

ANALYSIS OF AN INTERNAL MARKETING TOOL

Case Company: Lexus Europe

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Anna Roslavlceva

Abstract

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Title of publication Analysis of the Internal Marketing Tool Case Company: Lexus Europe		
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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Marketing is a popular area of research and analysis. The reason is that most of the time marketing is considered as the main channel of communication between the customer and the company. However, this is not the only approach that is possible nowadays. The motivation for marketing teams to design advanced campaigns is due to factors such as increasing profits and wavering customer loyalty. Additionally, these campaigns inspire to find an out-of-the-box strategy that would be profitable in the long-term. Finally, these campaigns can be divided into external and internal marketing approaches both of which have been detailed in this study.</p> <p>The main purpose of this study was to evaluate and study one of the internal marketing tools at Lexus Europe. The selected tool is a training program for all the Lexus staff which has not yet been implemented. Also, improvements and optimisations to the training program at Lexus Europe have been described. This work has been conducted using complementary inductive and deductive approaches. The outcome of deductive research has helped to reveal the problem, while inductive research has been instrumental in finding the solution.</p> <p>In conclusion, the author suggests on employing an implementation plan to enhance the existing training program at Lexus Europe as the internal marketing tool. This idea was borrowed from analysis of the training program at Lexus Ukraine and adapted to the needs of Lexus Europe.</p>		
Keywords Internal marketing, Internal marketing tool, Training program, Behavioural evaluation, Shuhari		

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and the Research Question

Marketing is a popular area of researches and various analyses. The reason is that, most of the time, marketing is considered as the main channel between the customer and the company. However, this is not the only approach that is possible nowadays. Since consumers pay more attention not only to the advertising but also to the experience that they get during the purchasing process, the customer service around the product becomes more valuable and meaningful. To pursue this trend, every company creates its own special marketing strategy. Nevertheless, an obvious matter is that the main objective of a company is to make as much profit as possible. The combination of this purpose and current customer behaviour trend motivates marketing teams to design advanced marketing campaigns and it also inspires to find an out-of-the-box strategy that would be profitable in a long-term. (Fanderl et al 2019.)

The luxury vehicle division of Toyota Motor Europe, Lexus Europe, stands for the distinction between internal and external marketing, as each marketing strategy has its own features and way of implementation. Every company that shares the philosophy of internal marketing importance has its own vision for it. As a result, the scheme or systems are various as well. At Lexus Europe, internal marketing is applied as a self-standing element of an overall system. (Cutler 2019.)

The author of this study did a one-year internship at the division of Lexus Europe, Lexus Academy Europe, which delivers various trainings for the Lexus employees in European markets. This experience inspired the author to conduct the research on the company's internal marketing. The initial idea was to explore communication between the Lexus Academy Europe and the Lexus retailers' staff and study the managerial influence on employees' mindset at Lexus. Besides that, the author got inspired by the article "INTERNAL MARKETING: HR or marketing - Who gets staff on side?" by Simms where various internal marketing techniques are described and analyzed. Simms (2003) concludes that only the companies that keep a healthy balance between HR and marketing are able to turn their employees into loyal brand ambassadors.

However, throughout this research, the problem has been faced that managerial influence on employees' mindset cannot be measured to the full extent. The obstacle is an incomplete internal marketing system at Lexus Europe. That is why the received results and conclusions would be fragmentary or wrong. Before conducting the research on managerial influence and behavioural change, the internal environment and systems at

Lexus Europe must be stabilized and tested. (Cutler 2019.) Consequently, the thesis turned into a different direction.

All things considered, the main purpose of the thesis is to evaluate and study one of the internal marketing tools at Lexus Europe. The selected tool is a training program for all the Lexus staff. The training program is currently under development and not implemented yet. The main research question of the thesis is: How can the training program at Lexus Europe be improved?

1.2 The Methodology of the Research

1.2.1 Research Design

Research design is defined as a framework of methods and techniques chosen by a researcher to combine various components of investigation in a reasonably logical manner so that the research problem is efficiently handled. It provides insights about “how” to conduct a study using a particular methodology. Every analyst has a list of research questions, which need to be assessed – this can be done with research design. (Bhat 2019b.)

If the thesis has an investigation topic, then there are a few research designs that can be used (experimental, survey, correlational, semi-experimental, review) and their sub-types (experimental design, research problem, descriptive case-study) either. There are three main sections of research design: data collection, measurement, and analysis (Bhat 2019b).

Adi Bhat (2019b) claims that “a researcher must have a clear understanding of the various types of research design to select, which type of research design to implement for a study. Research design can be broadly classified into quantitative and qualitative research design.”

Globally, there are two foundational types of research designs: qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative research is applied when the mathematical calculations form the basis of the relationship between collected data and observation. The aim of the quantitative research type is to prove or either disprove the assumed theories and hypothesis by the meaning of mathematical calculations. The reason for using the qualitative research design is to conclude ‘why’ a particular theory exists along with ‘what’ respondents have to say about it. The other fundamental research design, which is implemented by researchers to have statistical conclusions to collect actionable insights, is quantitative research design. Such type of research is crucial for the best growth of any

organization, as the analysis is conducted based on the numbers. Quantitative research is used to make important business decisions and it is proved to be effective for the business. (Bhat 2019b.)

Further, the research design can be classified by five sub-types: descriptive, experimental, correlational, diagnostic, explanatory. The description of each sub-type helps better understanding and selecting the right design for the research. If the wrong design is chosen at the beginning of the research, then the whole process of analysis and results will be unbeneficial. (Bhat 2019b.)

The aim of a descriptive research design underlies in its name. The theory is the foundation of the analysis. A distinctive feature of the descriptive design is asking in-depth questions and providing answers for 'why' and 'how' research. (Bhat 2019b.)

Another type of research design is experimental or casual research. The main feature of this design is that the cause and effect relationship compiles it. The idea is to observe how the dependent variable is affected by an independent variable, and which conclusion appears in evidence of the research. Experimental or casual research design has a practical characteristic. Findings of the research are applicable in real life and help to solve existing or potential problems. (Bhat 2019b.)

Correlational research design is the opposite of the experimental research technique as the analysis is based on the cause and effect relationship between two strongly connected variables. The feature that differentiates this design from the experimental one is the application of the statistical analysis techniques. There are no assumptions and hypothesis, which are a crucial part of the experimental design. Correlational research relies on the usage of a coefficient. (Bhat 2019b.)

Diagnostic research design is useful when the intention of the research is to discover and evaluate the upstream cause of a specific subject. There are three elements that support the research process: inception, diagnosis and finally the solution of the specified issue. (Bhat 2019b.)

The last but not the least research design is explanatory design. In general, the purpose of this research design is aiming towards the analysis of the unexplored topic. The outcome of the investigation should provide an explanation of the unexplored aspects. The evidence of a subject is provided along with 'what', 'how' and 'why' details related to the research question. (Bhat 2019b.)

Based on the study above and the purpose of the study, the following techniques are applied throughout the research. First, the type of research has a qualitative nature.

Second, the diagnostic sub-type is used due to the fact that the thesis does not provide the answer to the questions of descriptive, explanatory or any other research designs. The general purpose of this research type is to evaluate the impact of social interventions such as new treatment methods, innovations in services, and a host of others. The author considers the main advantage of diagnostic research is that it is a form of applied research. The consistent outcome of the research has some real-world effect. Qualitative research type and diagnostic research sub-type allow conducting interviews in order to achieve problem observation. (Prochaska 2012, 6.)

The research is framed by several limitations. The case of the research is exclusively applicable to Lexus Europe in the framework of internal marketing. Among various internal marketing tools, only one is analyzed. The research is relevant for the 2019 year.

1.2.2 Research Approach

According to many studies, there are two main research approaches or, in other words, methods of reasoning: inductive and deductive. A distinctive feature of induction is moving from the specific to the general or from the observation through the pattern to the theory. Deduction works in the polar way comparing to the induction. The research begins with the general and ends with the specific. In other words, the theory causes observation, which finally leads to the outcome. The approach to arguments depends on the research method of reasoning. The inductive approach suits better arguments that are based on experience or observation. Arguments based on laws, rules, or other widely accepted principles are best expressed deductively. Working styles of a researcher differ from method to method. The deductive researcher is obliged to work 'top-down', from theory to hypothesis, from generic to specific. On the opposite, an inductive researcher aims to work 'bottom-up', by observing the specific subject or pattern to generate an explanatory theory. In other words, a researcher moves from specific to generic. (Morales 2017.)

Having absolutely polar methods, data collection and styles of the inductive and deductive approaches configure the complementary approach towards the problem. In majority of the cases, only one approach is applied throughout the whole study. However, sometimes the flow of the research leads to the inevitable usage of both methods of reasoning in order to have a complete view of the subject. (Morales 2017.)

The first step of the research flow is to investigate what internal marketing and its tools are and review literature on relevant topic. Secondly, explore the underdevelopment training program as an internal marketing tool at Lexus Europe. Finally, find out how it can be improved and provide a valuable suggestion for the company case. In order to conduct

the complete research, both approaches of deductive and inductive methods are applied. However, in order to identify the weak point of the selected internal marketing tool, first, the deductive research is utilized towards the training program at Lexus Europe. The evaluation that starts from the framework will allow narrowing down to the problems that this framework might have. Once the gap is identified the inductive research is executed on the local level towards the topic. The research from a specific problem of the framework would allow having a global view on the internal marketing tool and coming up with the best suggestion for Lexus Europe.

1.2.3 Measurements and Data Collection Process

The main subjects that are in the focus: internal marketing system at Lexus Europe and the training system on Lexus Europe and of the European Lexus divisions. Even though the methods of reasoning that are applied towards the subjects are different the prevailing measurement tool is the same.

A predominant measurement tool, that helps to identify the problem within deductive research is the analysis of previous studies on the topic of internal marketing and observation of internal marketing system at Lexus Europe. During the inductive research, an interview is the crucial data-gathering tool that helps to develop the solution for the company case.

The identical way of preparations and approach was applied for each interview. Inspired by the article written by Professor Doctor Moura "How to Prepare For a Great In-Depth INTERVIEW!", the author had the intention to go in the direction as if s/he was using the mixed design approaches. This principle helped to move the focus from the conversation based on theory to the conversation based on practical experience. (Moura 2017.)

First preparation action for each interview was to define the topics that were covered during the conversation. The second step was the creation of the questions per each topic that helped to answer the research questions. Moura (2017) advises that an open type of question helps to cover all the subjects and discover new topics throughout the interview better, as the respondent cannot reply with the one-word answer. The last step of the preparation process was to put questions in the correct logical order: from generic to more specific topics. (Moura 2017.) The generic questions at the beginning of the interview allowed building the relationship with the respondent what helped to go in-depth conversation.

Throughout the research, the author conducted two interviews with the representatives of a European Lexus market, more specifically - Lexus Ukraine. This European division was

chosen based on the advice of the Senior Manager of Lexus Experience and Lexus Academy Europe. Moreover, while the internship period, the author succeeded in building trust relationships with Lexus Ukraine on training events and through communication channels. Both online interviews were dedicated to the new training program at Lexus Ukraine. The first interview took place on 4th of April 2019 via Skype for Business, the participants of the interview were Senior Manager of Lexus Experience and Lexus Academy Europe as an observant from Lexus Europe and Lexus Marketing Senior Specialist as Interviewee 1 from Lexus Ukraine. The topic for the discussion was agreed with the Senior Manager of Lexus Experience and Lexus Academy Europe. The list of the core questions of this interview can be found in the Appendices. The main outcome of this interview was the necessity of the second interview with another respondent in order to gain more information. Consequently, the second interview was agreed and held on the 26th of April 2019 via Telegram, the respondent of the interview was the Trainer from Lexus Ukraine, Interviewee 2. The main outcome of the interview was the acquisition of the missing data. The list of the core questions of this interview can be found in the Appendices.

Apart from interviews, author's working experience and discussions with the Senior Manager of Lexus Experience and Lexus Academy Europe were used as the primary source data to the same extent. The Senior Manager of Lexus Experience and Lexus Academy Europe has given permission to the author to use his name throughout the thesis and in the reference list. Mostly primary data is referenced in the study as the most reliable source of information. Nevertheless, some secondary data was retrieved from the online articles for the Literature Review.

1.2.4 The Validity of the Research

Validity is an integral part of the research as it reflects the contribution of the investigation process. The two fundamental dimensions of the validity are external and internal. They both depend on each other presence in the research process. Increasing external validity leads to a decrease in internal validity. (Validity and Reliability 2019.) Thus, the internal validity predominates in the research as the goal of the research findings is practical application to the company case.

The validity of the research concludes in the following reason. Lexus Europe is currently on the stage of launching the first stage of the newly developed internal marketing tool and progressing the second stage. The analysis of the training program as an internal marketing tool has allowed evaluating its delivery and evaluation channels as well as

discovering findings for further research. Thus, the outcome of this research is to provide a valuable suggestion for Lexus Europe in regards to training program improvement.

Face validity measurement is applied for data collection and research process. Face validity is identified as a method of 'common sense' analysis of the collected resources and research process. Face validity type is a "general measure and the subject often have input". Even though this measure is considered to be less powerful than content validity it saves a lot of time. With the approach of face validity, the author is responsible to eliminate suspicious resources and pick only the articles from trustworthy journals and webpages. (Shuttleworth 2019.) In the research mostly the corporate webpages and materials were used. The electronic corporate resources are public. Published and other corporate resources' utilization was agreed with Lexus Experience and Lexus Academy Europe management. Furthermore, all the electronic resources have been checked on the ground of feedback from other users and the positions and qualification of the authors of referenced articles. All the interviews are conducted with the permission given by the Senior Manager of Lexus Experience and Lexus Academy Europe. The interviewees were informed that the information received during the interview is used for the research only. The purpose of the investigation and interviews were shared by the author as well. According to GDPR, the private information of the interviewees is not disclosed in the research.

Face validity is most commonly utilized in social and educational sciences when the content of the research is difficult to measure (Shuttleworth 2019). Consequently, in order to secure the flow of the research process, constant meetings with the Senior Manager of Lexus Experience and Lexus Academy Europe were organized. During these meetings, the author has been introducing the materials and ideas that are used in the research to the representative of Lexus Europe. The Senior Manager of Lexus Experience and Lexus Academy Europe has given permission to the author to use his name throughout the thesis as a reference as well as in the reference list.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following chapter, the author explains the concept of internal marketing and its tools. Further, the difference between internal marketing and external marketing are described in detail. Moreover, the definitions of marketing and branding are provided in one sub-chapter for better understanding of internal marketing purpose. The author analyzes, how internal marketing is represented at some global corporations.

2.1 Internal Marketing and Its Tools

Services Marketing Specialist at SucceedGroup is sure that any internal marketing strategy is built on the approach of treating employees as internal customers. This type of customers who are already with the company and share its values and vision should not be considered less important rather than “external customers”. The goal of internal marketing is to align every aspect of the company’s internal operations with internal customers’ point of view to ensure that employees are as capable as possible of providing value to customers. (Van der Westhuyzen 2018.)

Throughout the research, the author did not find one and only definition of internal marketing as there are many perceptions. Some specialists believe that this is a part of the overall marketing strategy. This marketing direction includes activities for the employees in order to improve their engagement and satisfaction. However, there is another opinion that internal marketing is a separate process. This process allows managing internal relationships between employees and managers on a better level. Nevertheless, no matter what is the exact definition the results of applying the well-designed and implemented strategy are always the same. The most crucial outcome is generating value and better service and product for customers. The principle of the internal marketing strategy is, as Van der Westhuyzen (2018) states, “look after your staff and they will look after your clients”.

Internal marketing term does not equal to the employee engagement term as some people may assume. There are two key elements that form internal marketing: employee engagement and brand advocacy. With the help of a good collaboration between these two factors, the internal customers have a positive influence on external branding. If the management is on track of all the internal marketing efforts, the outcome goes beyond expectations. Management has to take care of ensuring the balance between corporate culture and work-life, providing a healthy work environment, opportunities for growth, sufficient knowledge and feedback, encouraging communication. Overall, the basic idea of

the internal marketing effort is to secure the happiness of employees and guarantee their engagement. (Rouse 2017.)

The chart below represents the logical chain of the consequences caused by positive internal marketing.

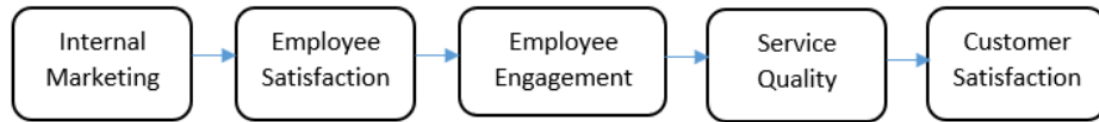


Figure 1 Internal marketing influence logic chain (Van der Westhuyzen 2018)

According to Ben Van der Westhuyzen (2017), there are various internal marketing tools that can be implemented by any company:

- Internal campaigns
- Influential employees
- Events
- Training
- Regular communication
- Core values introduction
- Clear job specifications
- Pleasant working environment
- Department competitions
- Internal employee newsletters.

There is one extra internal marketing tool that advised by Chhoda (2016) in the article for Forbes. The creation of the powerful and personalized content that can be utilized by internal customers can be added to the list above. The content should be well understood by the employees. Thus, this “take-and-go” content can be customized and spread out in a more efficient way. Once the employees are engaged in the content creation they share it more enthusiastically. (Chhoda 2016.)

The main purpose of an internal marketing campaign is a communication of the strategy and set goals from management to employees. This tool is required to ensure that the whole corporation is pursuing the same ideas following the same way. In most of the

cases, the communication is carried out via internal newsletters and events. (Internal Marketing 2012.) The president of Savage Brands, Andell (2014) explains in his article for the Houston Business Journal that even the small percentage of the influential employees can impact the vast majority of the company. The results of their influence can be positive as well as negative. The direction of the impact depends on the management that is in empowered to get at least three percent of employees “on board and effectively utilize their influence to engage others.” Andell (2014) represents steps that must be taken in order to generate positive results. The process of involving the employees into corporate culture should be carried out as soon as possible. Nevertheless, the employees cannot be involved in the corporate culture if objectives are not clear. That is why the cornerstone is a distinct strategy and core values.

The last step is the internal training of the influential group. This team of selected employees is, consequently, engage the others into the corporate culture and internal training as well. (Andell 2014.) Logically, the next internal marketing tool that requires description is training. Dobele (2019) in her article emphasizes that “internal marketing plays a major role in training”. The internal training is a complex process that has to cover plenty of points. The successful training always includes entertaining and cognitive content that involve employees in educating journey.

However, the training process would not be complete without internal communication. The necessity of pre- and post-communication is crucial for the involvement and positive results and feedback. Every particular employee expects his/her management to provide the training that is useful and corresponding to his/her learning needs. If the management does not consider employees' interests and needs the outcome of the training can turn into a decrease in the employees' motivation and a good work environment. It is important for management to understand the employees' level of proficiency in order to develop the training that would be useful and motivating. That is why regular communication, as one of the internal marketing tools, is essential. (Dobele 2019.)

The tool of training is tightly connected with the tool of the clear job description. It is known that the well-written job description is a sign of good management. It helps to hire, evaluate, terminate employees. As for the employees themselves, that is a clear instruction for their job. They can, also, be aware of the management expectations. Nevertheless, of all the known facts, the clear job description is used as a subsidiary instrument for training development. The proper and goal-seeking training content can only be created based on the outline of the skills and mindset required by management and employees needs. (The Importance of Job Descriptions 2019.)

One of the last internal marketing tools that are introduced is the department competition or, in other words, the competitive element. While studying a few articles regarding the competition within the employees, the author has deduced that the foundation of any competition consists of a friendly environment, the introduction of core values, internal communication and gamification. In the article by Insuperity Staff (2019), the importance of each component is explained. Gamification, as a key concept of any competition, allows turning any learning or evaluation process into interactivity. The form of a game assumes the logical and objective rewarding system, which is important for employees' motivation. In addition, gamification provides a positive environment for a friendly competition. Furthermore, the feedback flow will go smoother once the gamification principle is applied for the competition. (Insuperity Staff 2019.)

The analysis of the internal marketing tools shows that all the elements are connected to each other and the application of one of the tools assumes utilization of others simultaneously. Nevertheless, not all the tools are applicable to every company. The tool pack depends on the company's size, strategy, perspectives and budget allocated for internal marketing purposes. However, when the company makes an emphasis on some specific internal marketing tool it should keep a track on dependent elements of the system. First of all, not only an introduction of core values is crucial but their further implementation in everyday work culture as well. If the employees own and share the core values as an essential element of their behaviour, their decision-making process aligns better with the company's strategy. Second, events and trainings may include a few internal marketing tools at once, for example, regular communication, core value introduction, influential employees and a competitive element. Thus, there is a variety of strong internal marketing tools that would lead the company to success in customer service. If the rule of correlation between the elements is ignored, the internal marketing strategy will not be implemented to the full extent. (Van der Westhuyzen 2017)

2.2 Internal Marketing Versus External Marketing

External marketing is a popular concept, which most people understand. External marketing is a complex process of selling goods or services that consists of market research and advertisement for an existing or potential target customer. However, the term of internal marketing is relatively new and not all the companies are aware of the concept and its necessity. For a better understanding of internal marketing features the differences between this concept and external marketing are explained. (Pretorius 2016.)

First of all, the main distinguishing feature of internal marketing is that it is a process of interaction and partnership between the management and employees; while the external

marketing process aims at building relationships between the company and external customers. As external marketing connects a company and a customer, it is a customer who plays a major role in a company's decision-making processes. In internal marketing, management is influenced by employees' behaviour. When the company makes a promise to deliver goods or services to its external customer, the employees are in charge of that delivery. After this process, when the external customer receives her/his good or service, the internal customer benefits from it by mean of a compensation system. One of the main ideas of external marketing is to satisfy the customer in order to get profit and brand loyalty. This process is applicable to internal marketing and internal customers either. Satisfied and happy employees deliver better goods and services. Hence, there is an increase in the external customers' satisfaction. Moreover, a developed internal marketing strategy helps to retain valuable employees and attract new talents. Therefore, there is a question how the satisfaction level is measured. In external marketing, the tool of market research is widely used; while in internal marketing feedback system is applied in order to get the results for further development and improvements. In the beginning, it was said that one of the external marketing components is advertising. The company promotes its goods or services with the help of online/offline advertisement, word-of-mouth, publications. The company should also promote itself within employees through the bonus system, salaries, awards, recognition system and other non-financial schemes. (Pretorius 2016; Chand 2019.)

Figure 2 summarizes how external marketing is different from an internal marketing approach. However, they are inevitably connected to each other.

EXTERNAL MARKETING	INTERNAL MARKETING
1. Interaction between company (Management) and customers	1. Interaction between company (management) and employees
2. Customer play a greater role in influencing operations	2. Management takes a lead role to finish tasks and direct employees
3. Company makes promises to the customers regarding their services	3. Enables the employees to fulfill the promises made during external marketing
4. Customers benefit through service offered	4. Employees benefit through compensation system
5. Increases customer satisfaction or delight	5. Increases job satisfaction of employees
6. Market research is applied	6. Research is through appraisal and feedback system
7. Needs of customers are highly fluctuating	7. Needs of employees are less fluctuating
8. Promotional aspects include advertising, word-of-mouth, publications, etc.	8. Promotional aspects include transfers, wages / salary increase, awards, recognition, etc.
9. Quality cultural and social factors, standard of living, needs and wants of customer are important	9. Values, attitudes, beliefs and personalities are important determinants
10. Good public relations is needed	10. Counselling and disciplinary action is needed
11. Requires feedback and control	11. Requires vision and planning
12. "Relationship" is the key word	12. "Partnership" is the key word
13. Constrained by trends, fashions and money power	13. Constrained by available resources and other institutional factors
14. Demand - Supply inequilibrium cannot be tolerated	14. Demand - Supply inequilibrium can be tolerated
15. Operational level in focus	15. Strategic and tactical levels in focus
16. Retention of customers is critical	16. Retention of employees is critical
17. Target group are customers (buyers, suppliers, consultants, government, institutions, etc.)	17. Target group are employees
18. Incentives are through discounts, premiums, gifts, contests, etc.	18. Incentives are in addition to salary eg. Financial and non-financial

Figure 2 External Versus Internal Marketing (Chand 2019)

External marketing is always an independent element in each company while internal marketing is a rare occurrence. Internal marketing cannot exist if there is no external marketing. Yet, external marketing does not always assume having an internal marketing strategy in the company, because there are more features of internal marketing that depend on external marketing rather than vice versa. This conclusion is based on the differences between the two concepts.

2.3 Internal Marketing and Branding

Heaton (2011) states an interesting question in the title of his article “What Is The Difference Between Marketing and Branding?” He takes both terms and compares them throughout the article. Heaton (2011) shows the significant importance of separating these two terms. It has to be clear what are the purposes and methods of each concept.

As written in the previous chapter external marketing is the “action of promoting” goods or services via advertising (Pretotius 2016). This is the most common perspective on what external marketing is. To Heaton's point of view (2011), marketing is “a push tactic”. This idea of pushing the message to the consumers aligns with the definition given by Pretorius (2016). According to Heaton (2011) branding does not represent the same tactic.

“Branding is not push, but pull.” Business Dictionary (2019) provides the following definition of Brand, “unique design, sign, symbol, words, or a combination of these, employed in creating an image that identifies a product and differentiates it from its competitors. Over time, this image becomes associated with a level of credibility, quality, and satisfaction in the consumer's mind.” Therefore, branding is the communication of an image or experience that customer associates with the product or service. The brand represents the idea of a good or service, why does it exist. However, the brand does not explain to the customer why s/he should buy good or service because that is the goal of marketing. (Heaton 2011.)

The external marketing objective is to convince customers to buy a product or service. The idea of branding is wider. It aims to shape the image, to deliver the experience, to bring up loyal customers. “The marketing may convince you to buy a particular Toyota, and maybe it's the first foreign car you ever owned, but it is the brand that will determine if you will only buy Toyotas for the rest of your life.” Consequently, marketing cannot become branding but it can contribute to it. (Heaton 2011.)

The similarity of both marketing and branding is that these strategies are cost centres on the surface but in-depth research these are investments. A bad marketing campaign is definitely a cost centre. However, if the market research was conducted thoroughly and the campaign was executed well, then marketing is an investment. Branding requires a big budget as well. Yet, it is a wise investment in customers' loyalty that transforms them into brand ambassadors. (Heaton 2011.)

According to Heaton (2001), one of the long-term results of branding is brand ambassadors who come from external customers. Therefore, some companies have realized that their employees can become brand ambassadors as well. The example of,

English brewery company, Carlsberg-Tetley shows how internal customers are engaged in the brand. (Simms 2003.) Companies Brand Director for sales, Darran Britton explains why the employees take part in branding (Simms 2003):

We employ more than 2500 people, who are all potential brand ambassadors, and we'd be missing a huge opportunity if we didn't drive the brand growth through them. Brands and people have been two of our key business drivers for the past five years, and in an industry like ours where consumers are naturally interested in the products, it is important that our staff are informed, positive and communicate the right messages.

“Brand days” are regularly held within the company. That is the event before the launch or relaunch when employees are invited to sample the products. The event is organized in the branded space and includes not only tasting but competition and discussion of the advertising campaign as well. Participation in the competition gives an opportunity to win tickets for company-sponsored events. (Simms 2003.)

An entertaining event is not the only side of the internal marketing strategy. To the same extent, an interactive training program with marketing incline is playing a critical role in promoting the brand among staff. Throughout the training process, the employees learn more about Carlsberg-Tetley and its heritage while becoming brand ambassadors. (Simms 2003.)

All things considered, internal marketing can become an influential tool for branding strategy as well. However, the internal marketing strategy has to be well-structured and carefully implemented. The undeveloped strategy cannot be a reliable instrument for positive branding improvements.

2.4 Internal Marketing Examples

Before studying how the internal marketing is represented at Lexus Europe the author found out if the internal marketing is introduced at TOYOTA, the corporate parent of Lexus. Moreover, other case companies are described where internal marketing is an independent element of the marketing strategy.

Toyota Motor Corporation

In TOYOTA the internal marketing is not represented as a self-standing system. The concept is included in companies so-called Sustainability strategy and described in the sections Human Resource Management and Creating Happy Workplaces. One of the

principles in TOYOTA that the employees are the greatest asset of the company. The fundamental approach of Human Resource Management is “Monozukuri” what is in other words “Developing People”. As employees contribute a lot to the sustainable growth of TOYOTA global training based on “Toyota Way Five Key Values” was designed in Japan. These Five Key Values are:

- Challenge
- Kaizen (Continuous improvement)
- Genchi Genbutsu (Onsite hands-on experience)
- Respect
- Teamwork.

Introduction to the core values and companies’ goals and culture is the cornerstone of every activity. Hence, the practice of “Toyota Way” was organized into “Global Content” strategy, which helps every Toyota employee to understand and apply company values. The “Global Content” strategy underlies in the foundation of every training and “On-the-job” practice (OJT). (Sustainability Data Book 2018, 61.)

Based on ‘what’ should be delivered to the employees Toyota has developed the Global Human Resource Development Structure. The first section is the trainings for Global Executive Human Resource Development. So-called “The Global 21” program ensures that Toyota Motor Corporation and Overseas affiliate human resources are qualified and that they exercise their strengths. The program is based on three pillars:

1. Indication of management philosophy and expectations of executives
2. Human resource management
3. Training deployment and training programs

Further, the author narrowed down only to Toyota Motor Corporation Human Resource Development and describes the strategy that is applied in Japan. The second section of the Human Resource Structure on the Japan level is Management Human Resource Development. The one-year training that consists of group trainings and seminars for recently promoted general managers, department managers, section managers. The aim of the training is too boost the education process within the company through the general managers and bring executive human resource candidates from the selected managers. (Sustainability Data Book 2018, 62.)

The third section of the structure is the Administrative and Engineering Human Resource Development. The program is developed for graduates, young and mid-career employees. The general focus of the training is application one of the five core values Genchi Genbutsu (Onsite hands-on experience) on-the-job; while off-the-job the employee is guided by the supervisor for the growth. The generic process of the training is the following. The first year an employee undergoes sessions that are dedicated to fundamental knowledge. After, in the third and sixth/eighth years, the group training is executed. One of the objectives of these steps is to educate the employees about the problem-solving and see how they manage to apply the received knowledge at the workplace. This principle is called "Working method". There are four more pillars that sustain the last phases of the training. "Making even-better cars" meaning that the employee is capable of conducting a benchmarking analysis of Toyota and competitor vehicle. "Enriching the lives of communities" reflects how the employee is engaged in volunteer work. "Customer first" and "Company spirit" show how an employee is aware of the customer feedback and Toyota spirit and history. (Sustainability Data Book 2018, 62.)

The fourth section is the Dispatch program for Young Employees. The idea of the program underlies in its name. Employees who are working in the company for more than four years are encouraged to go overseas for one or two years. The main purpose of sending the young assets abroad is to give them a possibility to learn new cultures, gain practical knowledge and improve foreign language skills. (Sustainability Data Book 2018, 63.)

The fifth section in the structure that is relevant for Toyota Motor Corporation is Shop Floor Employee Human Resource Development. The purpose is to provide sufficient knowledge and techniques to on-the-job and off-the-job. This section mostly aims to help the ageing group of employees to keep up with the technologies and changes within the company. (Sustainability Data Book 2018, 63.)

The last category is the training for overseas employees that come to work to Toyota Motor Corporation from other Toyota divisions. The process may take from six months to three years. The training helps to establish connections and learn about the decision-making process. (Sustainability Data Book 2018, 63.)

Human Resource Management is only a part of the internal marketing at Toyota. There is another valuable section in the Sustainability Data Book (2018, 72) that reveals the internal marketing. Creating Attractive Workplace is the idea of creating a healthy working environment where every employee is engaged and can feel safe. "WE LOVE TOYOTA" is the internal campaign that serves as the foundation for internal marketing strategy in Japan. The core value that represented in the campaign is "teamwork". The campaign

aims at strengthening the loyalty of the employees by implementation of corporate culture into engaging activities. There were two seminars in 2017 attended by 400 employees. Teams of not co-workers were gathered in order to improve communication. These teams were taking part in a test-drive of Prius Cup, afterwards, they could share experience and feedback. In December 2017 the 71st Toyota Relay Race has been organized. The runners that took part in a race were coming from different departments as well as from overseas divisions. Toyota encourages its employees to form communities within the company based on sports hobbies. Hence, there are 35 sports clubs where employees play, challenge themselves and achieve results together. All the shared activities lift the team spirit and increase the loyalty of the internal customers. (Sustainability Data Book 2018, 72.)

To sum up, Toyota, being a global corporation, does not emphasize internal marketing as an independent process. However, the analysis of the corporate Sustainability Data Book (2018) helped to conclude that are a few elements that together build the internal marketing strategy.

IBM

IBM is one of the biggest global computer companies, which in 2000 has changed their point of view on marketing strategy. The company made a step in the direction of identifying what the external and internal customers are. As Bulkeley (2000) writes in his article for the Wall Street Journal, that there has been a perception shift in the new IBM campaign "Chapter 2: e-business gets back to business". Before IBM had been developing the marketing campaign orienting at external customers meaning that the campaign was targeted "information-technology people". However, the new marketing campaign had in its priority "chief executives, chief financial officers, and marketing and sales executives" as people holding these positions are influenced by computer technologies not less than IT people. This direction for the campaign was inspired by the employees at IBM. (Bulkeley 2000.) Later Mitchell (2002) for Harvard Business Review was using the IBM switch in the marketing strategy as a successful example of an internal marketing tool. He states that utilizing the same message for the external and internal customers improved relationships between employees and management as well as increased trust level and loyalty of the employees. The "Chapter 2: e-business gets back to business" marketing campaign was a strong communication tool. Overall, IBM represents an example of how to link the internal and external marketing in the company and how to ensure that the brand "was sold" to a wider audience. (Mitchell 2002.)

Disney

Disney is a global brand that operates in media networks; parks, experiences and products; studio entertainment; and direct-to-consumer and internationally (The Walt Disney Company 2019). The distinguishing feature of the brand is its corporate culture called “Disney Difference”. “Disney Difference” is not only the package of discounts and offers but it is “the way [they] do things at the Walt Disney World Resort” (Disney at Work 2019). The history of this authentic corporate culture has started with the competition grow on the market. Disney Corporation could not provide better salaries than some other hotel chains, for example, that is why the company had to create something that would attract new employees and retain the existing ones. In the beginning, the purpose of “Disney Difference” was to provide the cast members and their families with discounts and free services. Thus, the employees could experience the parks themselves and give this opportunity to their children. Company was trying to inspire the employees to use all the available offers as much as possible. This has formed the mindset of the privilege of working at Disney: which has improved loyalty and shaped the brand in the external environment. After all, the “Disney Difference” has grown into a large concept. The advantage of this internal marketing strategy is that it helps to select and retain the right type of employee. Only people who are inspired by the brand and its heritage stay in the company. Exactly these employees believe that everyone makes a contribution to creating a unique experience for the customers at Walt Disney. (Disney at Work 2019.)

Engaged and motivated employees at their turn are the engine of the comfortable work environment. The core principles within the company are “respect, appreciate, and value everyone”. Following these guidelines, the cast members sustain a happy atmosphere where they feel a part of the “Disney family”. (Disney at Work 2019.)

To sum up, Walt Disney Company is an example of a wise separation of internal and external marketing. The employees at Disney are treated as internal customers, which causes many positive consequences, provides advantages and shapes a good company image.

3 CASE STUDY

Based on the literature review, the author starts the study case of Lexus Europe internal marketing system. This chapter describes the Lexus brand background and what is the mission of this brand. The internal marketing system information is collected from the corporate presentation and adapted into a scheme. The Japanese discipline that underlies at the foundation of the whole system is explained separately.

3.1 Lexus Brand

Since the company was founded in 1989 Lexus has grown into a worldwide known luxury brand. Braithwaite-Smith (2019) is correct in writing that “at the time, the Lexus logo on the centre of the steering wheel had no heritage and zero provenance. It might have featured a banging stereo, a trick fascia and a level of finish to rival the very best, but without the brand equity, it would be playing catch up for years to come.” Nowadays going through all the articles dedicated to Lexus brand the growth trend is obvious. Lexus is gaining its power and awareness as a luxury lifestyle brand. In the article “Performance, Technology, Culture, Brand: Why Lexus Went Back To the Track” Haden (2018) writes, “when the general public thinks about Lexus, they think quality, they think styling, they think dealers who really take care of you... We love that about our brand image.” The understanding of the above leads to the fact that the way Lexus treats its customer is one of the key success factors. That is why it is vitally important to continuously improve customer service by establishing the right mindset in each and every retailer. As long as Lexus is positioning itself as not just a luxury car brand but a luxury lifestyle brand it has to go beyond the expectations and established luxury customer services. (Cutler 2019.) This is why the personal customer approach starts playing a crucial role. Cutler (2019) states that the key message that Lexus Academy Europe is trying to deliver to the Lexus retailers’ staff is that “every customer should be treated as a guest in your own home” and that “crafting of personalized experience” is an integral element of the success. Japanese hospitality or “Omotenashi” is one of the main brand differentiators that is underlaid in the foundation of Lexus mindset.

3.2 Shuhari Background and Application

The English reference for Shuhari (2019) is “three stages of learning mastery: the fundamentals, breaking with tradition, parting with traditional wisdom”. Shuhari is usually associated with discipline as a whole: it originally referred to a martial art, and it can easily extend to a scientific or professional field. However, the boundaries between the steps are

not that clearly set, thus in a sense, it can be seen how practitioners repeatedly follow the Shuhari approach even when they learn specific, smaller things. (Romei 2010.)

The first phase of Shu can be translated as “protect”, “follow the rule”. At the Shu step, the learner is following already existing rule taking into consideration every detail. This is the phase when a new discipline, approach or technique is learned in its intimacy, step by step. The rules are also repeated over and over in order to assimilate them. It is important that the student has a mentor who is continuously watching the progress and how does the student follow the training path. The teacher does not allow the student to reach the next phase before the s/he is ready for it. The mentor should should guide the practitioner throughout the journey to make it easier. (Romei 2010; Casali 2015.)

The next phase is called Ha that is literally translated as “cut”, “break the rule”. At this step, the practitioner perfectly knows the rules and has a right to break them when necessary. The practitioner is also able to teach the others, discuss the topic and improve the discipline itself. At this level the rules are questioned, the reason for their existence is put into the spotlight and the foundation becomes visible from the high point of the Shu studies. (Romei 2010.)

The last phase Ri means “depart”, “be the rule”. The practitioner has reached the pick of the learning journey. Now s/he does not just follow the rule, methods and approaches: the practitioner is the rule, transcends the rule. However, after reaching the master level the practitioner’s learning process continues. (Romei 2010.)

Shuhari technique is not widely used within the companies as it is a complex discipline that requires a specialist who can explain and implement the ancient martial art into a modern working environment. However, there is an example of a software company that has already adapted Shuhari.

Solutions IQ, which is acquired by Accenture, has the mission of bringing the agility into the business world. Solutions IQ are pioneers in the agile approach. The consulting and training help provided by the company reveals the creative potential and transform the slowly moving enterprise into accelerating business by “bringing humanity to the workplace”. (SolutionsIQ 2019.) Being pioneers Solutions IQ has decided to implement the Shuhari technique as an “Agile Adoption Pattern”. Knowing the meaning of each step there is a question how the Japanese martial art can become an “Agile Adoption Pattern”. The described example by Novack (2016) represents a very simple adaptation of Shuhari. The main idea of how discipline can be applied in the company. The process starts with mechanization and develops into a more creative flow. The first Shu step is the automatization of the basic processes until they are perfectly performed by employees.

After, on a Ha step, a few on-top suggestions for the basic processes are accepted. The last Ri step is the perfection of the automatic basic process into the creative workflow. (Novack 2016.)

Novack (2016) sees the advantage of the Shuhari technique in setting up harmony in any team. The Shu step allows developing the behaviour or mechanic memory that becomes a backbone for all the enhancements and changes. Therefore, second Ha and third Ri levels are based on the established behaviour that inspires the progression in the right direction. (Novack 2016.)

3.3 Training Program Framework Development

Development of the training program as an internal marketing tool is a time-consuming process as there are a lot of steps that must be taken into consideration (Designing a Training Program 2012).

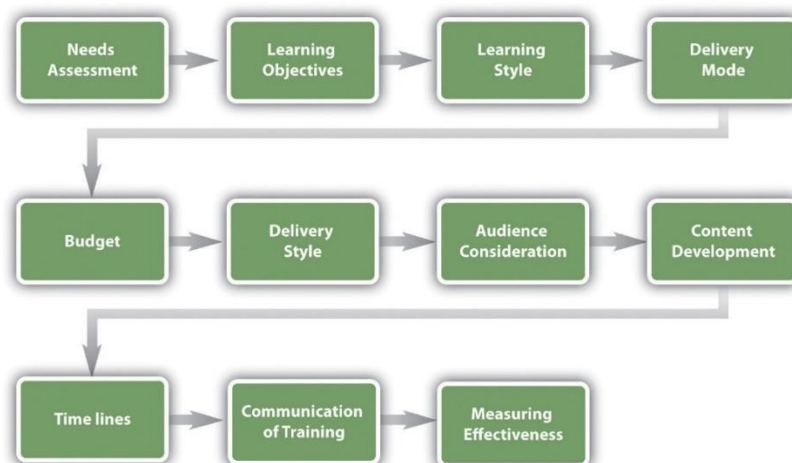


Figure 3 Training Program Development Model (Designing a Training Program 2012)

The very first and essential part of the development process is the identification of the needs and learning objectives. The need for the training program consequently helps to establish the learning objectives, which are covered throughout the training process and play a crucial role in the measurement of the training program. (Designing a Training Program 2012.) Next step according to Figure 3 is deciding on learning styles. There are three basic learning styles:

- Visual
- Auditorial
- Kinesthetic

(What's YOUR Learning Style 1989).

Once the needs, objective and style are clear, a delivery mode has to be chosen. The delivery method depends on the training type.

Table 1 Types of Training and Delivery (Designing a Training Program 2012)

Delivery Method	Type of Training Suggested	Delivery Method	Type of Training Suggested
On-the-job coaching	Technical training		Team training
	Skills training		Managerial training
	Managerial training		Safety training
	Safety training		
Mentor	Technical training	Job shadowing	Technical training
	Skills training		Quality training
	Managerial training		Skills training
	Safety training		Safety training
Brown bag lunch	Quality training	Job swapping	Technical training
	Soft skills training		Quality training
	Professional training		Skills training
	Safety training		Professional training
Web-based	Technical training		Team training
	Quality training		Managerial training
	Skills training		Safety training
	Soft skills training		
	Professional training	Vestibule training	Technical training
			Quality training

Delivery Method	Type of Training Suggested
	Skills training
	Soft skills training
	Professional training

Delivery Method	Type of Training Suggested
	Team training
	Managerial training
	Safety training

Obviously, the delivery methods can be combined in order to meet the required goals and delivery styles. Moreover, it is critically not to skip the “Budget” step. Even if this phase is self-explanatory, without it the whole development of the training program is useless.

(Designing a Training Program 2012.)

After the above steps are decided and confirmed, the creativity must be applied to the delivery style. Knowing your budget, delivery method and objectives the delivery style has to be picked. The spectre of styles is endless from the classic PowerPoint presentation to a complex interactive game. The style should, also, take into account the following steps of the Training Model, for example, what is the audience of the program and what is the content that has to be delivered to this audience. (Designing a Training Program 2012.)

Thinking outside of the training content and style, next topics, that must be covered during the implementation process of the program, are timeline and communication. The training program realization plan requires clear deadlines. Moreover, any new training should be communicated to its target audience. (Designing a Training Program 2012.)

The last step of the execution plan that measures the success of the training is evaluation. At this stage, the results are confronted to the set objectives. This analysis assesses if the training program is effective or not. Kirkpatrick’s evaluation system is a great help in measuring the effectiveness of the training. The system consists of four levels and assess participants reaction, learning, behaviour and finally what the global results of the training. (Designing a Training Program 2012.) A more detailed explanation of each level is described in the next sub-chapter of the thesis.

3.4 Kirkpatrick’s Evaluation System

Donald Kirkpatrick introduced his evaluation system in 1959. Later, the system was developed by his son and wife. In 2016, Kirkpatrick's family revised the original theory and updated it. The published book called “Four Levels of Training Evaluation” represents the

same pillars and the idea of the importance of making training program relevant to people's everyday jobs. (Mind Tools Content Team 2019.)

Organization of every training program is a great amount of work and preparations, that is why each element of the program has to be valuable and engaging. Four-level evaluation helps to look at the training framework in multi-ways, detect the gaps, develop a new delivery tool, and enhance the whole program. (Mind Tools Content Team 2019.)

The first step of the evaluation system is called “reaction”, which allows finding out fresh feedback on the training. This enables to measure the success of the training and distinguish the important missing elements. “Reaction” step can be measured by using a survey and observing the trainees: their oral feedback, body language and desire to be involved. Analysis conducted based on the feedback helps to amend the current program and, consequently, create more value for trainees. (Mind Tools Content Team 2019.)

Second level “learning” aims at evaluating the received knowledge and motivation. Learning objectives of the training should be specified in order to measure, how the trainees have learned the material. The most accurate result can be received by combining pre- and post-evaluation. Thus, comparing both assessments the final result provides more information for further improvements and shows a full picture of the trainees’ knowledge and motivation. (Mind Tools Content Team 2019.)

The idea of the next level, “behaviour”, is to measure, by conducting observations and interviews, how trainees’ mindset has or has not changed. This step helps to reveal the environment where the received knowledge should be applied. When management does not create a pleasant and positive atmosphere, people start feeling a lack of confidence, when applying the new knowledge. This, eventually, leads to the conclusion that the foundation for the mindset change process is ruined, what makes training inefficient. On the opposite, when management supports and coaches staff further, in the direction aligned with the training, staff is motivated to show gained and improved skills, abilities and mindset. (Mind Tools Content Team 2019.)

The last level, “results” stands for measuring the final outcomes. This step is essential for understanding whether the training was worth all the investments. Expected or higher return on investment demonstrates successful training. This level is supposed to have the most time- and cost-consuming measurement tools. The purpose of this step to identify, which elements of the training has the greatest impact on the profit. To achieve the results in the most effective way, modern trainers first define the final goal in order to deliver a more effective training program. (Mind Tools Content Team 2019.)

3.5 Internal Marketing at Lexus Europe

Considering the fact that Lexus Europe stands as an independent brand, it separates its processes and strategies from TOYOTA. Currently, at Lexus Europe, internal marketing is separated from the external marketing with the help of a new strategy that is under development. Internal marketing at Lexus Europe consists of training and teambuilding events. Moreover, the key element of the internal marketing strategy is special events that take place before the launch or relaunch of a new vehicle and where all Lexus Europe employees have an opportunity to test it and compare it to competitors' cars. In addition to the main internal marketing communication channel, there are Lexus mobile applications, for example, "Lexus Academy Europe" app, that delivers news and has some basic information that every employee at the company should possess. (Cutler 2019.)

Lexus Academy Europe, being in charge of the trainings on the European level, has taken a decision to improve the internal marketing strategy with the help of creating "SHU HA RI certification program". The framework of the system was borrowed from Japanese learning technique called Shuhari. Once the "certification program" is developed up to the last stage and implemented, it is going to become a backbone of the internal marketing system at Lexus Europe. (Cutler 2019.)

The original Shuhari technique was adapted by Lexus Japan for the sales training in 2016, after which Lexus Europe has started the development and implementation of this technique as the framework of the internal training. The original idea of SHU HA RI at Lexus was the trainers' certification. However, later the focus has moved in the direction of Lexus people and more specifically retailers' staff. (Cutler 2019.)

SHU HA RI certification, as it is called at Lexus Europe, is divided into three steps as well as the original technique. Certification levels are as follow:

SHU – Basic knowledge

The purpose of the SHU level is to establish a common understanding of the fundamentals of each member of the Lexus organization. Completing the studies of SHU level, the practitioner receives knowledge of Brand, Experience and Product. The SHU level aims to certify Lexus NMSC and authorized network staff. (Manager of Lexus Academy Europe 2019, 7.)

HA – Functional knowledge

The second step of certification aims at delivering more specific knowledge to all authorized network staff. Ha level ensures that all the received knowledge and skills are

employed in the way of delivering Lexus Experience to the customer. (Manager of Lexus Academy Europe 2019, 9.)

RI – Master level

At the Master level, there is the identification and recognition of those individuals in the Lexus authorised network that demonstrate an exceptional level of knowledge and skills. (Manager of Lexus Academy Europe 2019, 11.)

Thus, the training framework becomes a powerful tool of internal marketing strategy. The SHU HA RI “certification program” unites the following internal marketing tools: sustainable training system, competitive element, influential employees, and regular communication. Moreover, based on the explanation of each step, the system constantly delivers the core values of the company and helps to clarify on-the-job coaching for the management.

4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

In the following chapter, the research flow is introduced. The empirical research is conducted using a qualitative method by means of deductive and inductive approaches. The main advantage of using empirical research is the authentication of the research. The drawback of the research is that it is time-consuming as the data has to be gathered from different resources and analyzed thoroughly. (Bhat 2019a.)

4.1 Deductive Approach; Analysis of the Training Program

The analysis started with the representation of the training process framework at Lexus Europe. The data for the figure was collected through the meetings with the Senior Manager of Lexus Experience and Lexus Academy Europe as well as corporate materials, which were adapted by the author. As it was written earlier, the whole system had been built on the Shuhari technique.

In the corporate file, the representation of all the three steps had been shown in a line. Yet, the author created a figure where the steps were transformed into a circle. A round shape scheme helped to explain that the core of each step is the “TEAM”. The idea of such adaptation underlay in the definition of internal marketing. The core of the whole internal marketing system is the team, as the concept of internal marketing started with the idea of an internal customer. The internal customer layers at Lexus Europe are represented as follow:

- European layer
- NMSC (Local market) layer
- A particular retailer layer.

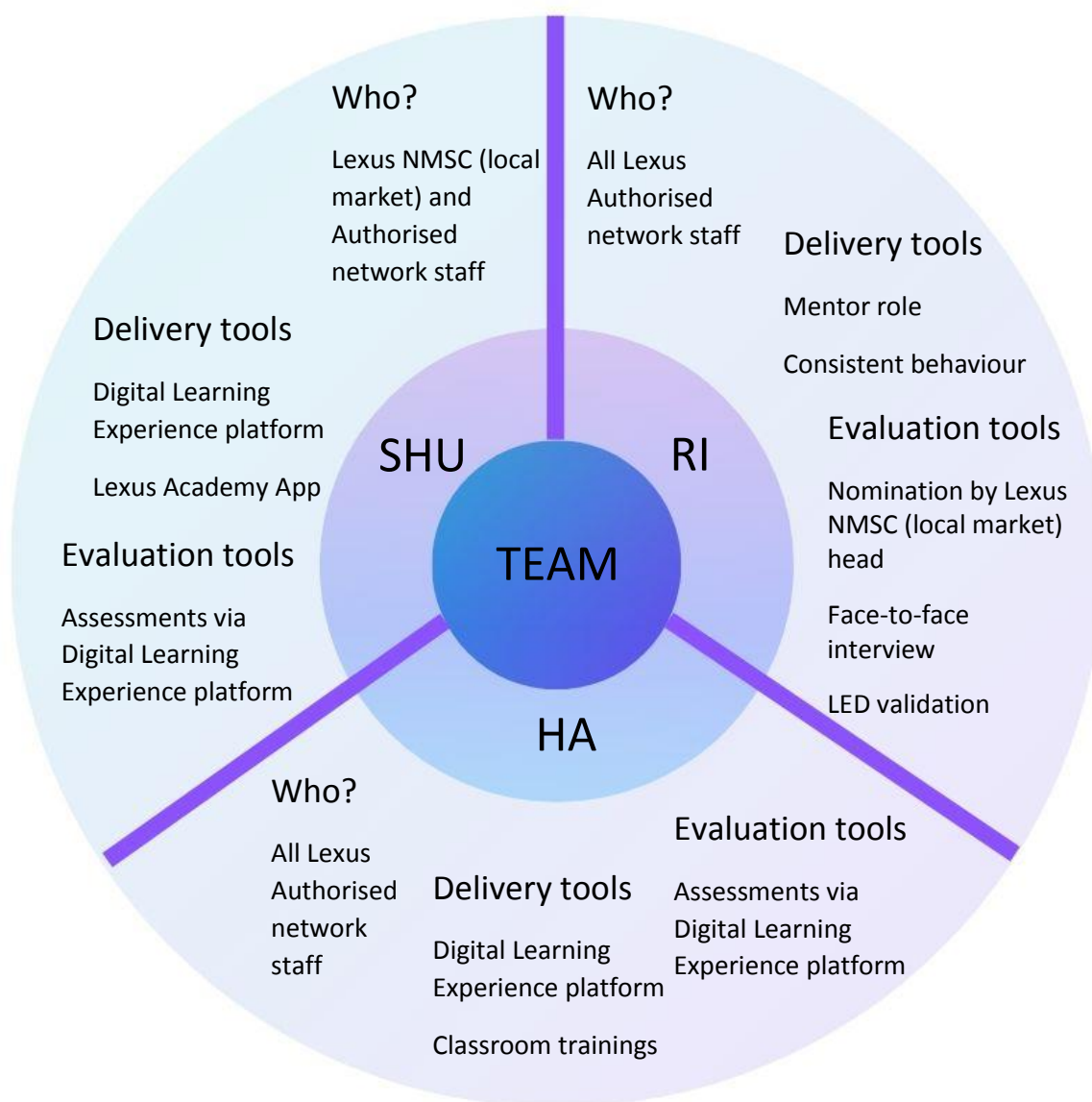


Figure 4 Current representation of the training program framework at Lexus Europe (adapted from Manager of Lexus Academy Europe 2019)

The core or the “TEAM” receive the knowledge, motivation and direction for the mindset via the delivery channels. These channels vary from level to level. As for now, the current tools for SHU phase are:

- Digital Learning Experience training courses delivered by Lexus Academy Europe
- Basic level of the knowledge via “Lexus Academy Europe” mobile application.

The mobile application and the platform of SHU level deliver the basic knowledge to all members in NMSC and Authorized network. The employees of Lexus Europe and all the local markets receive the relevant information on:

- 1) Brand: what are the Lexus differentiators, strengths and what is the Lexus mindset.
- 2) Experience: how to create luxury experience with Japanese hospitality.
- 3) Product: what is the Lexus range.

(Manager of Lexus Academy Europe 2019, 7.)

Delivery tools for HA level are:

- Digital Learning Experience training courses delivered by Lexus Academy Europe,
- Classroom trainings delivered by Lexus Academy Europe.

The online courses and physical classrooms on HA level deliver the job-specific knowledge to all members in authorised network. The employees of Lexus Europe sector should receive the necessary attainments in brand, mindset, product while employees of the authorised network on local levels have an opportunity to gain precise skills and knowledge that must be applied in everyday work. (Manager of Lexus Academy Europe 2019, 9.)

The distinguishing feature of the RI level delivery tools is that they are not vividly identified as the delivery tools. RI level is currently under development. In perspective, it should represent a complex delivery-evaluation tool that combines in-depth analysis of the real situation, a problem-solving exercise, and a holistic assessment.

The author was analysing the existing measurement tools of the training program through the prism of Kirkpatrick's evaluation system. In regards to the measurement tools, the fact is that they are less defined rather than the delivery tools of the training framework. If SHU HA RI is a certification program by itself, it does not eliminate the necessity of distinct evaluation methods. Nevertheless, at the current implementation phase, there is only one clear evaluation method that is applied in the system. This identified, developed and already implemented on the SHU step, measurement tool is represented by test assignment. The practitioner should pass the assessment within six months after being hired and completing the courses. If the practitioner is already in the company, s/he should not face difficulties during the test without preparations. However, it is still possible to refresh the knowledge on the digital platform or mobile application. The goal of the assessment on SHU level is a practical evaluation of the knowledge that an employee possesses. The element of the behaviour assessment is not applied at this level. The author assimilated evaluation at this step with the second level of the Kirkpatrick's system - "learning". The successful results of the test allow the practitioner to move forward to the next level of the training. (Manager of Lexus Academy Europe 2019, 8.)

Once the practitioner has received all the knowledge on HA level it is very important not only to measure the learned material but to be able to evaluate a person's mindset and behaviour. The goal of the assessment on HA level is the practical evaluation of the knowledge that an employee possesses and how are the corporate value and culture align with employees' behaviour and mindset. Currently, Lexus Europe is developing the test assignments to measure results of the gained knowledge. The evaluation method is the same as for the SHU level. The test on the digital platform is the main assessment of HA delivery tools such as Digital Learning Experience courses and the classroom trainings. (Manager of Lexus Academy Europe 2019, 10.) Current assessment tool aims only at measuring the received information in theory but not in practice, and this type of test does not allow observing the behaviour. According to Kirkpatrick's evaluation system, HA step of the certification system unites two levels: "learning" and "behaviour". Consequently, as the author applied the Kirkpatrick's evaluation system to the training program at Lexus Europe the following statement was reasonable. There was a gap in the measurement system on the HA level. According to Kirkpatrick's evaluation system, SHU HA RI certification program had the first two levels of evaluation while the third level was absent.

The importance of HA level rests on the idea of the RI level. The last step in the certification program is the final assessment of the practitioner, where there is no new knowledge to be delivered. The last evaluation affirms all the skills, experiences and mindset that an employee should have gained throughout the training process.

As it was revealed, there was an important element missing in the internal marketing tool, which made the whole certification program insecure. The gap in measurement system caused the risk of wrong evaluation. This had led to the conclusion that Lexus Academy Europe should take action at HA level evaluation before the development of the last RI step strategy and implementation plan.

In order to find out the suggestion for the gap in the training program, one Lexus European market was elected for an interview to investigate the local approach towards the behaviour evaluation. Therefore, the objective of the study was to discover the suggestion for the behaviour assessment at HA level with the help of inductive research based on the interview outcomes of a training program at one of the European markets.

4.2 Inductive Approach; Interview Outcomes

The implementation of the inductive research towards the stated problem helped to conduct a complete analysis of the situation, to find out the best solution, and, finally, to produce the suggestion and implementation plan for the company.

The process of inductive research started with a specific subject and resulted in framework development. In view of this, the gap in the internal marketing tool, that was revealed with the help of deductive research, was a subject for the inductive research, where the certification program at Lexus Europe was the framework of both research types. In order to build a bridge between the specific subject and framework, the interviews were used.

The goal of the first interview was to learn about the new training program at Lexus Ukraine and more specifically about its process and evaluation tools. After the results of the first interview, the outcome was the necessity of the second interview due to missing information regarding the assessment process. In the interview, Lexus Marketing Senior Specialist (Interviewee 1 2019) explained the background and goals of the new training in Lexus Ukraine: "The whole idea of developing a new training has started from the Lexus Experience guide." According to Interviewee 1 (2019), the guide, as a representation of Lexus standards, was tedious for Lexus Ukraine staff. That is why Lexus Ukraine training department has decided to go through the guidelines together with staff and make a refreshment with the help of new training. The purpose was to motivate retailers to go beyond standard processes, that had been written in the guidelines, and to establish a relationship with the customers. Interviewee 1 (2019) emphasized that the training can help the retailers learn the trends in customer treatment. The training program was built in such a way as a reminder for the Lexus Ukraine retailers' staff that if there is no unique customer approach, the customer leaves.

The main purpose of the second interview was to find out the measurement tools that are applied in the training. However, the results of the second interview revealed an unexpected matter. The impactful outcome for the whole research was that assumed training session at Lexus Ukraine was a facilitation session. Interviewee 2 (2019) explained that facilitation sessions had no delivery or evaluation tools. The short definition of facilitation session was the educating and interactive event but not the training program.

Following this unexpected answer, the author asked the Trainer (Interviewee 2 2019) to describe what was the process of the facilitation program and what was its main purpose. According to Interviewee 2 (2019), the whole process of the session was the conversation

based on the customer journey. There were a few separate activities that were not in the main focus but they had a teambuilding aim. The author asked the question regarding the main activity of the facilitation process and how the results were measured. As the Trainer (Interviewee 2 2019) said, “these sessions must motivate the participants to go through the whole customer journey in the customer shoes what at the end should provide fresh ideas.” Overall, based on the discussion the main exercise throughout the sessions was the enhancement of the customer journey. Every member of the team had his/her own approach towards each step of the customer journey. In the team, the staff shared his/her experience about how the customer journey can become even more engaging and personalized for a customer. After the session was finished, all the participants had to do so-called “homework”. The idea of the task was to implement all the ideas that had been generated throughout the brainstorming during the facilitation process. Once the plan had been completed, all the teams had to create a presentation. During the pitch, every team proposed their plan. Interviewee 2 (2019) said, “the main goal is to refresh the ideas and principles that have been used for a long time at Lexus Ukraine”. This kind of reconceptualization inspired the trainees to localize the standards and come up with a distinct and detailed action plan. The Trainer (Interviewee 2 2019) was sure that the facilitation sessions helped to go out from the comfort zone and standard framework; because of that, all the participants had to use their creativity.

After the results of the interviews were collected and put into the framework of the inductive research, the following conclusion was made. Lexus guidelines, that had been used as a foundation for the session, represented the specific subject, from which the whole research started and developed into the framework. The process of inductive research complemented the deductive research. Findings that were discovered during the interviews were later employed to the identified gap in European level. The interview with Interviewee 2 (2019), the Trainer of the recently implemented session, helped to understand the approach at Lexus Ukraine and to find out useful information and possibly applicable suggestions for the behaviour evaluation methods for HA level at Lexus Europe.

4.3 Outcomes of the Research

At the beginning of the thesis, the set purpose was to evaluate and study the training program at Lexus Europe as an internal marketing tool. Since the result of the deduction showed the gap in the evaluation process, the author decided to find the solution for the problem. Further, the suggestion for the certification program enhancement was found with the support of the interviews. The combination of deductive and inductive approaches

helped to conduct the holistic analysis of the internal marketing tool. By complementing the discovered gap in SHU HA RI training framework and the identified facilitating process at Lexus Ukraine, the suggestion for Lexus Europe was produced.

The goal of the interviews with the training team of Lexus Ukraine was to get inspiration for the best suggestion that could be advised to Lexus Europe and its HA level evaluation tool of behaviour and mindset. The second interview outcome showed that the expected training turned out to be a facilitation session that did not assume delivery or evaluation tools as such. From this interview, the whole process and goals of the facilitation session were known. This knowledge resulted in the idea of creating an evaluation tool for HA level behaviour assessment based on the process of the facilitation session that had been applied at Lexus Ukraine.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Answer to the Research Question

The most important tool of internal marketing at Lexus Europe is SHU HA RI certification system. Analysing training program through the prism of Kirkpatrick's system, the author acknowledged that there was a need to find out how "behaviour" evaluation level could be carried out. To provide a valuable suggestion for the improvement of internal marketing tool at Lexus Europe the interview with the Lexus Ukraine training team were executed. Lexus Ukraine was piloting creative facilitation session that was examining the mindset of trainees. The author provides an implementation plan of the behavioural evaluation on HA level of SHU HA RI certification for Lexus Europe. The suggestion is to utilize facilitation session designed at Lexus Ukraine as an assessment for the certification system at Lexus Europe.

Implementation Plan

The goal is to measure how well the behaviour and mindset of the Lexus staff align with the corporate culture, values, Lexus standards and at the same time Lexus personalized approach.

The purpose can be achieved by following the steps described further. After the successful accomplishment of SHU level and HA level tests, the trainees are ready for the behavioural assessment. First of all, the participants are united into groups. The group should consist of people holding different positions, ideally, the positions should not be repeated even twice. The team is given a map of the customer journey. The aim of the team is to write down the actions per each step of the customer journey based on Lexus standards first. After the team is given a customer profile, that is the moment when everyone within the group should use creativity by adding action points that align with the customer profile. Once the customer-centred action plan is finished the team presents it in front of the local Lexus Experience and/or Training department.

The whole process of brainstorming is monitored by the trainer who is appointed by Lexus Academy Europe or local Lexus Experience and/or Training department. The supervisor should carefully follow the whole process of the assessment in order to put down the comments regarding each member of the group. With the help of supervisor's observation and final presentation, local Lexus Experience and/or Training department makes a decision who out of the group has passed the assessment and who has to retake the HA step.

This process of the assessment allows not only checking the practical knowledge of Lexus standards but evaluating trainees' willingness to go beyond these standards. If the assessment is successfully completed, the practitioner is allowed to move forward in the SHU HA RI certification program from the second HA step to the last RI step. At this phase, the final evaluation is carried out. Implementation of the behavioural evaluation supports the alignment SHU HA RI training program with Kirkpatrick's system.

5.2 Findings for Further Research

The conducted research inspires to continue studying and analyzing the internal marketing system at Lexus Europe for further development. The author assumes that there is a potential for a few possible research works on the topic of internal marketing tools at Lexus Europe.

Based on the assumption that SHU HA RI can become internal marketing framework, the existing internal marketing tools can be integrated into this framework. For example, the training events dedicated to the launch of a new vehicle have educational characteristics and can be placed under the HA level. Delegates that attend the event learn not only about a car, its competitiveness, and upgrades but, moreover, about how to use the received knowledge in order to present a vehicle and how to build relationships with a customer. Thus, the event can become a part of the HA step due to its job-specific and Lexus mindset features.

In regards to the application of Kirkpatrick's system towards the SHU HA RI training program, the second suggestion is produced. The last "results" level of evaluation should be executed. The purpose of its implementation is to provide Lexus Europe with a holistic evaluation of the certification program. Development of "results" evaluation level gives a possibility to measure how effective the framework is from the financial perspective.

Moreover, as explained in the introduction of the thesis the initial idea of the research inspired the author to change the direction of the investigation. The finalization of the internal marketing system at Lexus Europe inspires to conduct the initially planned research on how managers influence employees' behaviour.

5.3 Summary

The research design was chosen correctly as all the three elements that support the Diagnostic research process took place throughout the thesis: inception, diagnosis and finally the solution of the specified issue. Inception is represented by internal marketing in Lexus Europe. Diagnosis and problem identification were conducted by means of

deductive and inductive approach methods. Throughout the research, author's working experience was applied. The solution is represented in the Answer to the Research Question sub-chapter of the thesis. Thus, the conclusion can be made, the research is successfully completed.

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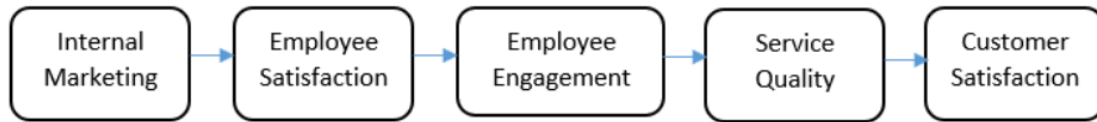
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APPENDICES

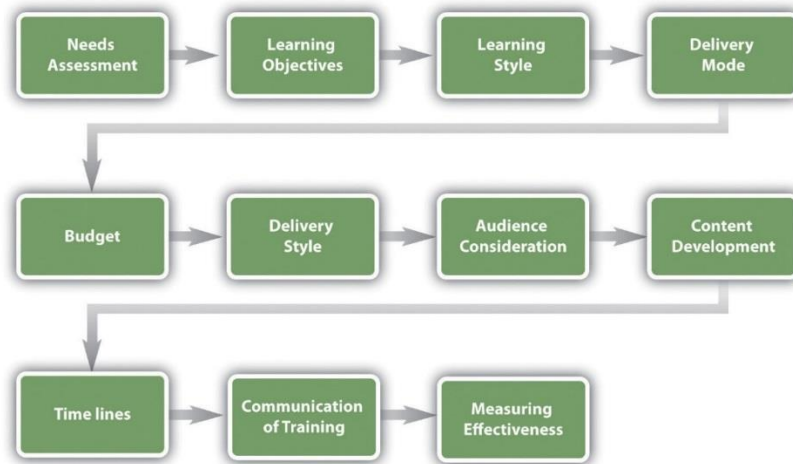
Appendix 1 Internal marketing influence logic chain (Van der Westhuyzen 2018)



Appendix 2 External Versus Internal Marketing (Chand 2019)

EXTERNAL MARKETING	INTERNAL MARKETING
1. Interaction between company (Management) and customers	1. Interaction between company (management) and employees
2. Customer play a greater role in influencing operations	2. Management takes a lead role to finish tasks and direct employees
3. Company makes promises to the customers regarding their services	3. Enables the employees to fulfill the promises made during external marketing
4. Customers benefit through service offered	4. Employees benefit through compensation system
5. Increases customer satisfaction or delight	5. Increases job satisfaction of employees
6. Market research is applied	6. Research is through appraisal and feedback system
7. Needs of customers are highly fluctuating	7. Needs of employees are less fluctuating
8. Promotional aspects include advertising, word-of-mouth, publications, etc.	8. Promotional aspects include transfers, wages / salary increase, awards, recognition, etc.
9. Quality cultural and social factors, standard of living, needs and wants of customer are important	9. Values, attitudes, beliefs and personalities are important determinants
10. Good public relations is needed	10. Counselling and disciplinary action is needed
11. Requires feedback and control	11. Requires vision and planning
12. "Relationship" is the key word	12. "Partnership" is the key word
13. Constrained by trends, fashions and money power	13. Constrained by available resources and other institutional factors
14. Demand - Supply inequilibrium cannot be tolerated	14. Demand - Supply inequilibrium can be tolerated
15. Operational level in focus	15. Strategic and tactical levels in focus
16. Retention of customers is critical	16. Retention of employees is critical
17. Target group are customers (buyers, suppliers, consultants, government, institutions, etc.)	17. Target group are employees
18. Incentives are through discounts, premiums, gifts, contests, etc.	18. Incentives are in addition to salary eg. Financial and non-financial

Appendix 3 Training Program Development Model (Designing a Training Program 2012)



Appendix 4 Types of Training and Delivery (Designing a Training Program 2012)

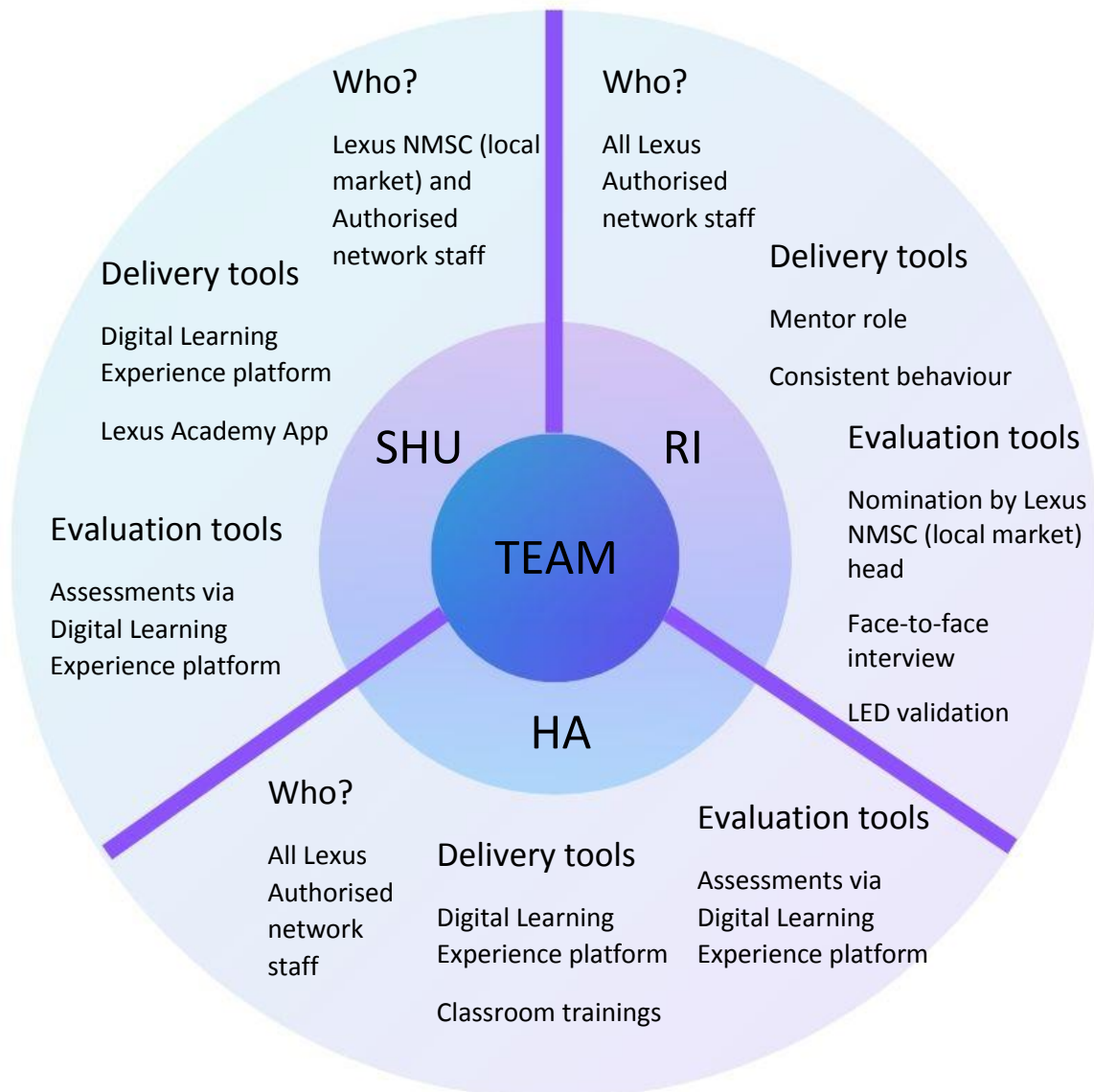
Delivery Method	Type of Training Suggested
On-the-job coaching	Technical training
	Skills training
	Managerial training
	Safety training
Mentor	Technical training
	Skills training
	Managerial training
	Safety training
Brown bag lunch	Quality training
	Soft skills training
	Professional training
	Safety training
Web-based	Technical training

Delivery Method	Type of Training Suggested
	Quality training
	Skills training
	Soft skills training
	Professional training
	Team training
	Managerial training
	Safety training
	Technical training
	Quality training
Job shadowing	Skills training
	Safety training
	Technical training
	Quality training
Job swapping	Technical training

Delivery Method	Type of Training Suggested
	Quality training
	Skills training
	Professional training
	Team training
	Managerial training
	Safety training
Vestibule training	Technical training

Delivery Method	Type of Training Suggested
	Quality training
	Skills training
	Soft skills training
	Professional training
	Team training
	Managerial training
	Safety training

Appendix 5 Current representation of the training program framework at Lexus Europe
(adapted from Manager of Lexus Academy Europe 2019)



Appendix 6 Interview #1

Date: 4 April 2019

Respondent: Lexus Marketing Senior Specialist from Lexus Ukraine

Online interview via Skype for Business

Language of the interview: English

Questions:

1. What is the background of the idea to start a new training?

2. What are the purposes and goals of the new internal training?
3. For who was the new training design?
4. What knowledge do the participants receive and through which delivery channels?
5. What knowledge do the participants receive and through which delivery channels?
6. What are the evaluation methods and how the results are collected?

Appendix 7 Interview #2

Date: 26 April 2019

Respondent: Trainer from Lexus Ukraine

Online interview via Telegram

Language of the interview: Russian (translated by author)

Questions:

1. What are the purposes and goals of the new internal training?
2. What are the activities of the facilitation sessions? What is the purpose of each activity?
3. Which delivery tools do you use for the main activity of the facilitation session?
4. What are the evaluation tools and how is the feedback and results are going to be collected?
5. What were the instant outcomes of the facilitation session?