

New Report Identifies Best Practices for Creating and Sustaining Apprenticeship Programs

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Accenture, the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce, the Global Apprenticeship Network and ETH Zurich/KOF Swiss Economic Institute publish “Jobs Now” report to help U.S. organizations bridge the skills gap

NEW YORK; Oct. 12, 2017 – Accenture, the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce, the Global Apprenticeship Network (GAN) and ETH Zurich/KOF Swiss Economic Institute today released a new report that examines best practices for creating and sustaining apprenticeship programs, which are gaining momentum as a strategy for narrowing the skills gap.

The report, “Jobs Now,” aims to help U.S. organizations tap new sources of talent for in-demand skills that will drive growth and innovation – which is particularly important given that 95 percent of U.S. corporate leaders say finding the talent they need is problematic. ¹



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“Jobs Now” presents key elements of Switzerland’s successful apprenticeship model, along with case studies of successful programs and profiles of CEOs who started their careers as apprentices. Nearly 70 percent of Swiss citizens participate in an apprentice program, which has helped the country achieve the top global ranking in innovation (INSEAD Global Innovation Index, 2016) and competitiveness (WEF, 2016).

“The U.S. faces a skills shortage that threatens our competitiveness,” said Julie Sweet, Accenture’s CEO for North America. “People are our country’s greatest strength, and apprenticeship programs, particularly at the local level, can play a critical role in developing new sources of talent while creating additional opportunities for our citizens to participate in some of the most dynamic parts of our economy.”

In the United States, Accenture recently initiated technology-based apprenticeship programs in San Antonio and Chicago, which are providing new job opportunities while bringing needed skills to Accenture’s business in these markets. These programs – along with others from leading companies including The Adecco Group, Nestlé and Zurich – are featured in “Jobs Now.”

“With this report, we are accelerating a movement that has already shown great promise,” said Martin Naville, CEO of the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce. “The vocational education and training system in Switzerland is considered the global gold standard due to its positive impact on the nation’s economic success, rich employer engagement, and low youth unemployment. We are thrilled to share our learnings with the United States.”

Among the best practices identified in the report:

- Involve key partners and stakeholders early. Apprenticeship systems in Switzerland are one of the oldest public-private partnerships in the world. For the U.S., key partners include community colleges; industry groups; local, state and federal governments; and social partners.
- Create buy-in within the organization. Not all decision-makers within companies are sold on the positive ROI argument. Pointing to the benefits can play a key role in changing mindsets.
- Allow flexibility in designing the program. Each employer should design a program tailored to the specific needs of its business and the communities it serves.

“The vocational education and training system in Switzerland prepares a broad cross-section of young professionals – including high achievers – for their careers in almost all occupational fields,” said Dr. Ursula Renold, head of Division Comparative Education Systems at KOF/ETH Zurich. “A major strength is the intensive cooperation between employers and educators. Some U.S. states, such as Colorado, have shown a pioneering initiative in adapting elements of the Swiss approach. We are eager to continue to share our best practices through this important report.”

Shea Gopaul, founder and executive director of the Global Apprenticeship Network, said, “There are many lessons to be learned from the Swiss model, and we are optimistic that it can be adapted to the United States. The three keys are ensuring that apprenticeship is employer-driven, that it is accessible by all, and that the model promotes lifelong learning.”

About Accenture

Accenture (NYSE: ACN) is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions – underpinned by the world’s largest delivery network – Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With approximately 425,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives. Visit us at www.accenture.com.

About Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce

The Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce promotes and facilitates better business relations between the US and Switzerland; provides essential information about doing business in these markets; brings business leaders together to facilitate contacts and provide platforms for networking in both countries; represents the mutual interests of members; promotes both countries as advantageous places to do business; and fosters good corporate citizenship to benefit the communities in which members do business.

As the largest association of multinational companies in Switzerland (Swiss and foreign, large and small), the Swiss AmCham addresses all issues of concern to this sector for the long-term success of the Swiss economy.

The Swiss AmCham, the second largest AmCham in Europe, is a private organization with 2,000 members representing 1,600 internationally active companies. Twenty-five percent of the members are located in the US (with organizations in Boston, New York, Atlanta, Charlotte, Miami, San Francisco and Los Angeles) and 75 percent are distributed throughout Switzerland. The Swiss AmCham covers all areas of the private sector and does not accept any subsidies from any government entity. A very prominent group of Directors —CEOs of the largest Swiss companies and European headquarters of the largest US companies—oversees the direction of the Swiss AmCham.

About Global Apprenticeship Network

The GAN is a business-driven alliance created in 2013 with the overarching goal of encouraging and linking business initiatives on skills and employment opportunities for youth - notably through apprenticeships and work-readiness programs. Following our mission 'skills for business, jobs for youth', we work with companies, governments, international organizations and employers' federations to promote the apprenticeship model and work-readiness programs as a tool to increase employability and combat skills mismatch.

While the GAN provides a global strategic platform, we have also launched GAN National Networks (GNN) in 9 countries (France, Spain, Turkey, Indonesia, Colombia, Mexico, Argentina, Malawi and Tanzania), with over 180 company members and have committed to over 9 million opportunities for youth.

About ETH Zurich/KOF Swiss Economic Institute

ETH Zurich regards itself as an institution with regional and national roots that is fully integrated in the international academic community. The ETH has more than 19,000 students from 120 countries. It measures itself in all respects against the world's leading universities—from its education and research to its management. KOF Swiss Economic Institute, which is part of ETH Zurich, is the leading institute for research in applied economics in Switzerland. KOF has been providing independent and high-quality contributions both to international research and to economic policy for more than 75 years. The institute focuses on research relating to innovation, internationalization, national regulatory frameworks and education systems. Its forward-looking research is sustained by national and international cooperation with scholars, institutions and economic operators.

¹ 2016 Business Roundtable Education and Workforce Survey

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