14% of furniture and shoe companies employ more than 100 employees. The research shows that analysed companies are very small or on the other hand very large ones.

The diagram below reflects the results mentioned.

Diagram 4. Number of employees percent distribution.



Explanation of abbreviations:

AA – Advertising agencies

FB – Furniture branch

PO – Printing offices

SB – Shoe branch

Source: own analysis

5.2.2 Employees with regard to type of employment (B3):

Table 3. Type of employment percentage distribution.

Firm	Adm.	Prod.	Comm.	PR	Tech.	Maint.	Σ
AA	20,01	36,23	24,96	0,99	17,6	0,21	100
FB	0,9	39,7	58,8	0,22	0,19	0,19	100
PO	0,3	46,45	0,29	0,06	0,06	52,84	100
SB	0,9	39,7	58,8	0,22	0,19	0,19	100

Source: own analysis

In all branches most employees are employed in production and commercial departments: 36,23% in advertisement agencies, 39,7% in furniture and shoe companies and 46,45% in printing houses. The second largest type of employment is commercial: 24,96% in advertisement agencies 58,8% in furniture and shoe companies. Moreover in printing houses there is a large number of employees dealing with current maintenance 52,84%, while in the advertising agencies – in the field of administration: 20,01%. The least numerous area of employment in all branches is Public Relations what is reflected by the following percentage distribution: advertising agencies – 0,99%, furniture and shoe companies - 0,22%, printing houses – 0,06%.

5.2.3 Changes in the personnel structure during last two years (B4):

Table 4. Percentage distribution of personnel fluctuation in different branches:

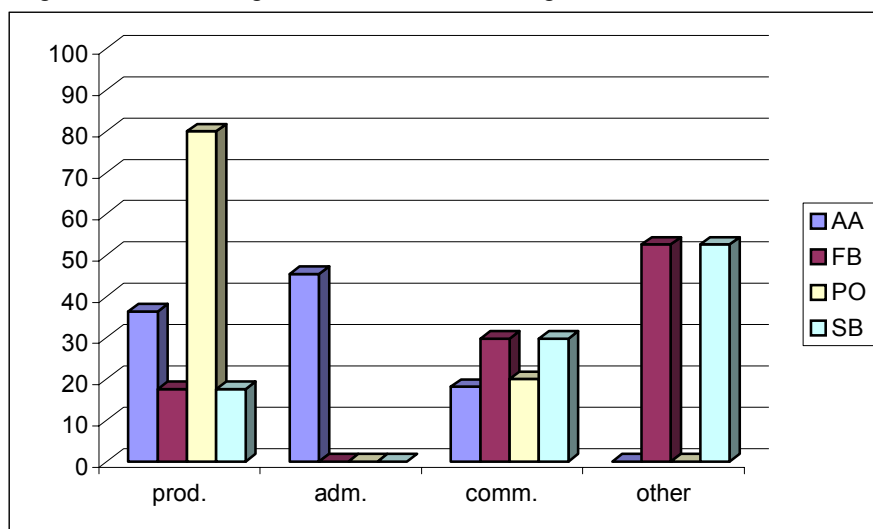
Firm	Increased	The same level	Reduced	Σ
AA	26,7	40	33,3	100
FB	42,8	14,4	42,8	100
PO	31	38	31	100
SB	42,8	14,4	42,8	100

Source: own analysis

Both in furniture and shoe companies personnel increased or was reduced by 42,8%. In the remaining 14% it remained at the same level. In 40% of advertising companies the level of employment was relatively stable but the increase represented by these companies was also the slowest in this sector. In case of printing houses the distribution of employees was steady, so 31% of the companies reduced the level of employment while 38% from this branch remained on the same level.

5.2.4 Areas of growth (B5)

Diagram 5: Percentage distribution of labour growth in different branches



Explanation of abbreviations:

AA – Advertising agencies

FB – Furniture branch

PO – Printing offices

SB – Shoe branch

Source: own analysis

The highest employment growth in advertising agencies regards administration departments – 45,48% of all companies, and production - 36,39%. In case of furniture and shoe companies the highest employment growth was noticed in other (not specified in the research) departments – 52,6%

5.2.5 Sector origins / training of the new employees. (B6, 7):

Table 5. Percent distribution of employees' sector origins in different branches.

Firm	Same sector	Other sectors	Trainings	Σ
AA	43,7	25	31,3	100
FB	25	50	25	100
PO	50	16,7	33,3	100
SB	25	50	25	100

Source: own analysis

Table 6. Percentage distribution of employees' job qualifications in different branches.

Firm	Qualified	Nonqualified	Σ
AA	46	54	100
FB	50	50	100
PO	50	50	100
SB	50	50	100

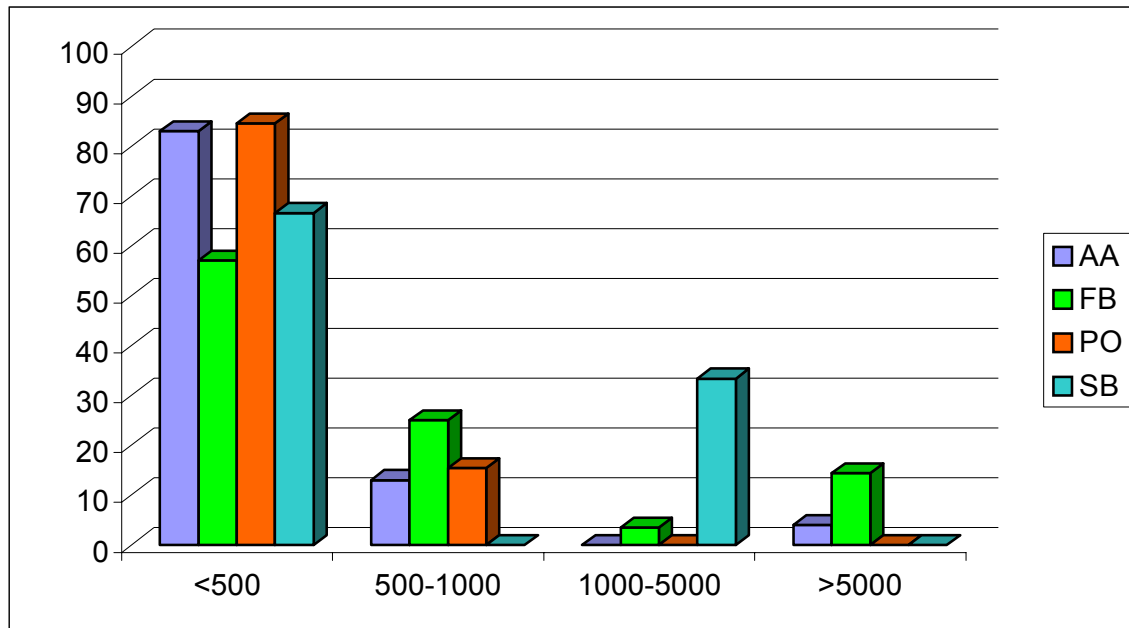
Source: own analysis

Most newly employed in the shoe and furniture branch came from other branch sectors – 50%, while 42,7% of advertising agencies and 50% in printing houses – came from the same sector. Average percentage distribution regarding employing newly trained workers was as follows: in advertising agencies – 31,3%, in furniture and shoe companies – 25% and in printing houses – 33,3%.

5.3 Section C:

5.3.1 The number of customers in different branches in the last year (C1):

Diagram 6. Number of customers percentage distribution in different branches



Explanation of abbreviations:

AA – Advertising agencies

FB – Furniture branch

PO – Printing offices

SB – Shoe branch

Source: own analysis

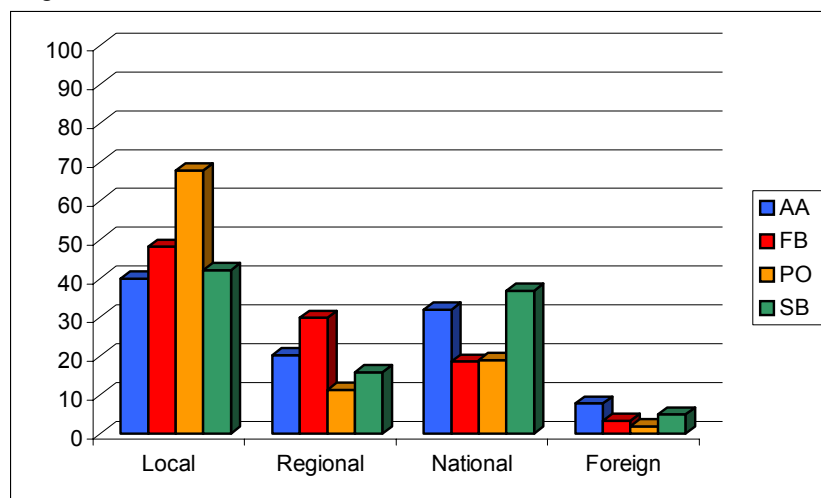
Most analysed companies have less than 500 customers:

- 83% advertising agencies
- 57% furniture companies
- 84,6% printing houses
- 66,6% shoe companies

Only 33,4% of shoe companies have 1000 – 5000 customers and 14,4% of furniture companies have more than 1000 of them.

5.3.2 Approximate customers' distribution by different branches (C2):

Diagram 7. Percent distribution of different kind of customers in branches



Explanation of abbreviations:

AA – Advertising agencies

FB – Furniture branch

PO – Printing offices

SB – Shoe branch

Source: own analysis

Most loyal customers in all branches are local or regional (relatively national ones). Foreign customers are less popular within interviewed companies. The distribution was as follows:

- Local customers:

The highest percentage of local customers was found in the printing sector – 67,8% of all their customers, and the smallest percentage in the shoe sector – 42,2%. Advertising and furniture branches have adequately: 40% and 48,2% of local customers.

- Regional customers:

As many as 29,9% of all customers in the furniture sector are regional customers, other sectors have regional clients adequately: 20,2% -advertising agencies, 11,3% -printing houses and 15,9% - shoe companies.

- National customers:

The highest percentage of such customers was found in the shoe sector and it was 36,9% of all customers and in turn: 32% in advertising agencies, 19% in printing houses and 18,6% in furniture companies.

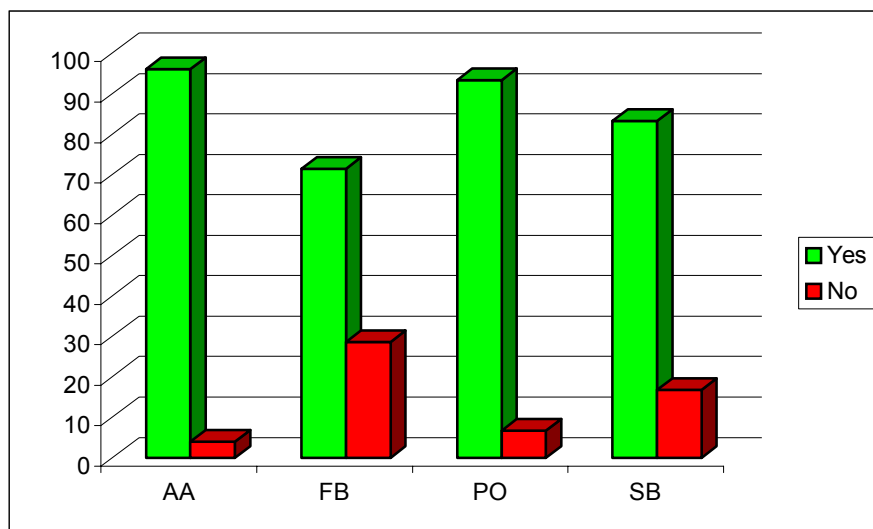
- Foreign customers:

Advertising agencies and shoe companies have the highest number of foreign customers, adequately: 7,8% and 5% of all customers. The smallest number of foreign customers is typical for printing houses – 1,9% what is a consequence of the way they operate.

5.4 Section D:

5.4.1 Commercial contacts with competition (D1):

Diagram 8. Percent distribution of commercial contacts with competition in different branches



Explanation of abbreviations:

AA – Advertising agencies

FB – Furniture branch

PO – Printing offices

SB – Shoe branch

Source: own analysis

As it is shown in the diagram, definitely most companies in the different branches collaborates with their competitors, where advertising agencies mostly keep such contacts – 96%, then printing offices – 93,3%, shoe companies – 83,3% and finally the least contacts with competition have furniture companies – 71,4%

5.4.2 Permanent relations with competition (D2)

Table 7. Percentage distribution of competition relations in different branches

Firm	Buying prod.	Exchanging prod.	Buying prod. factors	Exchanging customers	Organizing common structures	Managing common structures	None	Σ
AA	21	11,9	25	15,7	22,3	1,4	2,7	100
FB	9	22,9	18,2	15,9	11,3	2,3	20,4	100
PO	5,8	11,7	11,7	17,6	29,7	0	23,5	100
SB	22,2	11,3	22,1	0	22,2	0	22,2	100

source: own analysis

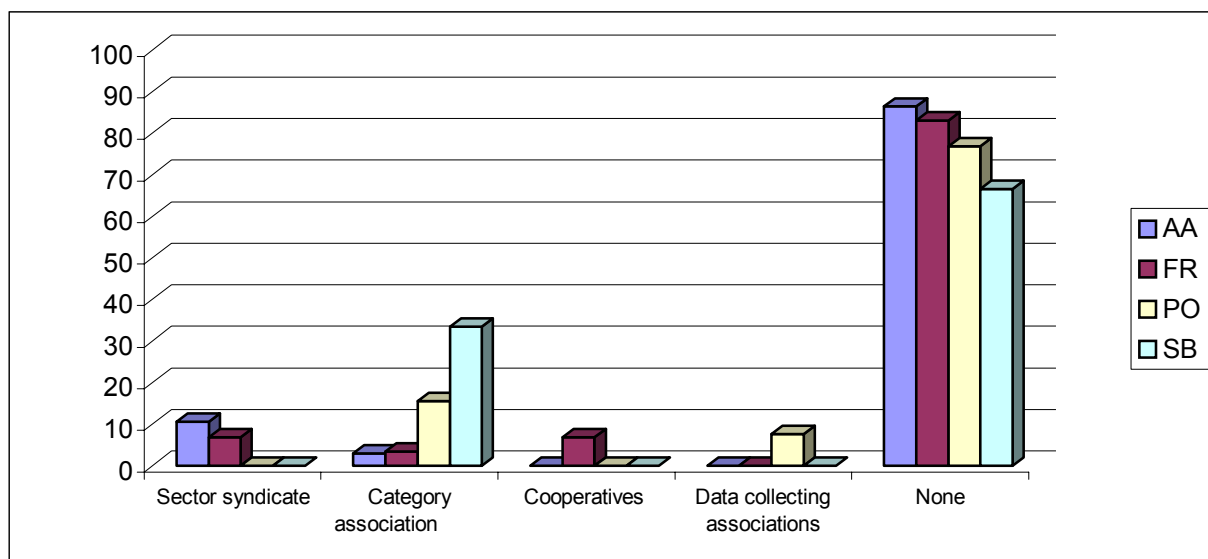
As far as the type of these permanent relations is concerned – companies mostly organise common structures with competitors: 29,7% - printing houses, 22,3% - advertising agencies, 22,2% shoe companies and 11,3% - furniture companies.

Both printing houses – 23,5%, shoe companies – 22,2% and furniture companies – 20,4% take up other ventures with their competitors. 25% of advertising agencies most often buy raw materials from competitors. Activities most seldom taken up with cooperation are related to managing common structures: advertising agencies- 1,4%, furniture companies – 2,3% while printing houses and shoe companies do not take up such actions at all – 0%.

5.5 Section E and F:

5.5.1 Relationships with sector associations (E1):

Diagram 9. Percentage distribution of membership in different associations



Explanation of abbreviations:

AA – Advertising agencies

FR – Furniture branch

PO – Printing offices

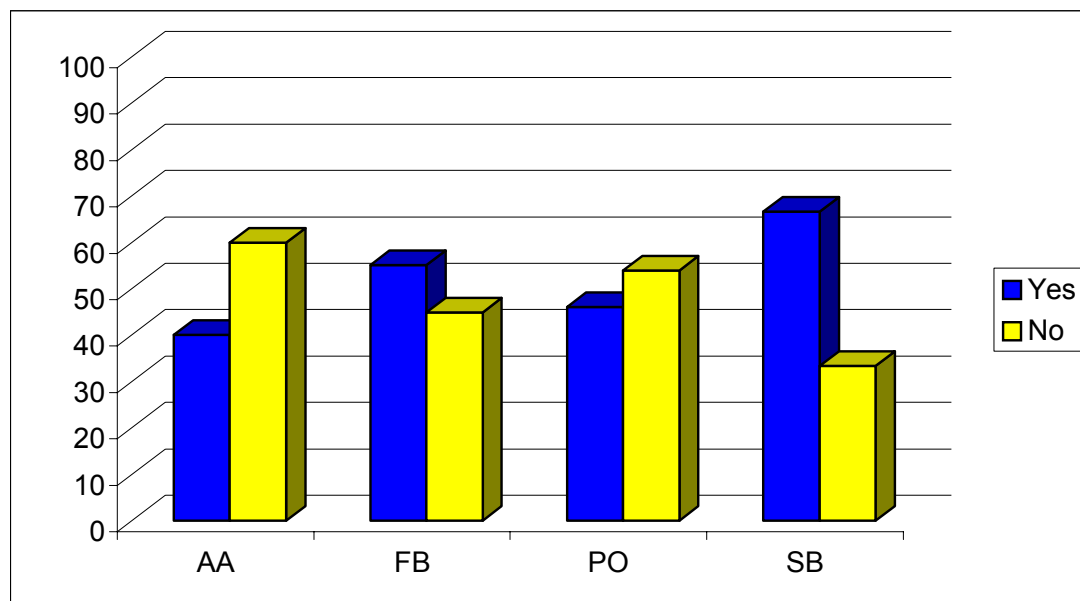
SB – Shoe branch

Source: own analysis

The above diagram shows that unquestionable majority of the companies do not have any relationships with sector associations. The percentage in different branches is as follows: advertising – 86,4%, furniture – 83%, printing houses – 76,9% and shoes – 66,6%. Small percentage of shoe companies – 33,4% and printing houses – 15,4% belong to category associations while 10,6% of advertising agencies belong to sector syndicates.

5.5.2 Organisation of promotional and advertising actions (F 1,2):

Diagram 10. Percentage distribution of promotional and advertising actions carried out by companies



Explanation of abbreviations:

AA – Advertising agencies

FB – Furniture branch

PO – Printing offices

SB – Shoe branch

Source: own analysis

Table 8. Type of promotional and advertising actions percentage distribution

Firm	Sending advertising material to customers	Sending it to past customers	Seminars	Fairs	Generic press adver.	Specialised press adver.	Workshop	Σ
AA	36,3	27,2	0	9	12,2	15,3	0	100
FB	30,7	15,2	2,1	10,8	15,2	21,7	4,3	100
PO	26,3	26,3	0	5,2	0	10,7	31,5	100
SB	28,6	7,2	0	14,2	7,2	14,2	28,6	100

Source: own analysis

It turns out that almost half of respondents in analysed branches organise promotional and advertising actions: 40% of advertising agencies, 55,1% of furniture companies, 46,1% of printing houses and 66,6% of shoe companies while almost half of them do not organise such events at all: 60% of advertising agencies, 44,9% of furniture companies, 53,9% of printing houses and 33,4% of shoe companies. Most popular action is sending out advertising materials to potential customers: 36,3% advertising agencies do this, 30,7% of furniture companies, 26,3% of printing houses and 28,6% of shoe companies. Analysed companies send out promotional materials to their former customers also quite often: 27,2% of advertising agencies and 26,3% of printing houses. They also advertise in specialised press – 21,7% of furniture companies or organise workshops: 31,5% of printing houses and 28,6% of shoe companies. Seminars are the least popular promotional actions: only 2,1% of furniture companies use this promotional tool while the rest of analysed branches do not at all – 0%.

5.6 Section G:

Respondents assessed the particular elements of work market in G1 question, which were described in the table as:

- 1 - meeting of demand and supply in the local market;
- 2 - youth's attitude towards work;
- 3 – enterprise and autonomy of the work force;
- 4 – vocational training system;
- 5 – instruction and scholastic system;
- 6 – professional knowledge acquired thanks to experience;
- 7 – presence of high professionals;
- 8 – presence of immigrant labour;
- 9 – wage levels;
- 10 – staff preparation;
- 11 – staff's attitude towards training.

The distribution of answers includes the table below:

Table 9. Numerical distribution of work market assessment.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
AA – Advertising agencies	3,6	3	3,1	2,75	3,1	2,9	3,16	3,44	3,56	3,03	2,71
FB – Furniture branch	3,33	2,66	3,07	3	3,51	2,86	3,12	3,16	3,44	2,96	3
PO – Printing offices	3,5	2,66	3,15	3,77	3,23	3	2,91	3,66	3,5	3	2,46
SB – Shoe branch	4	3,14	2,57	2,86	1,86	2,71	2,86	3,42	3	2,57	2,57

Source: own analysis

As you can see from the table above the respondents quite good assessed the *attitude of managerial staff towards trainings* and *youth's attitude towards work*. *Instruction and scholastic system* were assessed positively, but not by shoe branch's respondents, similarly to *enterprise and autonomy of the work force* and *professional knowledge acquired thanks to experience*. Those criteria, in remaining branches, increased the average assessment. The most negatively was assessed *meeting of demand and supply in the local market* and *presence of immigrant labour*, in which parameters, the answers has been distributed almost equally.

Interviewers, in G3 question, had to distinguish the most important functional areas and particular competences in division to: key, technical and cross competences. The only one area had chosen by representatives from every branch was *sales, relationships with customers, commercial*. That indication is not surprising and clearly emphasize difficult market's situation, that is evoked by deepening crisis. The advertising agencies listed also: *communication, image, advertising, logistics, storage, deliveries, transports* and *design and innovation*. The furniture branch backed next *communication, relationship with customers* (similarly to advertising agencies) and *data processing and data communication*. The printing offices besides

the sales indicated *purchases and relationship with suppliers* and *processing and communication data*.

However, in shoe branch, emphasized the meaning of *logistics, storage, deliveries and transports*.

The most rare indicated, among the answers listed in G3 question, was area of *juridical, legal* (only two indications among whole population, and among furniture branch, printing offices and shoe branch there was no such an answer at all). As rare the respondents indicated area connected with personnel *management, human resources, training* (seven indications as total), what in front of established aim of researches and constructing the final conclusions is not very encouraging. Remaining answers were dispersed.

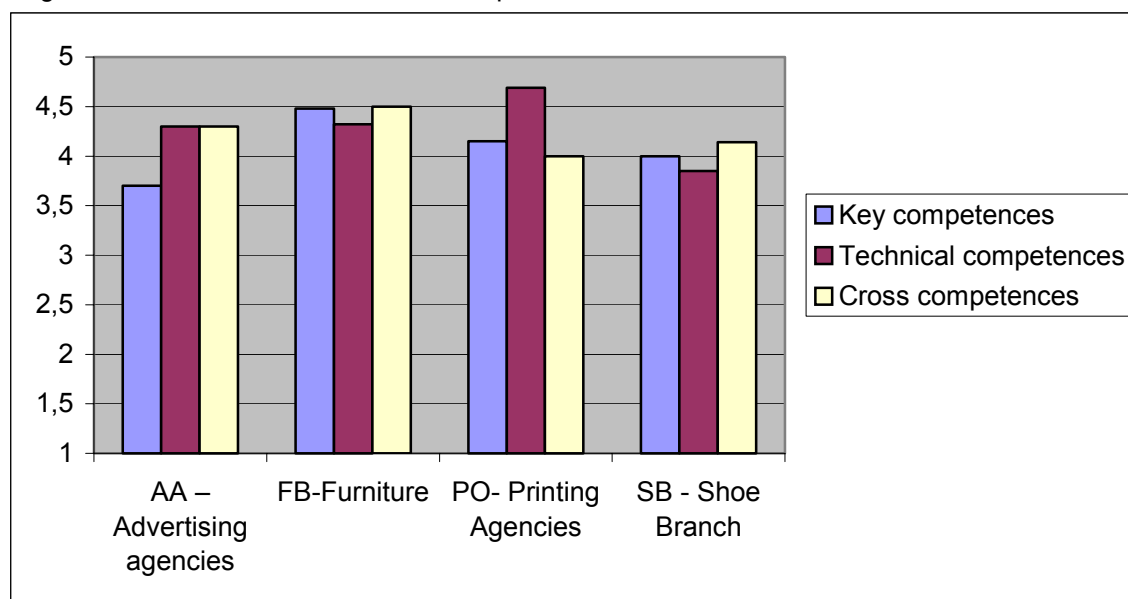
As far as the competences relevant in future (G4), from among key, technical and cross competences, it is shown below for every branch (table 10, diagram 11).

Table 10. Numerical distribution of competences relevant in future

	Key competences	Technical competences	Cross competences
AA – Advertising agencies	3,7	4,3	4,3
FB – Furniture branch	4,48	4,32	4,5
PO – Printing offices	4,15	4,69	4
SB – Shoe branch	4	3,85	4,14

Source: own analysis

Diagram 11. Numerical distribution of competences relevant in future



Source: own analysis

The highest priority, among the respondents from every branch, was given to cross competences. Interviewers perceive growing importance of interpersonal communication, building the coalition, creating the bonds. Although in chosen branches: printing offices (4,69) and advertising agencies (4,3) dominative or high position have technical that is content – related competencies, which are connected with occupation. They are often characterized as those that can help to manage with

task's mechanics. This is why technical competencies gained the highest individual note. The astonishment can awake the lowest range key competencies: computer science, languages, safety. Maybe associating the competencies in that way was not a very good idea.

The next area were variables determining possible innovation needs as for human resources/ training in the firm (G 5). Respondents described importance of these internal training in the scope:

1. Need to increase the firm's efficiency
2. Presence of new national / international rules
3. Customer's demand for a standard or a certification
4. Change in the service or in the reference market
5. Changes in the process of the service supply
6. Introduction of new management and control modalities
7. Critical state of the human resources management
8. Prospects of economical and dimensional growth
9. Increase in external complexity

Respondents had their own not very different preferences (table 11, diagram 12).

They decided that the most important is necessity of increasing the firm's efficiency (AA-4,34, FB-4,28, PO-4,23, SB- 3,86) and client's demands for a standard or a certification (from 3,96 in AA, up to 4,23 in PO).

Table 11. Numerical distribution of main variables determining possible innovation needs as for human resources/ training in the firm

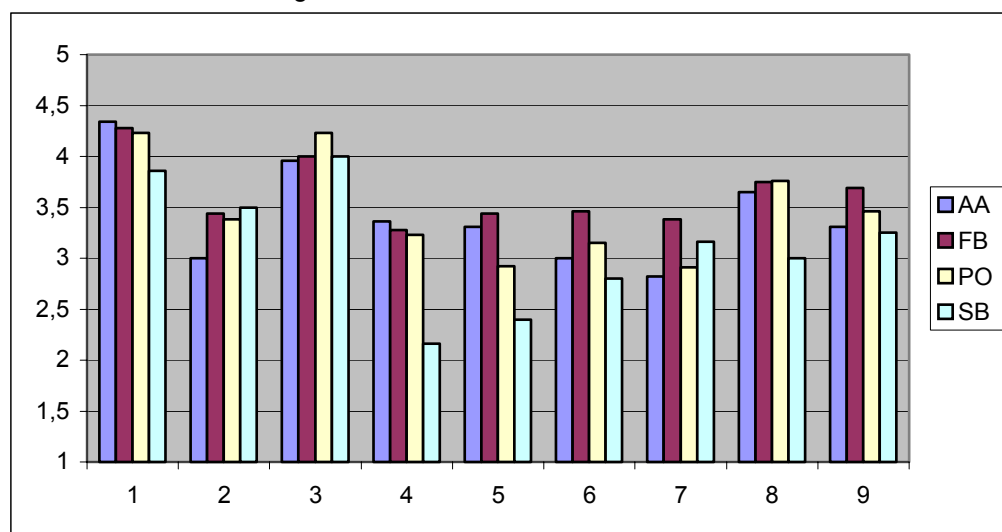
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
AA	4,34	3	3,96	3,36	3,31	3	2,82	3,65	3,31
FB	4,28	3,44	4	3,28	3,44	3,46	3,38	3,75	3,69
PO	4,23	3,38	4,23	3,23	2,92	3,15	2,91	3,76	3,46
SB	3,86	3,5	4	2,16	2,4	2,8	3,16	3	3,25

Source: own analysis

The less important, in interviewers opinion, is necessity of increasing the changes in the service or in the reference market (particularly SB - only 2,16), changes in the process of the service supply (also SB - 2,4), introduction of new management and control modalities (AA -3,0, SB -2,8).

Comparison in this scope is presented on diagram 12.

Diagram 12. Numerical distribution of main variables determining possible innovation needs as for human resources/ training in the firm



Source: own analysis

Next, the respondents had to assess how easy is to find the following professional resources on the spot (G6 question):

1. Non qualified staff
2. Qualified staff
3. Service and/or process technicians
4. Commercial professionals
5. Managing professionals
6. Administrative professionals

Distribution of answers related to availability of staff shows that the easiest is to find non qualified staff (CA – 3,1, FB – 3,73, PO – 3,8, SB- 5,0) This category gained the maximum note in whole researches (table 12).

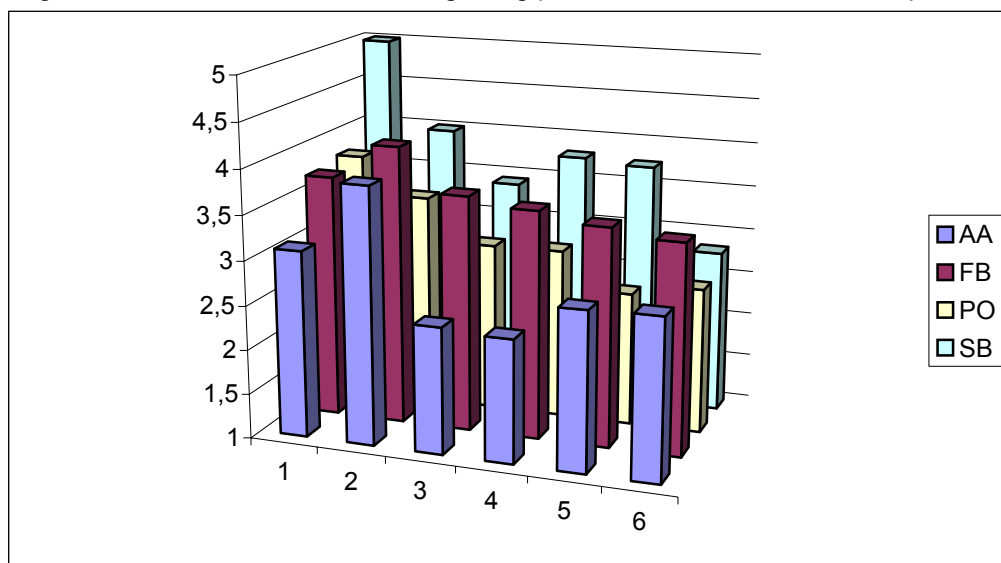
Table 12. Numerical distribution of gaining professional resources on the spot

	1	2	3	4	5	6
AA	3,1	3,88	2,42	2,38	2,78	2,8
FB	3,73	4,13	3,65	3,56	3,45	3,36
PO	3,8	3,38	2,9	2,91	2,5	2,63
SB	5	4	3,43	3,8	3,75	2,83

Source: own analysis

On the contrary the most difficult is to find qualified administrative professionals on the spot.

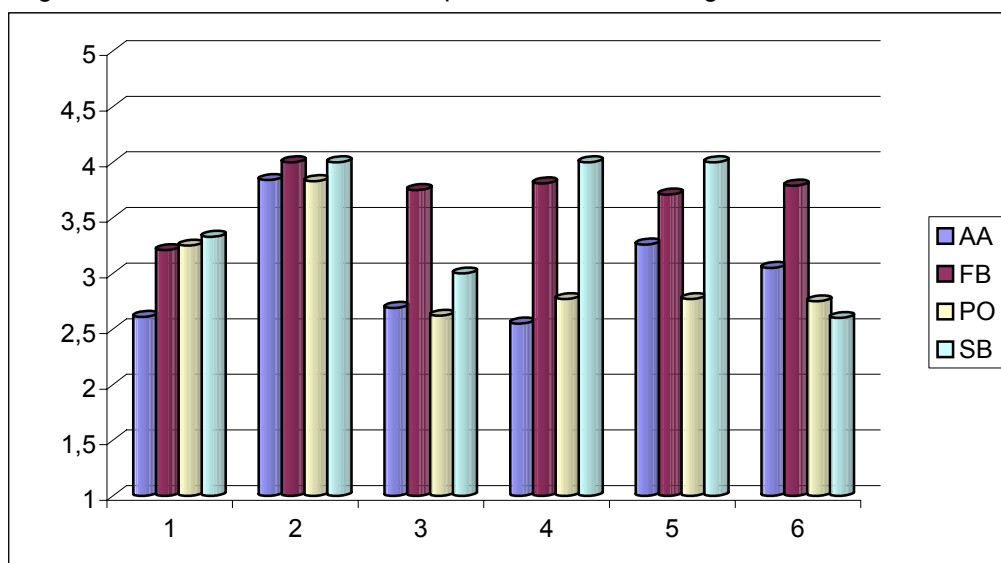
Diagram 13. Numerical distribution of gaining professional resources on the spot



Source: own analysis

If you found the professional resources on the spot, would they be suitably trained (G7)? On that question, within the framework of previous question specification (G6), respondents answered in following way (diagram 14).

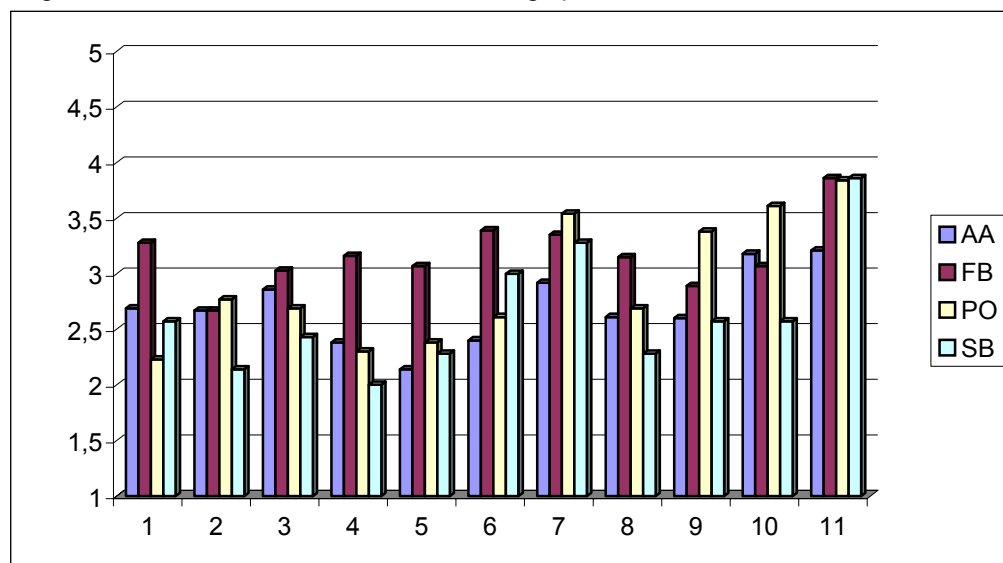
Diagram 14. Numerical distribution of professional staff being trained



Source: own analysis

Respondents assessed the non qualified resources' adequacy of being trained the lowest, and the qualified staff the highest in general. Particularly, as far as the administrative and commercial qualified staff is concerned, which occupational preparation was very high assessed by the representatives form the shoe branch (4,0). Generally, in the shoe and furniture branch more high assessed occupational preparation and competencies.

Diagram 15. Numerical distribution of learning specified activities at a medium level



Meaning of abbreviations:

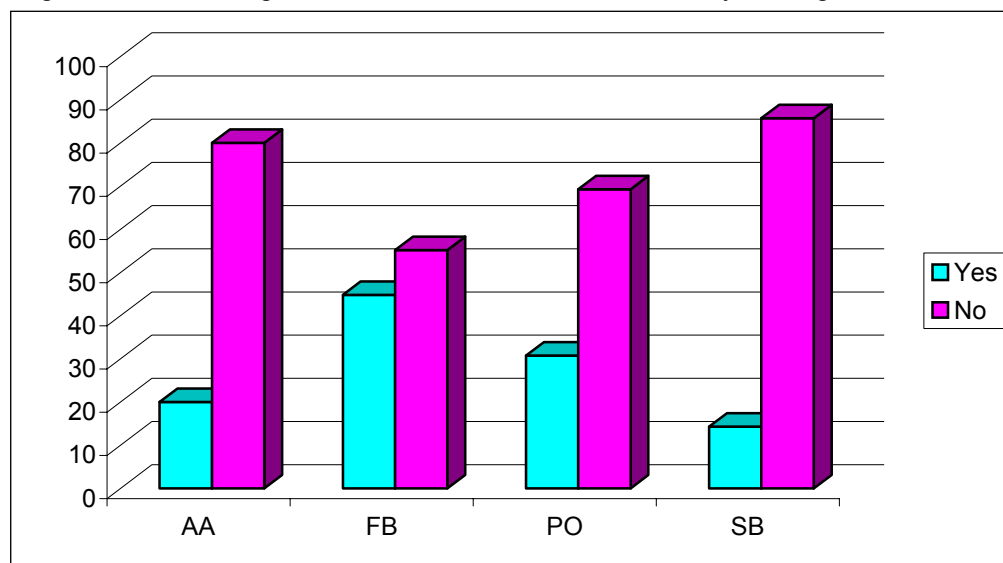
Source: own analysis

AA – Advertising agencies
 FB – Furniture branch
 PO – Printing offices
 SB – Shoe branch

1 - Local/regional/national/foreign market analysis
 2 - Firm promotion to costumers
 3 - New services development
 4 - Definition of the service organisation
 5 - Service supply – executive activities
 6 - Service supply – quality control activities
 7 - Service supply – technology management activities
 8 - Choice and management of the relationships with suppliers
 9 - Administration processes management
 10 - Human resources management
 11 - Planning of economical and financial resources

As it follows from the diagram above the respondents, in particular branches, think that it takes, the motivated and inclined person, form 3 or more months but shorter that three years to learn specified activities at a medium level (G8).

Diagram 16. Percentage distribution of interventions to identify training needs



Meaning of abbreviations:

AA – Advertising agencies

FB – Furniture branch

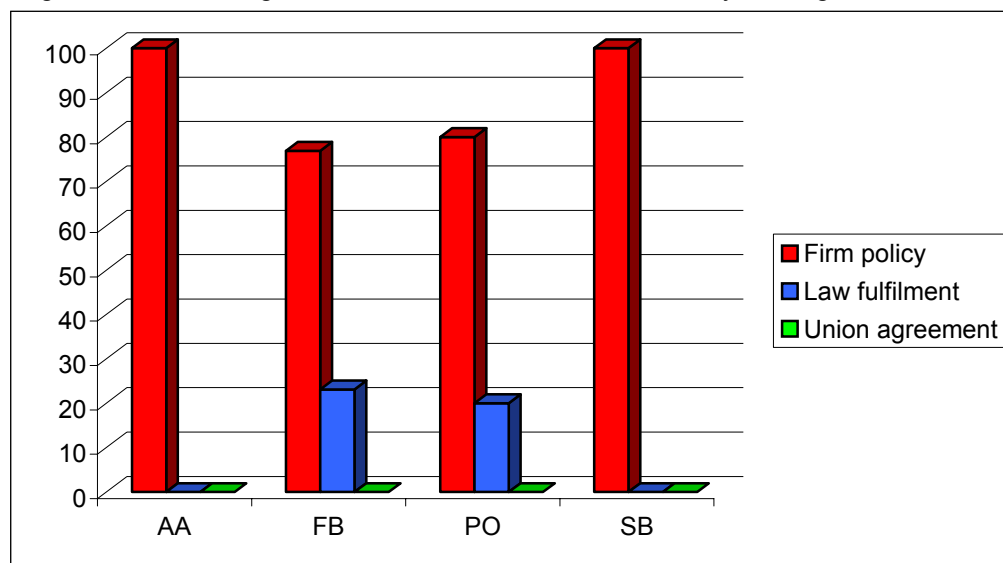
PO – Printing offices

SB – Shoe branch

Source: own analysis

It follows from the researches that the most firms, in particular branches, are shoe firms – 85,72%, printing offices – 69,24%, advertising agencies – 60%, furniture firms – 55,2%, had not carry out interventions to identify training needs during the last years (G9), what is showed on the diagram above. If so (G10), where the leader are furniture firms – 44,8%, it was connected the most often with firm policy: advertising agencies and shoe enterprises – 100%, printing offices – 80% and furniture branch – 76,9%, what is graphically showed below.

Diagram 17. Percentage distribution of interventions to identify training needs



Meaning of abbreviations:

AA – Advertising agencies

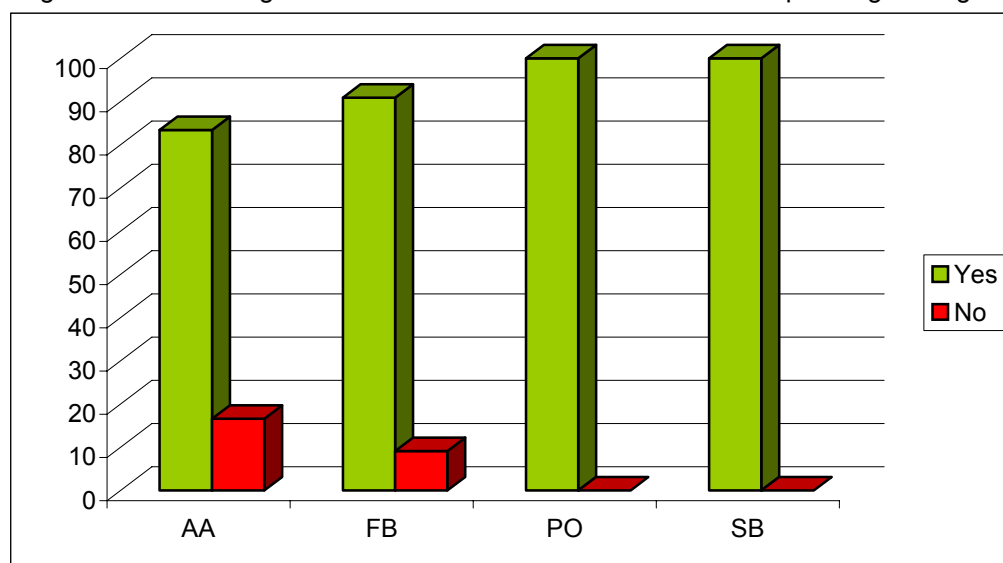
FB – Furniture branch

PO – Printing offices

SB – Shoe branch

Source: own analysis

Diagram 18. Percentage distribution of activities connected with separating strategic functional areas



Meaning of abbreviations:

AA – Advertising agencies

FB – Furniture branch

PO – Printing offices

SB – Shoe branch

Source: own analysis

Table 13. Percentage distribution of strategic functional areas

Firm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
AA	10	25	5	5	0	0	5	10	10	5	15	10	0
FB	9,8	7,8	11,81	11,81	5,88	3,95	5,88	7,8	7,8	1,98	9,8	15,69	0
PO	0	7,69	7,69	7,69	15,38	0	7,69	15,4	15,4	7,69	0	15,37	0
SB	25	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	25	0

Source: own analysis

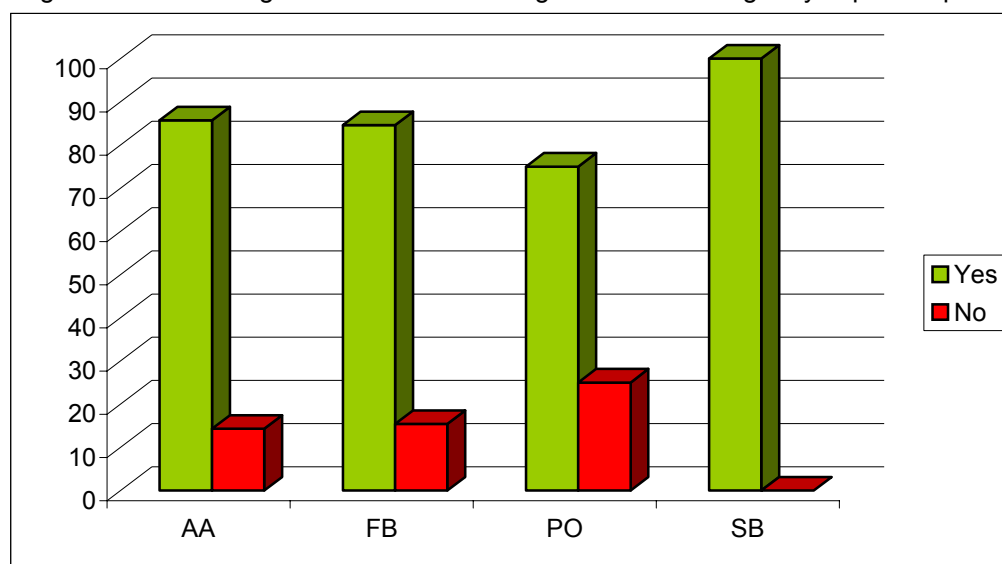
Results of researches shows, that activities connected with identifying training need at near 90% firms, in every branch, allowed to separate these functional areas, which are strategically important for those enterprises (G11). We can classify these areas (G12) in that way: „strategic direction and design” - 25% furniture enterprises, „design and innovation” – 25% advertising agencies and shoe firms, „communication, image, advertising” – 15% advertising agencies and shoe firms as well as „sales, relationship with customers, commercial” – 25% shoe enterprises, 15,69% furniture firms and 15,37% printing offices. The less important strategic area was „juridical, legal”, which respondents minded as not very substantial for future training needs.

The next element that was assessed by respondents had been finding answer for following questions:

- Did the enquiry favour those professionals considered strategically more important? (G13)
- Did the enquiry favour those thematic areas considered strategically more important? (G14)

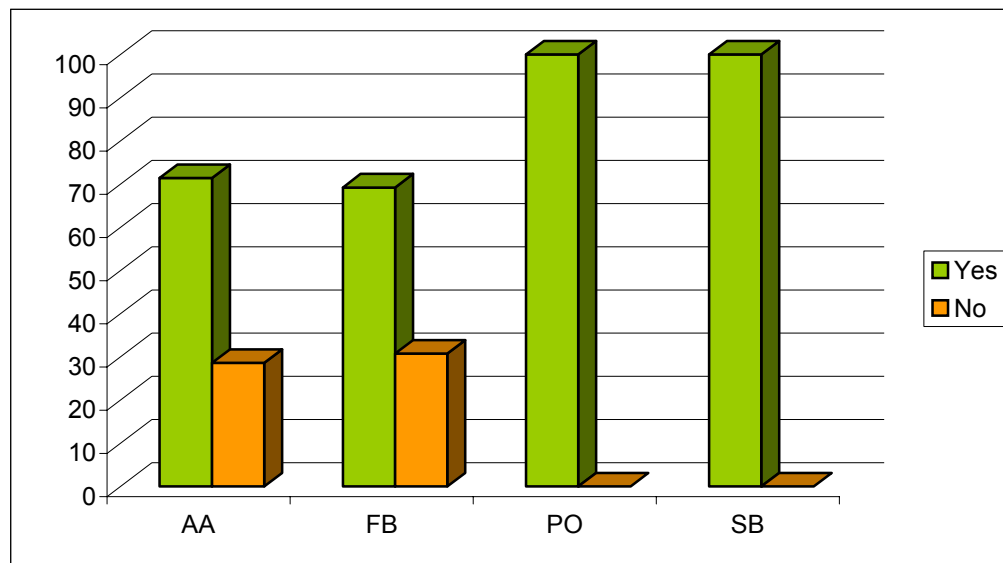
Most representatives confirmed these two thesis what is showed graphically below (diagrams19, 20):

Diagram 19. Percentage distribution of training needs for strategically important professionals



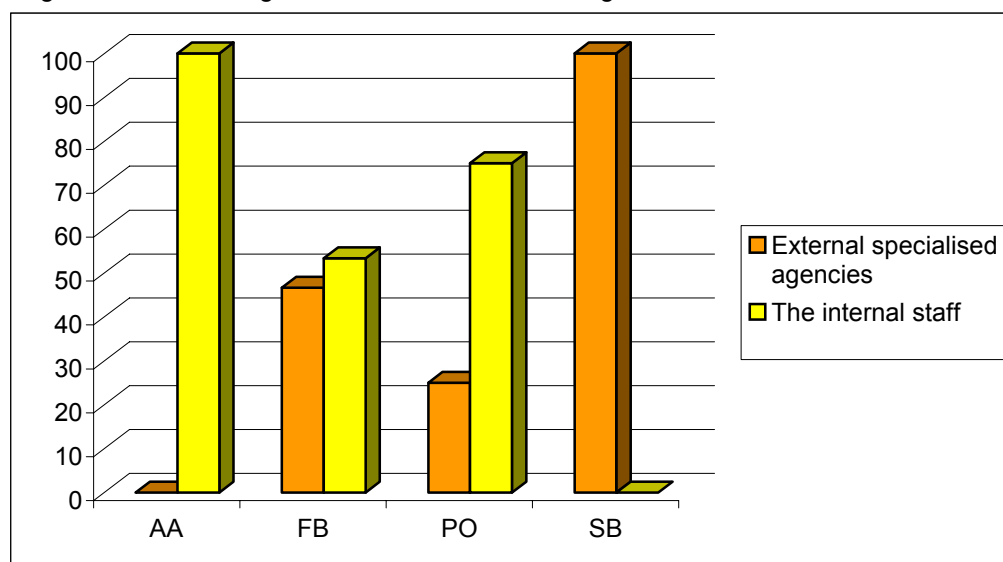
Source: own analysis

Diagram 20. Percentage distribution of training needs for strategically important thematic areas



Source: own analysis

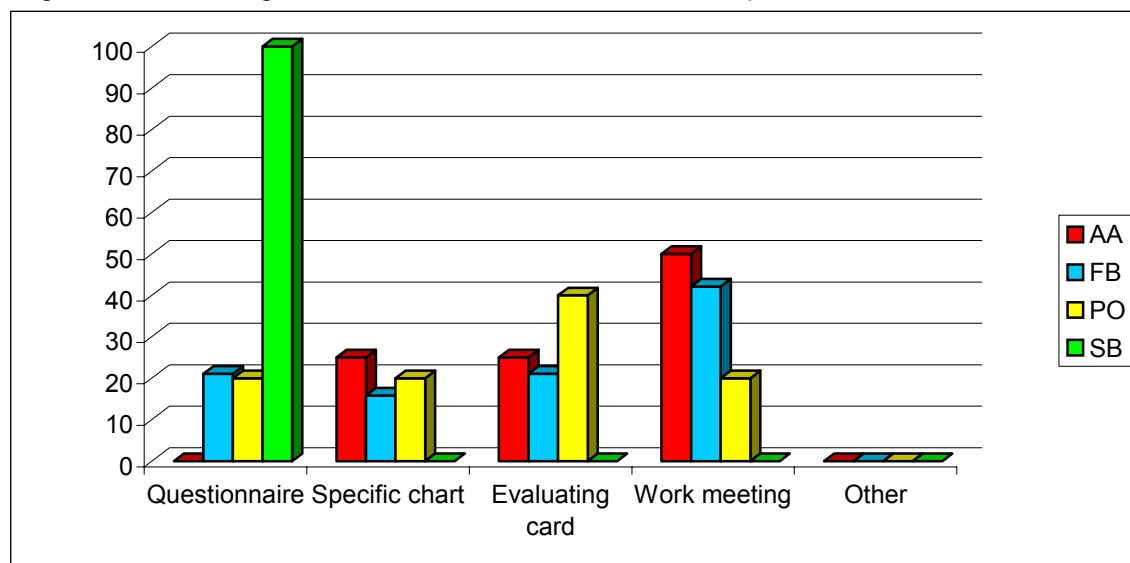
Diagram 21. Percentage distribution of units running researches



Source: own analysis

Most of enterprises entrusted the researches, connected with specifying training needs, to the firm's staff, and all advertising agencies did in that way (100%), 53,34% furniture firms and 75% printing offices. Only 100% of shoe branch used for those researches the external specialised agencies (G15), what is showed at the graph above (21). The specific research techniques were used to that aim (G16). Shoe branch used the questionnaire addressed to interested people – 100% firms, advertising agencies and furniture branch run work meetings (50% - AA, 42,1% - FB) and printing offices the evaluating card – 40%. It is graphically showed below (diagram 22).

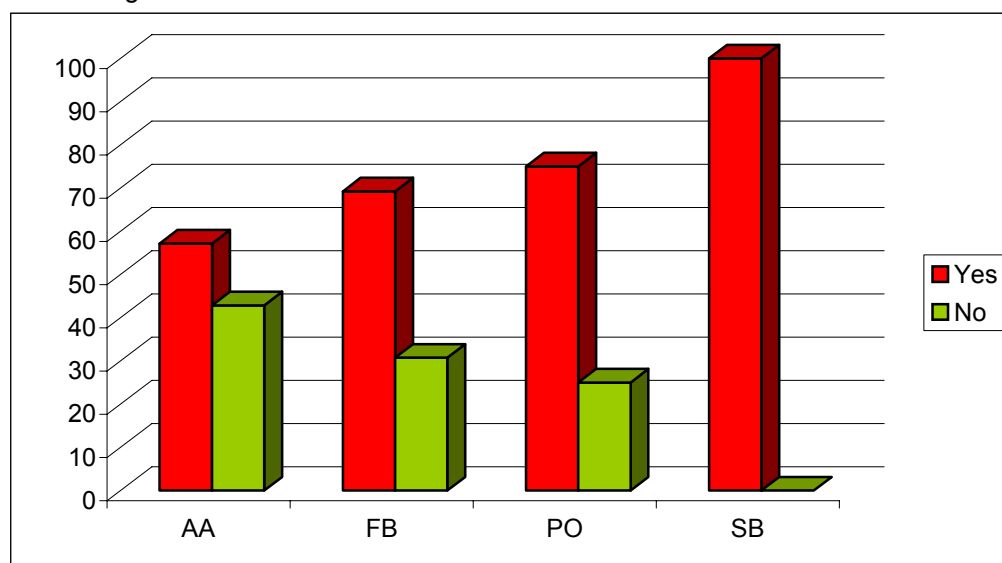
Diagram 22. Percentage distribution of used researches techniques



Source: own analysis

It turns out, that most of the furniture firms (69,23%), printing offices (75%) and advertising agencies (57,14%) as well as all shoe enterprises made an enquiry to check the preferences as for training methodologies (self – training, classes...) – (G17), what is showed below (diagram 23).

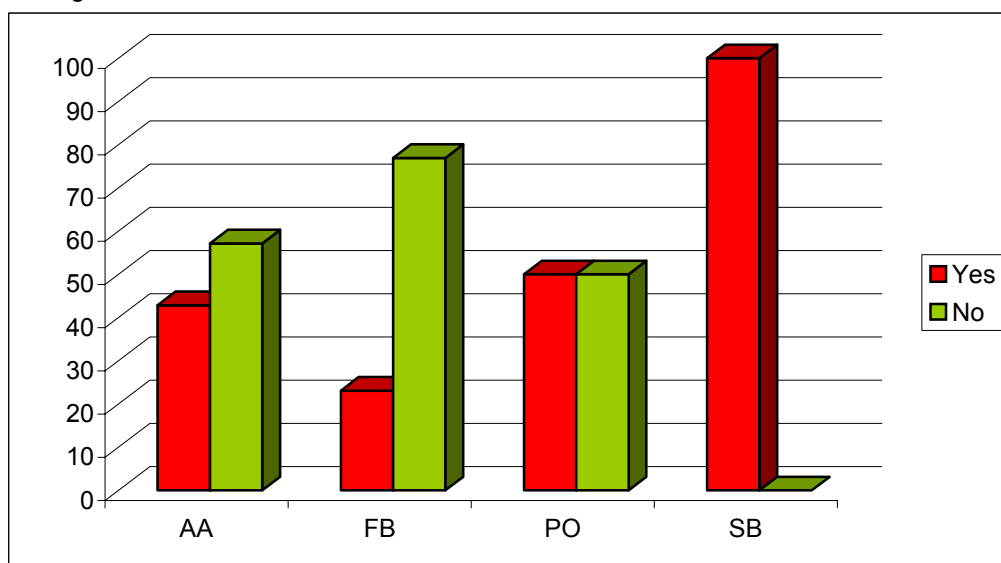
Diagram 23. Percentage distribution of made an enquiry to check preferences as for training methodologies



Source: own analysis

As far as the enquiry to check the preferences as for the organisation of the training intervention (G18) are concerned only shoe branch was engaged in that process totally (100%) but in the left branches were engaged only 57,14% advertising agencies and 76,93% furniture firms. 50% printing offices did not take such steps at all. Results of researches are shown on the diagram 24 below.

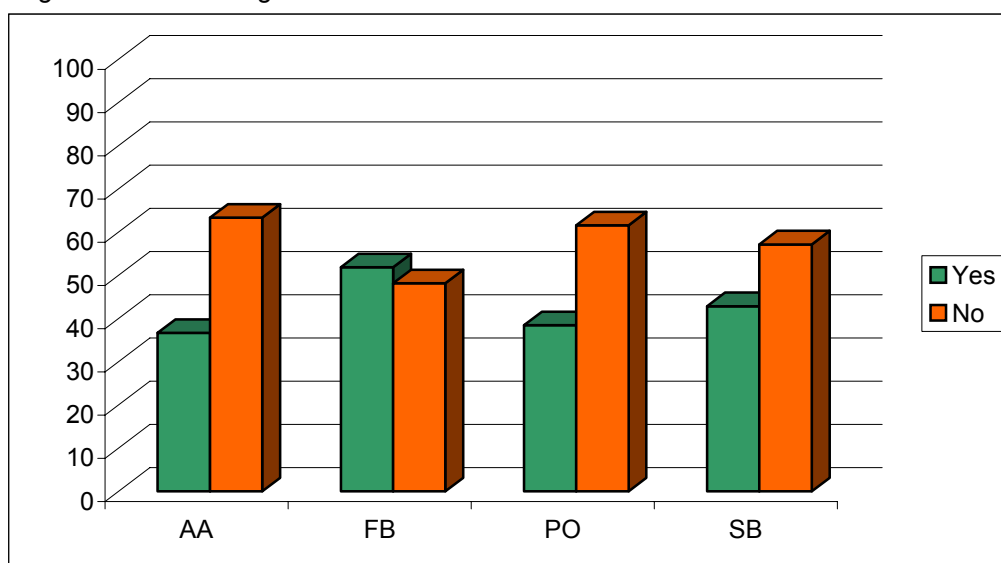
Diagram 24. Percentage distribution of enquiry to check the preferences as for the organisation of the training intervention



Source: own analysis

As for training interventions carried out by the particular firms, in specific branch, only 36,66% advertising agencies, 51,85% furniture firms, 38,36% printing offices and 42,86% shoe enterprises identified any indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention (G20), what is showed on the diagram 25 below.

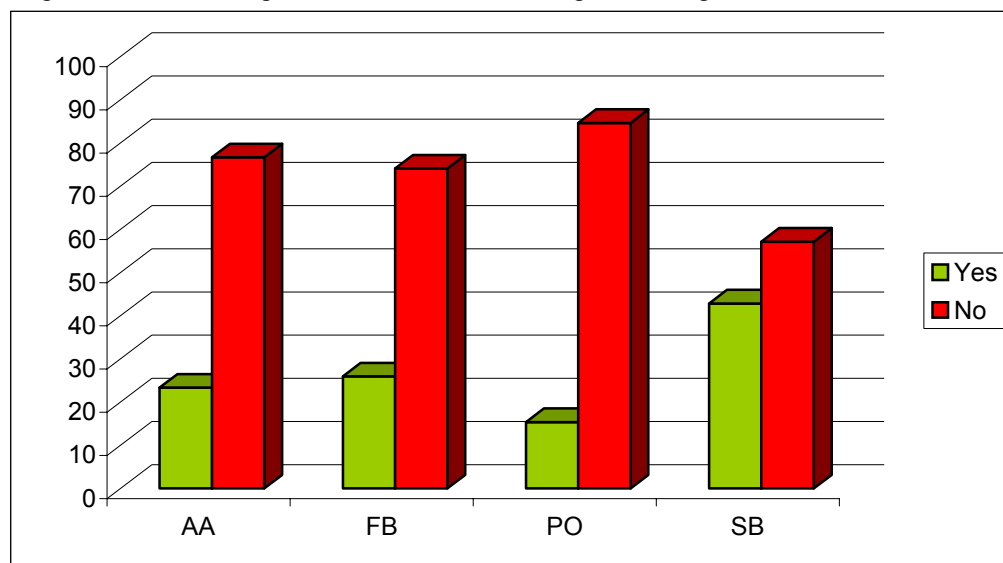
Diagram 25. Percentage distribution of the effectiveness of the intervention



Source: own analysis

As it turned out, in progress of further researches, most of the training interventions were not monitored so as to carry out possible changes of adaptations of the intervention itself, after all (G21). That situation took place in the case of 76,67% advertising agencies, 74,07% furniture firms, 84,62% printing offices and 57,14 shoe enterprises, which had taken earlier interventions (diagram 26).

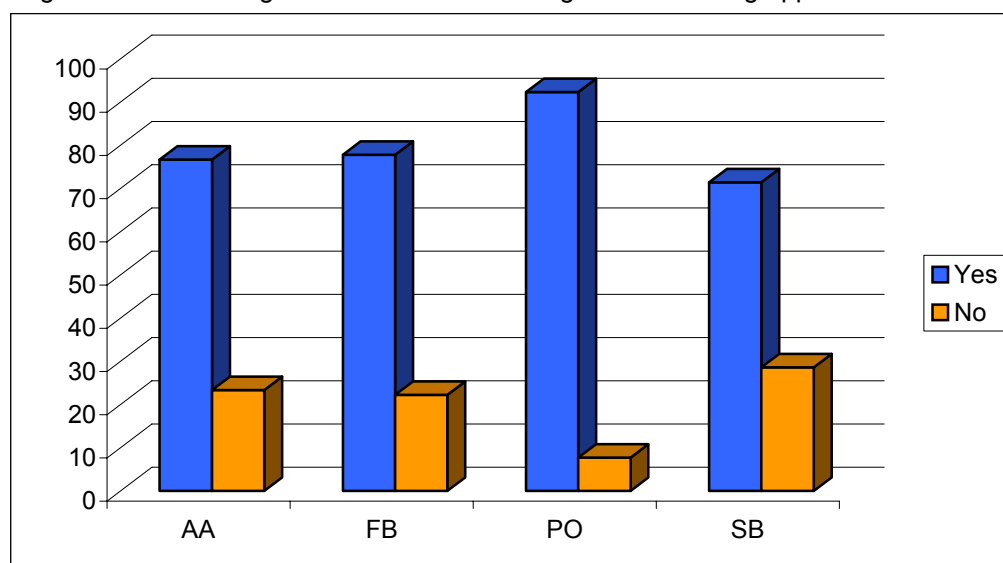
Diagram 26. Percentage distribution of monitoring of training interventions



Source: own analysis

Most of enterprises, in particular branches, knows the training opportunities offered by their area (G22), and it is 76,67% advertising agencies, 77,77% furniture firms, 92,3% printing offices and 71,3% shoe firms (diagram 27).

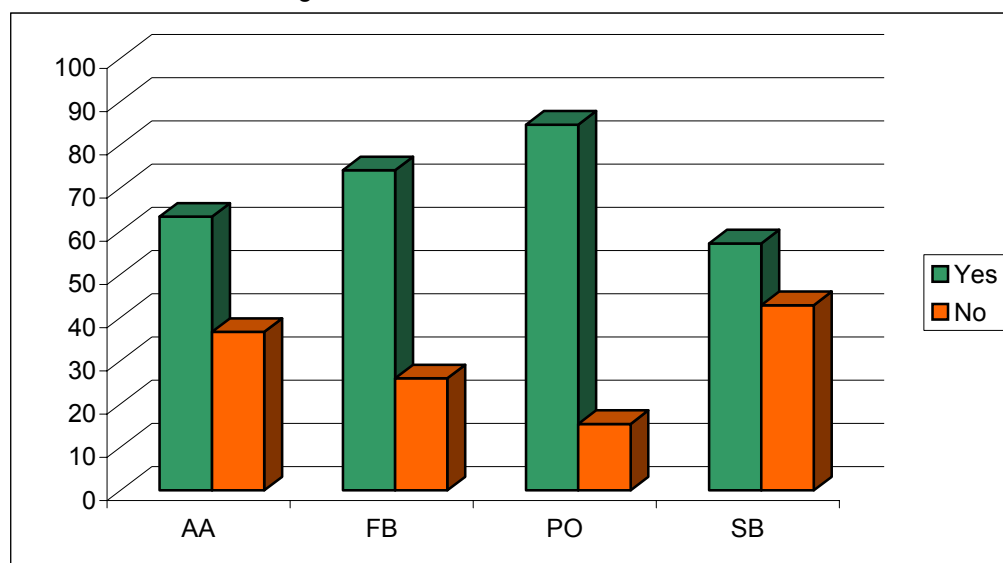
Diagram 27. Percentage distribution of knowledge of the training opportunities in firm's areas



Source: own analysis

Most of them, also knows the opportunities and funds provided for by current laws as for training is concerned (G23), and these knowledge has average 70% firms from particular branches what is shown on the 28 diagram below.

Diagram 28. Percentage distribution of knowledge of the opportunities and funds provided for by current laws as for training is concerned

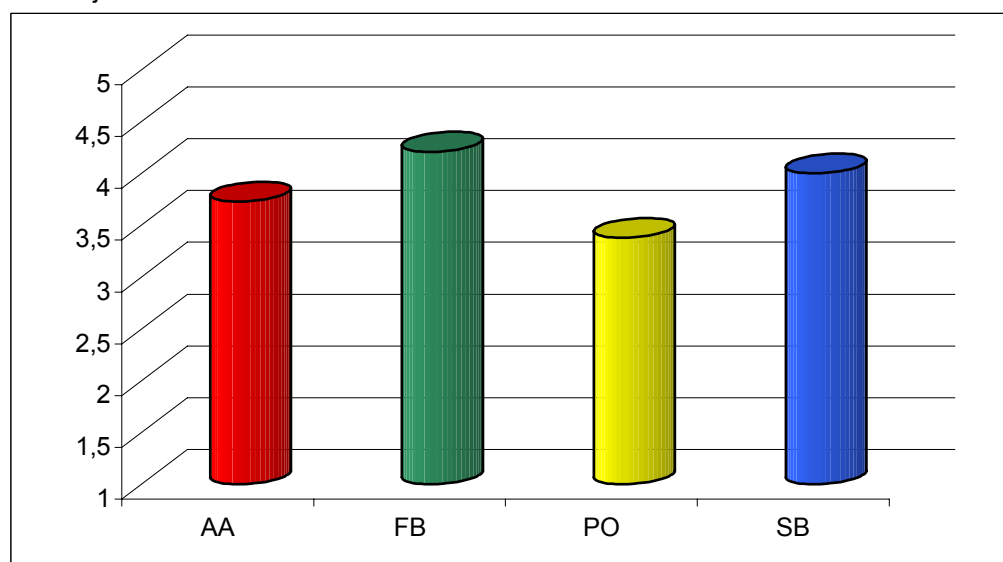


Source: own analysis

The question G – 24 had to inquiry the opinion of the respondents that in order to improve the firm's position and to reach fixed objectives, training plays a very important role. The representatives estimated their agreement on the scale form 1 to 5 (diagram 29).

As it is shown, representatives of furniture branch agreed with this statement the most (4,21) as well as shoe branch (4,0), but representatives of printing offices assessed training influence on the improvement of firm's position and achievement fixed objectives the weakest (3,38).

Diagram 29. Numerical distribution of training role in improvement of firm's position and achievement fixed objectives

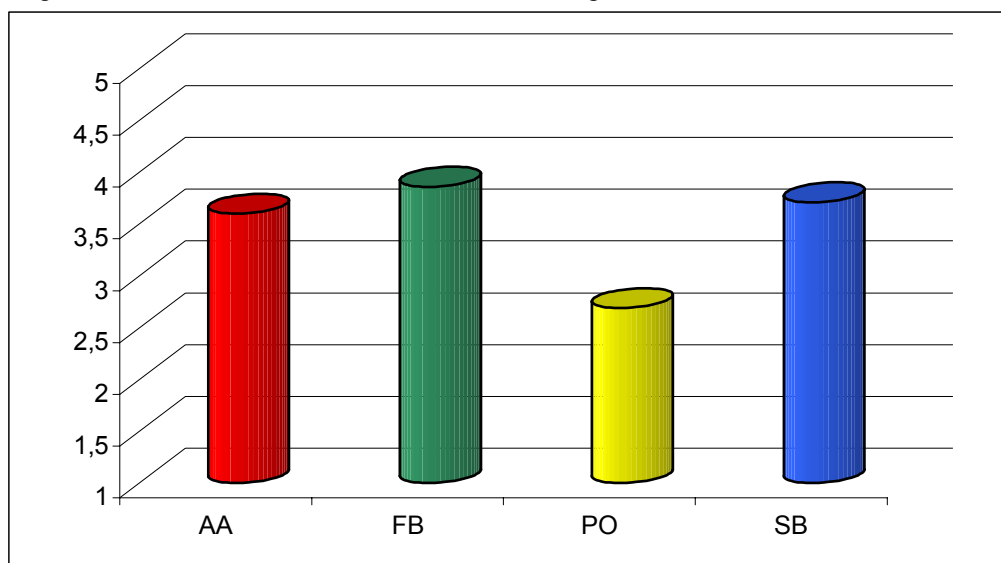


Source: own analysis

As regards agreement with the opinion that all the costs the firm must bear in order to carry out training interventions are a useful investment for the firm (G25), the representatives of printing offices assessed it below average (2,69), while

interviewers from furniture branch the gave it the highest range (3,86). It is presented on 30 diagram.

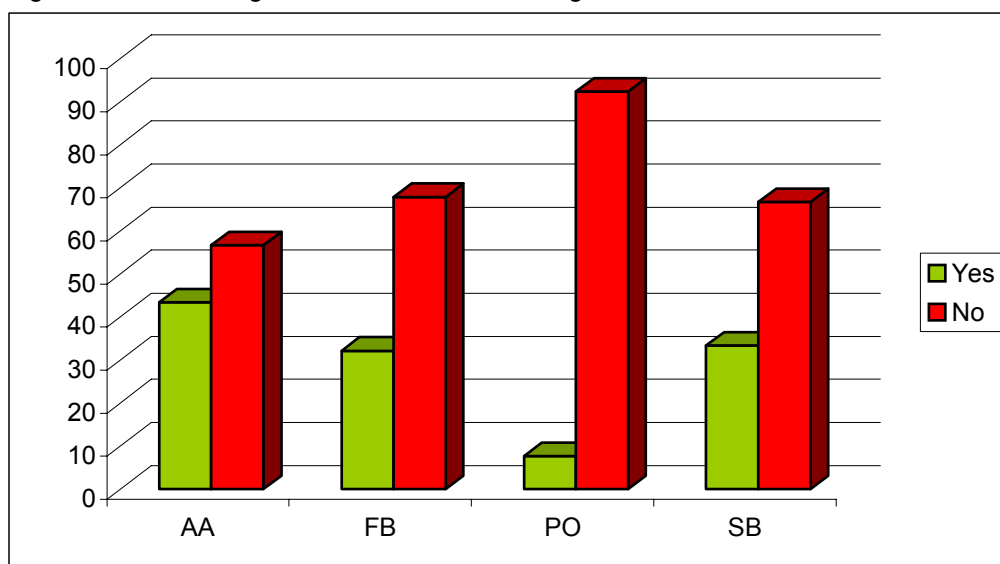
Diagram 30. Numerical distribution costs of trainings as the firm's investment



Source: own analysis

56,67% advertising agencies, 67,86% furniture firms, 92,3% printing offices and 66,67% shoe enterprises has not recently noticed such situations in which the lack of training had caused problems in the current management (G26), what is graphically shown at the 31 diagram below.

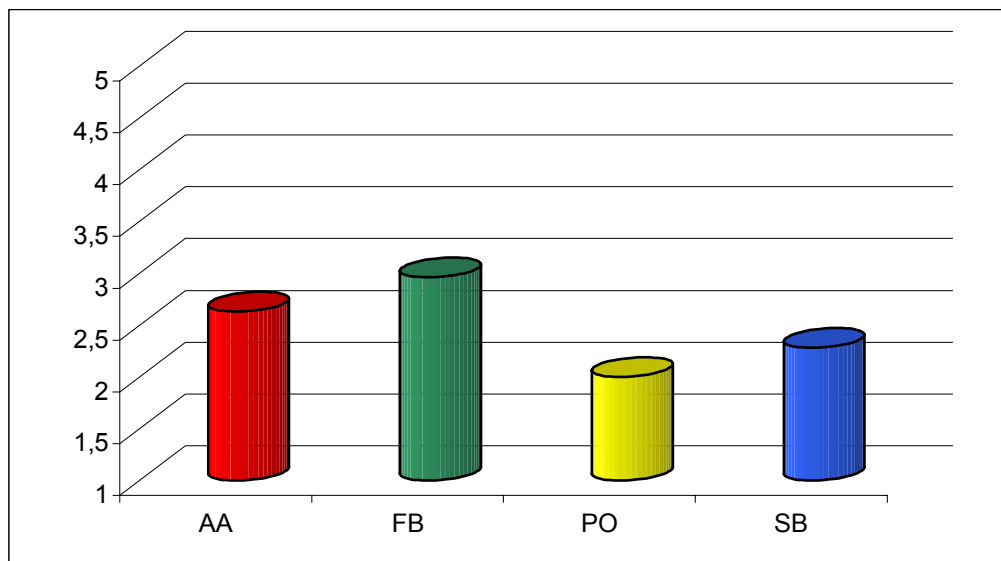
Diagram 31. Percentage distribution of the training's lack and it's influence on current management



Source: own analysis

Question G – 27 refers to planning possible insertions of professional resources. Most of the respondents do not see such a need: AA – 2,63, FB – 2,96, PO – 2,0, SB – 2,28. Either firms do not see necessity of hiring professionals, that is they realize trainings in the frame of their own resources, or they do not plan training activities at all, and place it temporary, depending on their needs (diagram 32).

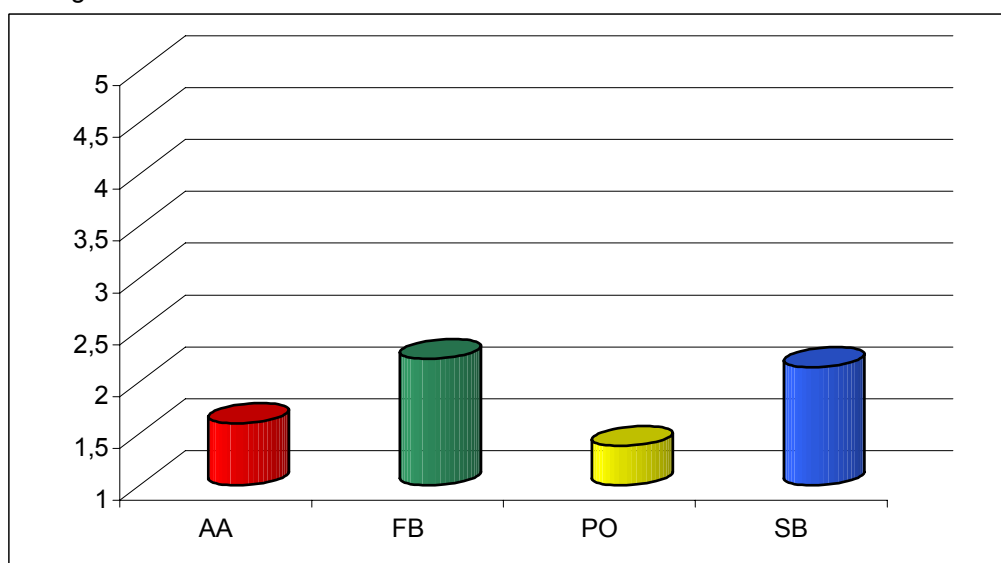
Diagram 32. Numerical distribution of hiring professionals to realising the trainings



Source: own analysis

Question G28 refers next to extents in which are possible insertions of professional resources planned. The respondents gave here answers on the very low level (AA – 1,6, FB – 2,22, PO – 1,38, SB – 2,14), what is shown on the diagram 33.

Diagram 33. Numerical distribution of the possibility of professionals` hiring planning who can realize trainings

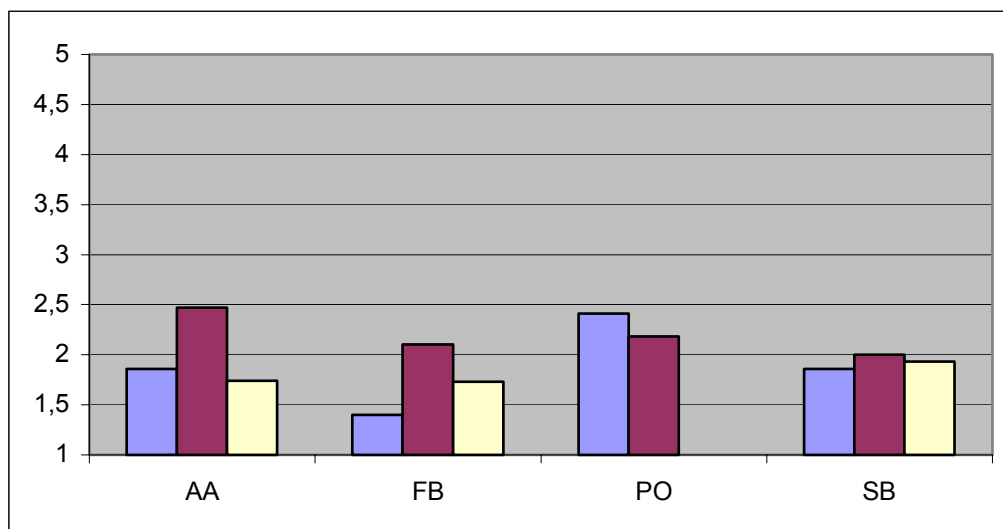


Source: own analysis

In the question, by means of which modalities are insertions of professional resources planned (G 29), respondents answered, that using the specifically planned instruments would be possible in printing offices (2,14) but not in shoe branch (1,4). Use of generic instruments: consultants, agencies was the most often chosen by advertising agencies (2,47). If we have something to do with lack of specific

instruments then this parameter was assessed as following: AA-1,74, FB-1,73, PO-1, SB-1,93.

Diagram 34. Numerical distribution of used modalities to plan the insertions of professional resources



Source: own analysis

All the answers to that question gained the note which was below the average.

As regards modalities by means of the insertions of professional resources are found (G30), the particular modalities had been specified in that way:

1. Recommendation (1)
2. Job centres (2)
3. Temporary employment (3)
4. Training stages (4)
5. Advertisement (5)
6. Received application for the job (6)
7. Other (7)

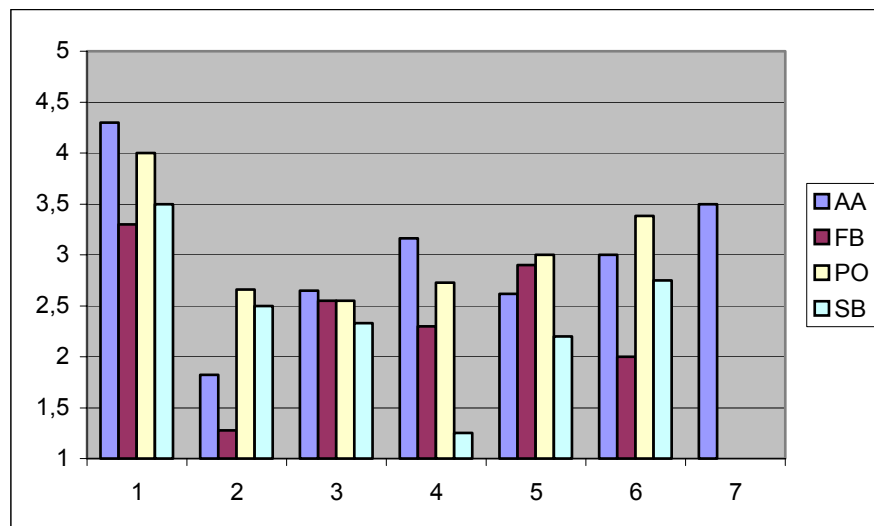
Distribution of results is presented in the table 14 and 35 diagram.

Table 14. Numerical distribution of modalities by means of the professional resources are found

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
AA	4,3	1,82	2,65	3,16	2,62	3	3,5
FB	3,3	1,28	2,55	2,3	2,9	2	1
PO	4	2,66	2,55	2,73	3	3,38	1
SB	3,5	2,5	2,33	1,25	2,2	2,75	0

Source: own analysis

Diagram 35. Numerical distribution of modalities by means of the professional resources are found

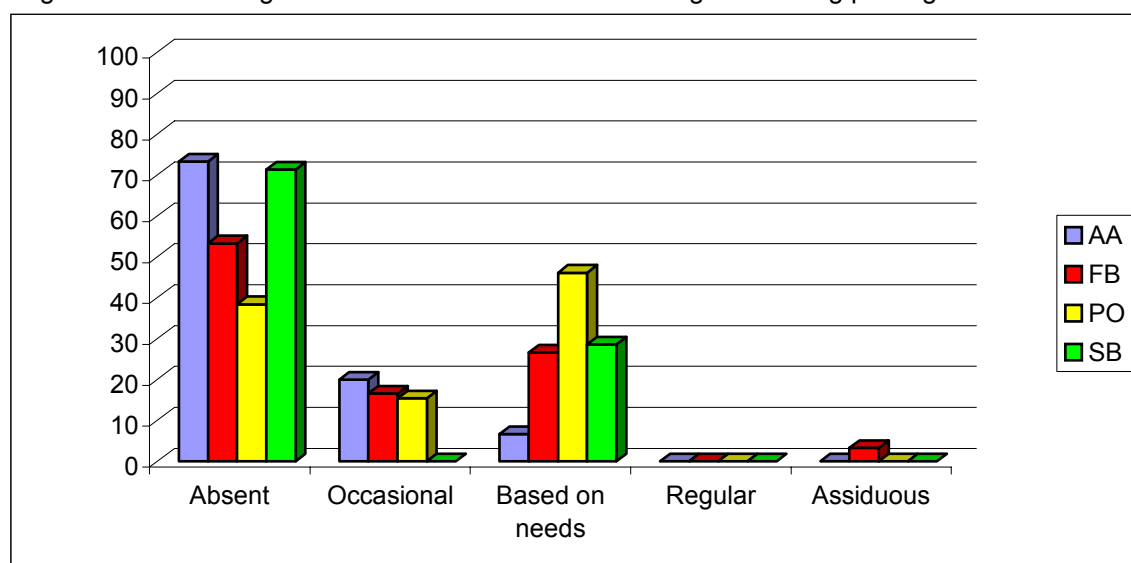


Source: own analysis

As it follows from the 35 diagram the interviewers willingly would try to find professionals needed to trainings in their firms by the way of recommendation, and it is shown very clearly in advertising agencies (4,3). Relatively low the respondents assessed the possibility of looking for such a professionals by the job centres and temporary employment. It was assessed almost equally by the representatives from every branch (about average).

Question G 31 referred to existing activities connected with research and finding of training packages in the firm. As it follows from the respondents answers the majority of advertising agencies (73,33%), shoe firms (71,42%) and furniture branch (53,33%) do not take such. Only in some printing offices (46,16%), furniture enterprises (26,67%) and shoe firms (28,58%) such activities are based on the actual needs for such actions, what shows 36 diagram.

Diagram 36. Percentage distribution of research and finding the training packages



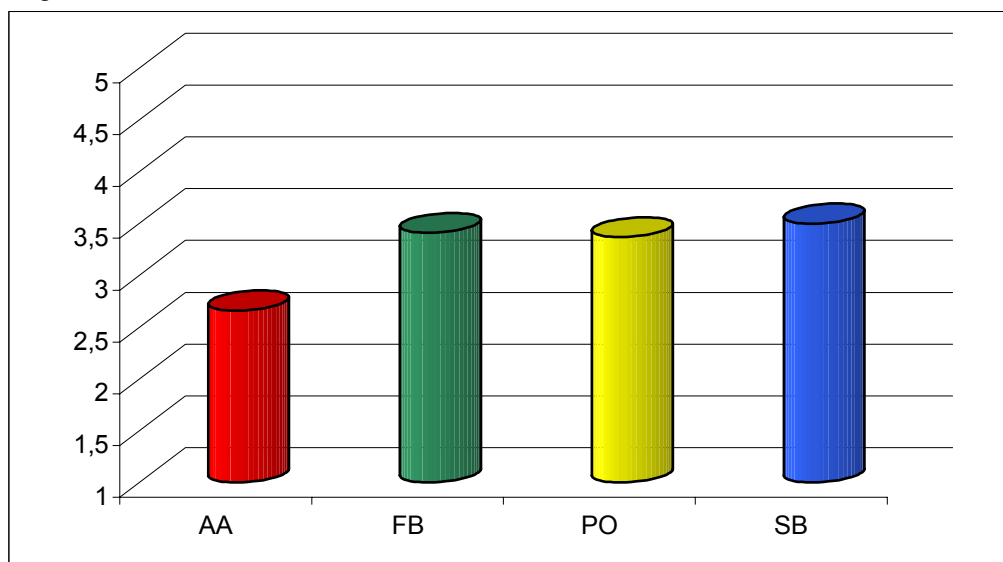
Source: own analysis

As far as the result of that activity is concerned (G 32), the answers has distributed as follows:

- AA – 2,66;
- FB – 3,41;
- PO – 3,37,
- SB – 3,5.

It is graphically shown at the diagram 37 below.

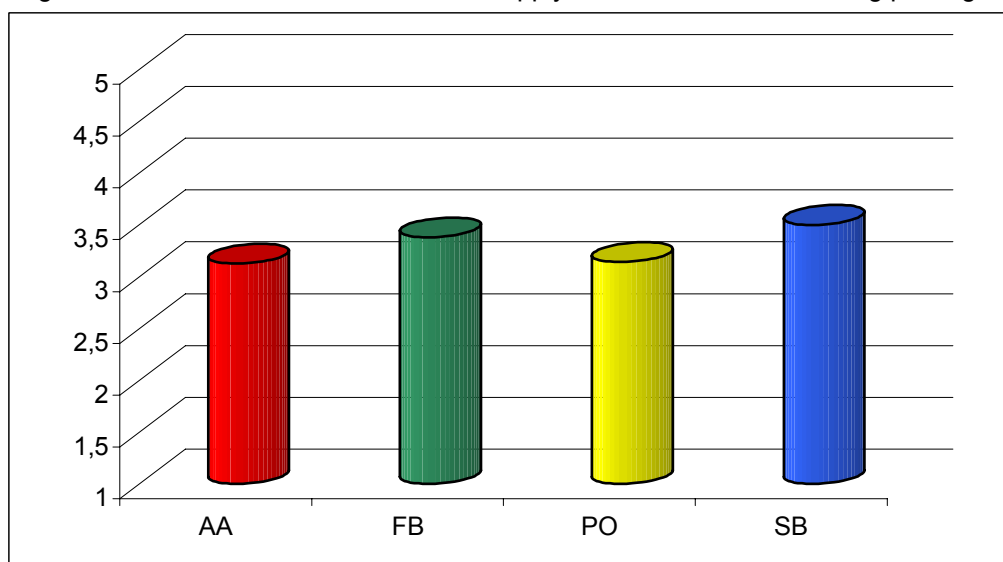
Diagram 37. Numerical distribution of the result of such activities



Source: own analysis

The next area related to the result of the supply of the training packages found in that way (G33).

Diagram 38. Numerical distribution of the supply's result referred to training packages



Source: own analysis

The effectiveness` assessment of using training packages was almost equal for every branch, near the average, what shows the diagram above.

Question G34 is related to instruments using to find training packages, and firms answered to that question very differently (table 15).

Table 15. Numerical distribution of used instruments to find training packages

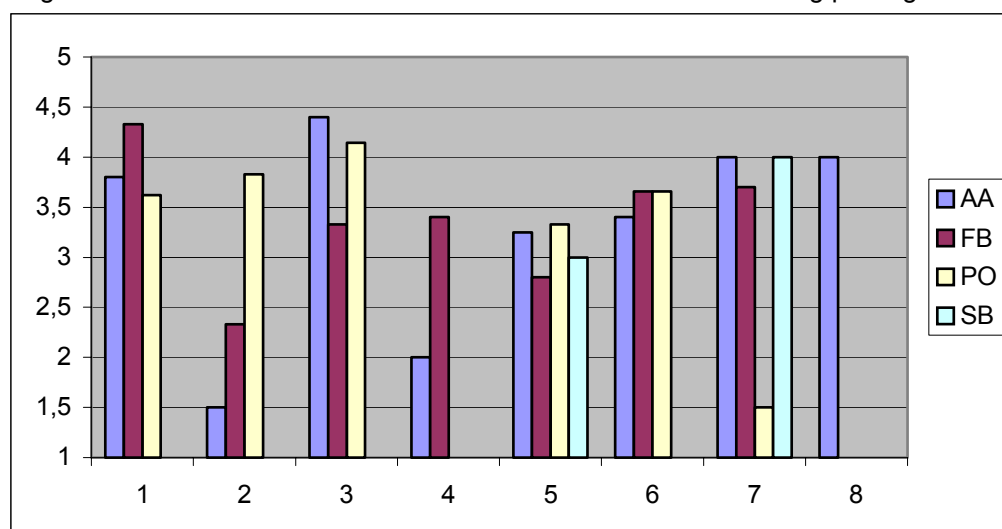
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
AA	3,8	1,5	4,4	2	3,25	3,4	4	4
FB	4,33	2,33	3,33	3,4	2,8	3,66	3,7	1
PO	3,62	3,83	4,14	1	3,33	3,66	1,5	0
SB	1	0	1	0	3	0	4	0

Source: own analysis

The pool that was given to interviewers choice contained following measures and ways:

1. Use of written sources (newspapers, magazines, periodicals)
2. Sharing opinions with agents
3. Sharing opinions with other firms
4. Sharing opinions within association/ syndicates
5. Participation in fairs/ shows in country or abroad
6. Internet
7. School – firm net
8. Other

Diagram 39. Numerical distribution of used instruments to find training packages

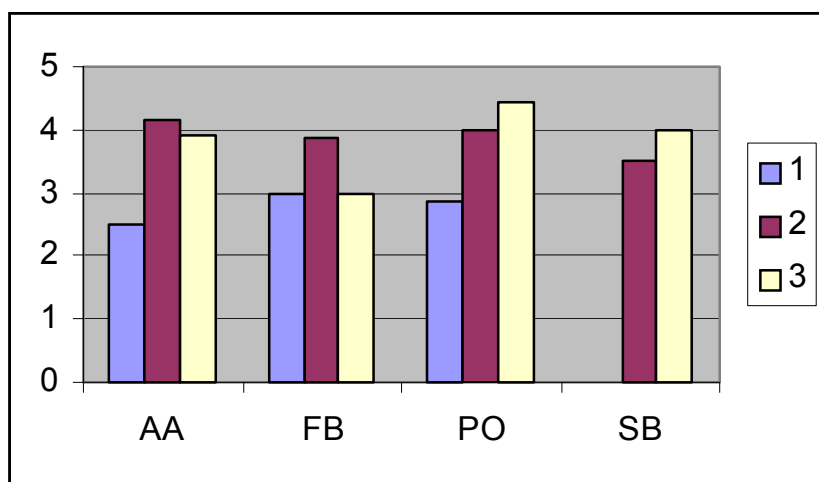


Source: own analysis

Sharing opinions with other firms gained the highest notes in advertising agencies, but the lowest in shoe branch. The shoe branch assess very high the co-operation school – firm in general (4,0) and participation in fairs/ shows (3,0).

The assessment of competences, which were taken under the consideration during working out the training packages (G 35) went rather uniform (diagram 40).

Diagram 40. Numerical distribution of competences on the basis of the training packages were found



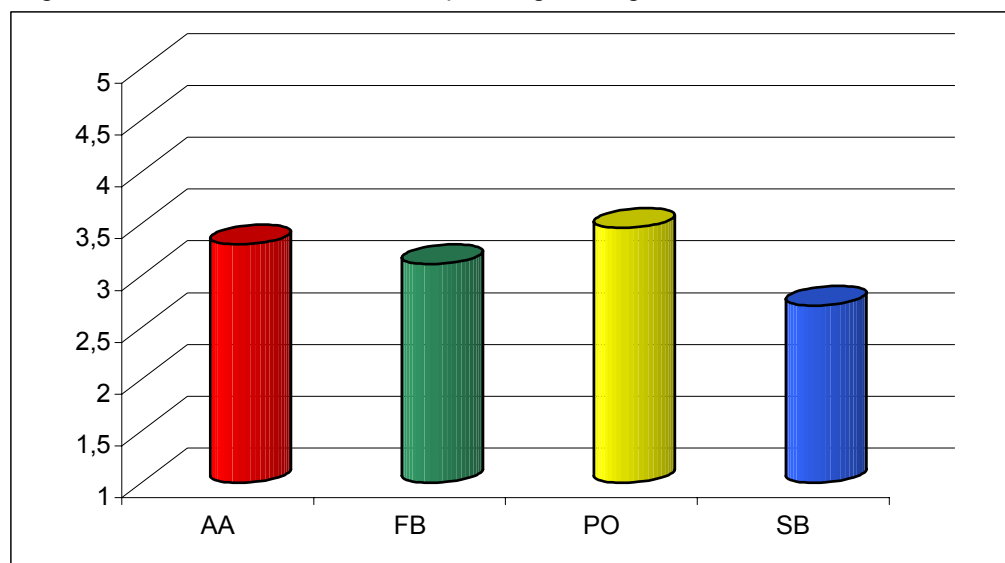
Meaning of abbreviations:

Source: own analysis

- 1 – key competences
- 2 – technical competences
- 3 – cross competences

Question G36 related to assessment usefulness of planning training actions in the firm. The distribution of answers oscillated also around average (AA – 3,3, FB – 3,11, PO – 3,46, SB – 2,71), what is shown on the 41 diagram.

Diagram 41. Numerical distribution of planning training actions



Source: own analysis

Question G 37 is the continuation of earlier considerations. It refers to reasons, why respondents find it useful to plan training actions in their firm.

Reasons which usefulness were assessed are:

1. „Ad hoc” actions as for contents
2. „Ad hoc” actions as for methods and execution modalities
3. More effective and efficient training action
4. Training action more suitable to the firm’s strategy
5. Other

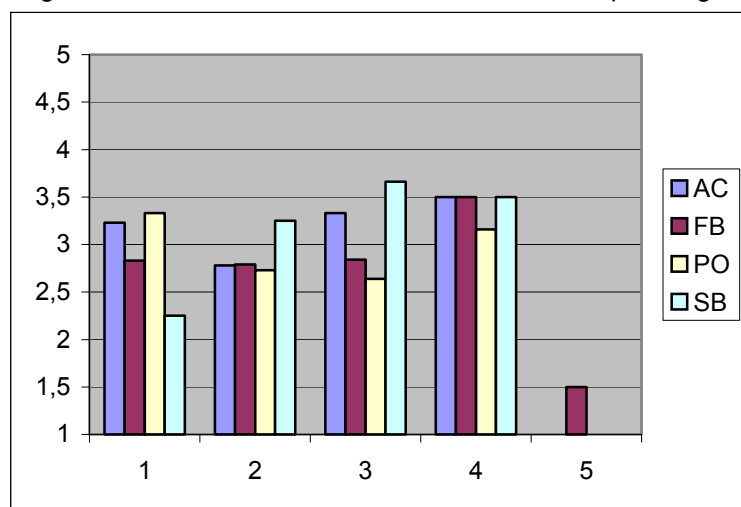
Table 17. Numerical distribution of usefulness of planning training actions

	1	2	3	4	5
AA	3,23	2,78	3,33	3,5	1
FB	2,83	2,79	2,84	3,5	1,5
PO	3,33	2,73	2,64	3,16	0
SB	2,25	3,25	3,66	3,5	0

Source: own analysis

Distribution of answers shows, that the respondents, as a reason, gave training actions more suitable to the firm’s strategy the most often (4). „Ad hoc” actions as for contents were chosen by the representatives form printing offices, what is also shown on the diagram 42.

Diagram 42. Numerical distribution of usefulness of planning training actions



Source: own analysis

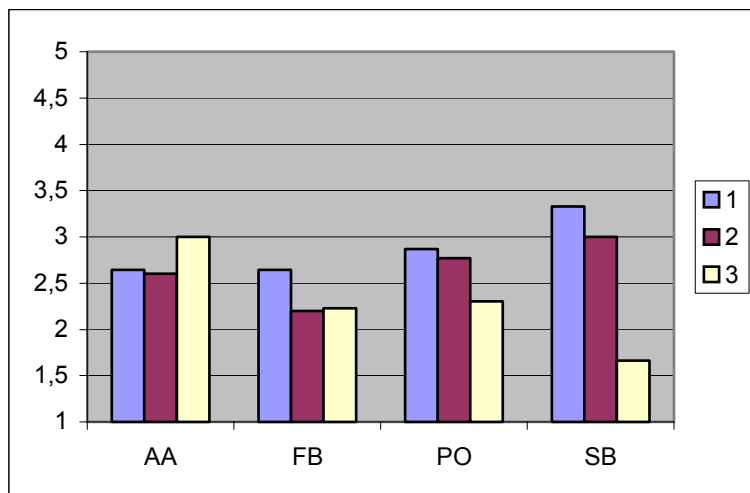
The training actions will be planned by means of different modalities in the firms (G 38). Use of specifically planned instruments was the most often chosen answer in the group of shoe branch, but the most rare by advertising agencies and furniture firms. Use of generic instruments such as consultants or agencies often declared representatives of furniture branch. Lack of instruments is the domain of advertising agencies, what is shown in the table 18 and on the 43 diagram.

Table 18. Numerical distribution of specified modalities used to plan training actions

	1	2	3
AC	2,64	2,6	3
FB	2,64	2,2	2,23
PO	2,87	2,77	2,3
SB	3,33	3	1,66

Source: own analysis

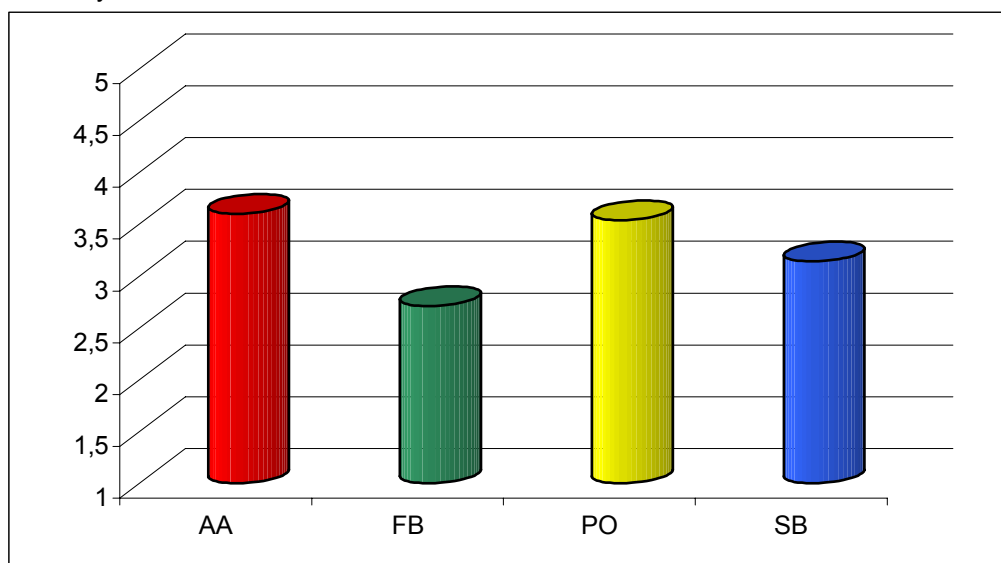
Diagram 43. Numerical distribution of specified modalities used to plan training actions



Source: own analysis

However, question G39 gave rather diverse answers. For the less useful, the firm's training needs to be known by the local school system, recognized the respondents from furniture branch (2,71), for the most useful the respondents from advertising agencies (3,6) and printing offices (3,54). It is presented on the diagram 44.

Diagram 44. Numerical distribution of usefulness for the firm's training needs to be known by the local school system



Source: own analysis

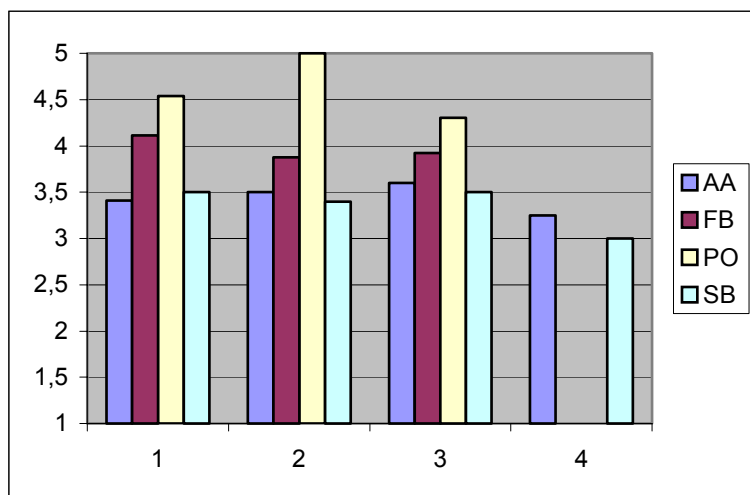
The most useful for the firm's training needs to be known by the local school system (G40) recognized representatives of furniture branch (4,11) and printing offices (4,54). The opinion, that student's training should be more aimed at the firm's needs gave the highest priority the respondents from printing offices (5), while medium respondents from advertising agencies (3,5), furniture firms (3,875) as well as shoe one (3,4). The view, that students should be more motivated to future work quite high assessed representatives of printing offices (4,3) and furniture firms (3,92). The results are presented in table19 and on the diagram 46.

Table 19. Numerical distribution of reasons for the firm's training needs should be known by local school system

	1	2	3	4
AA	3,41	3,5	3,6	3,25
FB	4,11	3,875	3,92	1
PO	4,54	5	4,3	0
SB	3,5	3,4	3,5	3

Source: own analysis

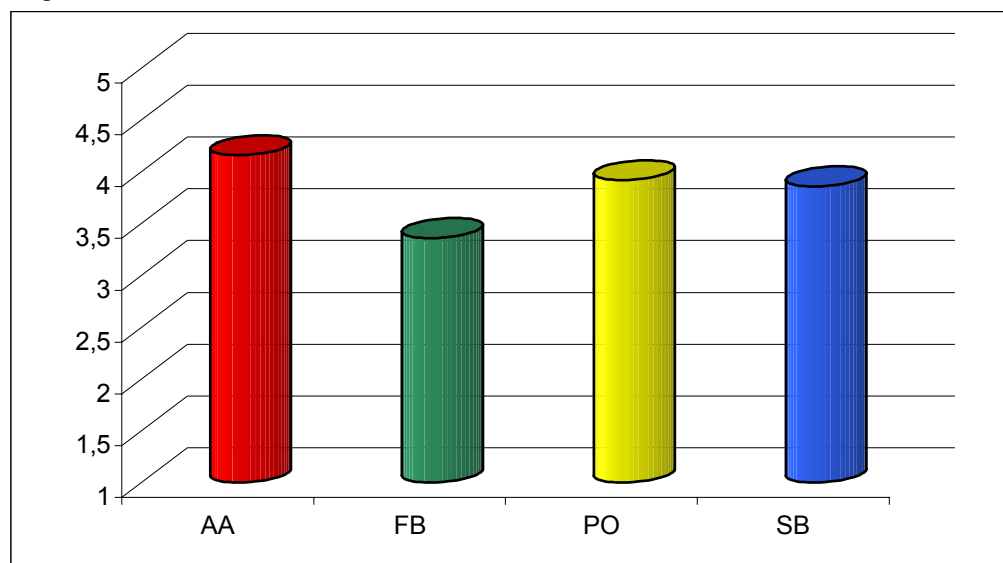
Diagram 46. Numerical distribution of reasons for the firm's training needs should be known by local school system



Source: own analysis

The actions which aim is to tighten the co-operation between school and enterprises could be fruited with creating a school – firm net (G 41). The representatives of furniture branch assessed such a need the lowest.

Diagram 47. Numerical distribution of the creation the school – firm net usefulness



Source: own analysis

Actually, the majority of firms assessed such a need very high, giving different reasons to it (G42). Those reasons were classified as follows:

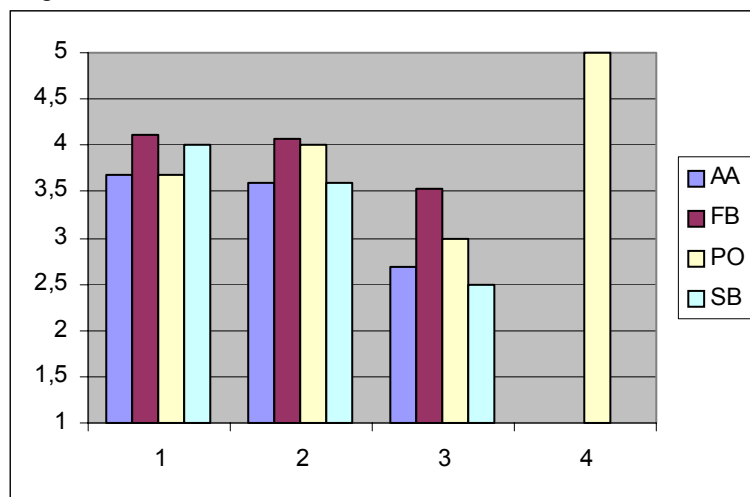
One of the reasons, that was assessed very high by respondents from furniture branch (4,11) and shoe branch (4) was the chance of exchanging competences. Second reason was the chance of fostering a meeting between training demand and offer, which the high priority were given by representatives of furniture branch (4,08) and printing offices (4). Moreover, interviewers from printing offices gave also another reasons for creating such a net (5), which they actually did not specified. These data are presented in the table 20 and diagram 48 below.

Table 20. Numerical distribution of usefulness' reasons for creating the school – firm net

	1	2	3	4
AA	3,69	3,6	2,68	0
FB	4,11	4,08	3,54	0
PO	3,69	4	3	5
SB	4	3,6	2,5	0

Source: own analysis

Diagram 48. Numerical distribution of usefulness` reasons for creating the school – firm net



Source: own analysis

Detailed conclusions:

1. The interviewed mainly have higher and secondary level of education including technical and economic. It is interesting that no interviewed declared commercial education, especially within representatives of shoe and furniture companies.
2. Most interviewed had gained their job qualifications at work. School education was another factor that influenced acquiring these qualifications.
3. The number of employees in different branches varies from 1 to 3 or 3 to 5. Certain percentage of printing houses declared employing 6 to 10 employees while some furniture and shoe companies declared employing more than 100 workers. Such results reflect the characteristics of these branches. The companies represented in the research were usually very small or medium. There were no companies within the employment range from 20 to 50 people.
4. The research shows that most employees in different branches are employed in production and trade, the fewer in Public Relations department.
5. It turns out that during last two years, preceding this research, the level of employment growth in furniture and shoe companies was at the same level as the level of decline. Only advertising agencies kept the same level of employment and at the same time they noticed the slowest growth. In printing offices the distribution of dismissals and new employments was equal. Generally the growth of employment in all branches was noticed mainly in production and commercial departments.
6. Shoe and furniture branches employed new workers, both qualified and unqualified, coming usually from other sectors what can be a result of the willing to change the organizational structure as well as from lack of well qualified employees within their sectors. On the other hand advertising agencies employed usually from the same sector. In case of printing houses the results were dispersed.
7. Most of analysed companies have less than 500 loyal customers, only small percentage of shoe companies ranges from 1000 to 5000 and only few companies in the furniture branch have more than 5000 of them, what reflects the peculiarity of the market and the customers to whom the product is targeted.

8. Most branches have loyal local or regional customers, relatively national ones. The smallest percentage of loyal customers in different branches regarded foreign customers. The highest percentage of local customers was noticed within printing houses, the smallest within shoe companies. As much as 29,9% of all customers from furniture branch are regional customers, other branches have regional customers adequately: 20,2% advertising agencies, 11,3% - printing houses and 15,9% - shoe companies. The highest percentage of national customers was noticed in the shoe sector and it was 36,9% of all customers and in turn: 32% for advertising agencies, 19% for printing houses and finally 18,6% for furniture companies. As far as foreign customers are concerned most of them were found in advertising agencies – 7,8% and shoe companies – 5% of all customers, the fewest in printing houses – 1,9% what results from the market situation.
9. The research shows that most companies in different branches keep contacts with their competitors, at the same time advertising agencies most often collaborates on such basis, then printing houses, shoe companies and finally furniture companies that most seldom have contacts with competition.
10. Most popular form of collaboration with competition is organising common activities. Moreover advertising agencies buy raw materials from their competitors. The least popular form of collaboration with competition is managing common structures, which is not used by shoe companies at all, probably because of difficult market and inflow of foreign goods.
11. Most interviewed companies do not have connections with sector associations. Only small percentage of the shoe and printing sector belong to sector associations, while not much more than 10% of advertising agencies belong to sector syndicates.
12. It turns out that almost half of the interviewed companies in different branches organise promotional and advertising actions, that are usually based on sending advertising materials to potential customers. Furthermore almost 30% of advertising agencies and printing houses declare sending such promotional materials to their former customers as well. Despite this fact about 20% of furniture companies advertise in specialised press, and almost 30% of printing and shoe companies organise workshops. The least popular promotional tool are seminars – not more than 2% of furniture companies organise them.
13. As far as an interviewees' attitude towards labour market is considered – they like the managements' attitude towards trainings and also youth's attitude towards work was positively perceived. Instruction and scholastic system was appraised positively but by representatives of shoe companies, as well as enterprise and autonomy of the work force and professional knowledge acquired thanks to experience. In other sectors these factors were ranked to be medium. Most negative marks were given to meeting of demand and supply in the local market and presence of immigrant labour where the answers distributed almost equally. Advertising agencies pointed also to communication, image, advertising, logistics, storage, deliveries as well as design and innovation. Furniture companies stress the communication, image, relationships with customers (like advertising agencies), informatics and telecommunication. Printing houses pointed out

not only sales but relationships with suppliers as well. Important factors for shoe companies were also logistics, storage, deliveries and transport. The least popular answer for question G3 was the meaning of juridical and legal areas (only 2 answers in the whole population, while in the furniture, shoe and printing sector such answer was not given at all). Also personnel management appeared seldom - all together seven answers, what is not good if we take into account the aim of research and making final conclusions. Other answers were dispersed.

14. Moreover, interviewed had to state which of the competences in the given functional areas that need specific training would be most important in the future. The highest priority declared by respondents from all branches was given to social competences. The interviewed notice increasing role of interpersonal communication, building coalitions and relational skills. On the other hand in printing and advertising branches technical competences related to the profession were highly ranked or even dominating. They are also regarded as those necessary to cope with tasks. These were technical competences that reached the highest unit rank in the whole research. It is surprising that the role of key competences like: informatics, foreign languages, health and safety-at work legislation is the smallest. Maybe suggested combination of competences was not the best one.
15. Next step was to specify basic variables, that would describe potential requirements towards innovations regarding job trainings inside the firm. The most important was the need to increase the firm's efficiency and customer's demand for a standard or certification. The least important turned out to be the change in service or in the market relations (especially shoe companies), changes in the process of service supply (also shoe companies), introduction of new management and control models.
16. As far as availability of professional resources on the spot are taken into account, non qualified staff is the most available while it is hard to find administrative professionals. Of course respondents accordingly said that non qualified staff is the worst prepared while qualified staff – the best. It is especially if we consider qualified staff coming from service and/or process technicians and commercial professionals whose job qualifications were highly scored by shoe companies. Generally vocational qualifications were better scored by shoe and furniture branches.
17. In case of establishing training concerning special job qualifications organised for unqualified staff most interviewed said that motivated and skilled persons would acquire such qualifications in about three months but not more than 3 years.
18. The research shows that most of companies didn't make an enquiry to check the preferences as for the organisation of the trainings. Even if such actions were taken up they were the result of firm's policy, where advertising agencies and shoe companies were leading. Those actions partly enabled to select strategically important areas like: "strategic direction and design", - 25% of shoe companies, "design and innovation"- 25% of advertising agencies and shoe companies, "communication, image, advertising" -15% of advertising agencies and shoe companies and "sales, relationships with customers, commercial" – 25% of advertising agencies, 15,69% of furniture companies and 15,37% of printing houses. The least

important area was “Juridical, legal”. The interviewed didn’t find it necessary from the future training point of view.

19. Analysed companies may not identify properly their strategy (their own and competitors’). Many of them didn’t point out areas strategically important for them at all or declared “strategic decision and design”, what is surprising. Also communication between the owner and employees may not be good in such companies.
20. The research aiming at identification of training needs is carried out by many companies from shoe branch, but only if they regards professional trainings for improvement of strategic areas of the company or strategic staff.
21. This research was carried out rather by internal staff (advertising agencies) and external agencies (shoe companies). The size of these companies may explain it to some extent – advertising agencies were mainly very small companies. The chosen techniques prove it, as shoe branch usually used questionnaires. Companies from other branches declared to use other techniques. But it may turn out that a questionnaire that is relatively “the simplest” form may be the most complicated (it is in a form of a document, it has a personalised and targeted form). We can only suppose usefulness for investigating training needs and the efficiency of such tools as: specific charts for each of the firm’s professionals, meetings with employees, cards evaluating the potentiality based on the observations of the evaluated people which were most often declared by companies. The fact that the shape of training depends on the level of management process formality proves the identification of training needs.
22. The companies usually don’t personalise indicators to evaluate effectiveness of trainings.
23. The training activities weren’t monitored from effectiveness point of view after improving changes because, for sure, there were no such changes.
24. The companies that were interviewed in this research declare difficulties resulting from employee’s lack of qualifications and problems with getting funds for trainings. Relatively the smallest problems were in printing houses, but generally there are few trainings and this process is not very formal.
25. Furniture and shoe companies notice that trainings are essential for establishing competitive advantage and strong market position. This may be the result of the fact that these companies are big and have wide markets.
26. Training costs are not perceived as an investment by analysed companies.
27. Lack of trainings doesn’t make problems with functional operating for printing houses representatives, but it may cause problems for 40% of advertising agencies. This proves their unique competence.
28. Generally the need for employing specialists responsible for implementation of trainings was not observed in the research. (trainings are not planned and implemented at all or they are ordered *ad hoc*.)
29. Printing houses hardly see the need to employ specialists responsible for training implementation, even shoe and furniture companies are rather pessimistic about it. It is still too expensive for small companies.

30. Recommendations and analyse of incoming documents (CVs) seem to be the most effective methods of searching for training specialists.
31. Generally companies don't look for or work out training packages. It is confirmed in the question about the ways of finding suitable packages and the amount of money spent on it – the answers are very diversified including even exchange of experience or opinions among associations and consortiums, that hardly exist in Poland. Such answers may result from the fact that interviewed were tired while answering this question.
32. The companies declare rather medium usefulness of planning training actions and identifying training needs.
33. Usually advertising agencies declare the need to tighten relations between educational institutions and firms. Again it proves the unique competences characteristic for this sector, and that they change very quickly, somehow without any reactions in the field of school system. That is true also in case of using computer techniques and specialised software. Advertising agencies find it useful to create a school-firm net.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS:

Present economical situation in Poland, and particularly in Lodz region, results in fast development of small firms focused on local market and operating in the short run. Increasing rate of unemployment in the whole country makes private persons set up their own, very often one-man enterprises. If we compare definition of small and medium sized company in Poland and in western countries where SME is defined to employ from 50 to 500 employees, it is obvious that the situation when there is employed from 1 to 3 workers differs from the above definition considerably. This basic research that analysed companies from four branches: advertising agencies, shoe companies, furniture companies and printing houses, shows that five-people staff is the maximum possible level of employment. This concerns especially advertising agencies. The situation is a little better in case of shoe and furniture companies, where some percentage of these companies declared employing more than 100 employees. This can be explained by the specificity of these companies where production of one good consists of several or even a dozen or so phases and different qualified personnel attend each phase. They also have larger market that is targeted to wider group of customers, and it is shown in the research that both shoe and furniture companies have the most of loyal customers in all branches – adequately: from 1000 to 5000 or more. It shouldn't surprise if we take into account increasing demand for domestic goods mainly being a result of foreign competition, especially price competition. It proves also another conclusion, that most staff in analysed branches is employed in production and sales. Considerable growth of new personnel was also noticed in these departments while the general tendency concerning level of total employment is rather reduction or remaining at the same level, especially in case of advertising agencies. It is not surprising because this sector has suffered symptoms of recession from 2000-2002.

The abilities of using different promotion tools without support of agents like advertising agencies increase also in case of other branches. A good example for this can be advertising in specialised press, organising thematic workshops or seminars at lower costs than it would be with support of professional advertising

agencies. Moreover, advertising agencies employ new staff usually from the same sector while furniture companies on the contrary from different ones. It is another proof of deep variety and peculiarity of those sectors comparing to the advertising sector, where companies need to grow also in the area of inner management and promotion structure. In any case promotion of the firm influences its competitiveness and surviving on the market considerably. Usually such activities are based on sending promotional materials to potential customers. Furthermore, almost 30% of advertising agencies and printing offices send it to their former customers as well. It shouldn't surprise as they have the fewest potential customers (less than 500 customers)

Of course competitiveness depends also on information exchange among competitors and extent of them, that is why most of analysed companies from different branches declared keeping relationships with competitors. The most popular form of contacts with competition is establishing common activities, mainly fairs, while the least popular is managing common structures, what is obvious in the above context. Advertising agencies buy also raw materials from their competitors. An excuse here could be narrow specialisation of the branch and problems with availability of some necessary products. As far as customers are concerned – most companies have mainly local or regional customers – printing houses and furniture companies are leaders here. Shoe companies (almost 40%) and advertising agencies (a little more than 30%) have relatively many national customers. Those two sectors address their services also to foreign customers, however it is a small percentage of totality, a bit more than 7%, what can be a result of branch specificity and demand for such goods abroad (especially in case of advertising agencies). It may be a consequence of decrease for such services in other branches, that was described above.

Although being attractive for foreign companies in Poland shoe companies become attractive abroad as well because of lower prices, cheaper raw materials and western design.

Analysing results of this research, a question regarding the future of small and medium sized enterprises in Poland arise. It turns out that activity of such companies is focused mainly on the short-term aims, fast money circulation, gaining as much customers as possible together with reduction of employment costs. Insecure situation on the labour market as well as legal aspects of companies discourage from heavy investing in the long run (risk reduction). Interviewed's attitude towards labour market is described in above detailed conclusions. Such way of operating in these conditions is the most effective and the best one for them. They very seldom perceive the chance to develop through trainings and improvement of personnel qualifications, especially when the same person is a manager and employee having economic or technical qualifications at the same time. Many firms see the need for improvement of social competences, related to managing personnel policy, especially within those better developed. But still it is too expensive for them to carry out such trainings that require involving professionals, because of bad economic condition. In the light of this research general conclusion arise: present condition of small and medium sized enterprises differs from European standards, where much attention have been paid to improvement of competences and proper personnel strategy perceiving this as a powerful tool to become more competitive on the market. Thus there is a wide gap to change the attitude of these companies towards such issues as: competitiveness, trade mark promotion, image of the firm.

Trainings will play an important role here. International projects and EU financial contribution will open a new way to implement it.