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SUCCESSFUL ONBOARDING PROCESS AND ONE ELOMATIC CULTURE

– Case Elomatic



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- Case Elomatic

The objective of this thesis was to learn about the structure of the onboarding process in Elomatic organization's two subsidiary offices located in Poland, as well as how it is implemented and experienced. Furthermore, the purpose was to ascertain how the employees feel about the one Elomatic culture. The research questions were created related to these topics.

This thesis is practice-based which consist of a theoretical part and a practical part. In the theoretical part, the thesis provides an overview of an onboarding process, what is effective onboarding, what are the challenges, and why it is important. The chapter also provides a short introduction to organizational culture. For the practical part, this thesis uses empirical research where the results are based on real experiences and observation. The onboarding process in Polish offices was studied through interviews and in addition, a Forms questionnaire was created to receive a more detailed opinions of the process.

According to the findings, there could be presented suggestions for making the onboarding process more successful. The recommendations for the future onboarding process include a test on technical knowledge and programming during the recruitment process, updated training material, communication orientation and development discussions during the orientation process, and employee feedback after the onboarding process.

Keywords:

Human resource management, human resources, employee induction, orientation

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ONNISTUNUT PEREHDYTTÄMISPROSESSI JA ONE ELOMATIC-KULTTUURI

- Case Elomatic

Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli selvittää Elomatic-organisaation kahden Gdanskissa ja Łódzissa sijaitsevan tytäryhtiön perehdytysprosessin rakenne sekä se, miten se on toteutettu ja miten uudet työntekijät ovat sen kokeneet. Lisäksi tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli selvittää, miten työntekijät kokevat one Elomatic -kulttuurin. Tutkimuskysymykset luotiin näistä aiheista.

Opinnäytetyö on toiminnallinen, joka koostuu teoriaosuudesta ja käytännön osuudesta. Teoriaosuudessa opinnäytetyö antaa yleiskuvan perehdyttämisen prosessista, mitä on tehokas perehdyttäminen, mitkä ovat sen haasteet ja miksi se on tärkeää. Käytännön osuudessa käytetään empiiristä tutkimusta, jonka tulokset perustuvat todellisiin kokemuksiin ja havainnoihin. Perehdyttämisen prosessia tutkittiin haastattelujen avulla, ja lisäksi luotiin Forms-tyytyväisyyskyselylomake.

Tulosten perusteella voitiin luoda joitakin ehdotuksia, joiden avulla perehdyttämisen prosessista voidaan rakentaa menestyksekkäämpi. Tulevaisuuden perehdyttämisen prosessia koskevia suosituksia ovat muun muassa teknistä tietämystä ja ohjelmointia koskeva testi rekrytointiprosessin aikana, päivitetty koulutusmateriaali, viestinnän perehdyttäminen ja kehityskeskustelut perehdyttämisen prosessin aikana sekä ja työntekijän palaute perehdyttämisen prosessin jälkeen.

Asiasanat:

Henkilöstöhallinto, henkilöstöresurssit, työntekijän perehdyttäminen, työnopastus

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List of abbreviations

BU	Business Unit
HR	Human Resources
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRM	Human Resource Management
ICT	Information and Communication Technology

1 Introduction

It can be said that onboarding is crucial for new hires in an organization. Onboarding is a process where a new hire is adapted to their new role, organization's procedures, and what the organization has to offer. It engages the employee in the organization and makes them feel part of the team. Onboarding gives basic information for a new hire to conduct effectively, and it helps them to understand the organization in a broader way. Normally, the HR (human resources) department arranges the onboarding and training programs however, the supervisor prepares and performs most of the everyday onboarding and training. (Dessler 2017, 269.)

Elomatic has offices in eight countries and this thesis concentrates on the onboarding process in the Finnish and Polish offices. The onboarding process in Finland has been improved in 2020 and the next step is to develop the onboarding process in the Polish offices which are located in Gdansk and Łódź. The goal of the onboarding development process is to ensure that the onboarding process has a clear structure, it is performed successfully, and new hires have a positive experience of the overall process.

The topic of this research is current for Elomatic as there is no clear onboarding process in Gdansk and Łódź offices. Due to this, it is essential to learn the current process and obtain feedback from the employees to improve the overall onboarding. The intention is to bring organizational cultures together yet, it does not mean that the onboarding process in Gdansk and Łódź offices should be comparable to the Finnish onboarding process.

This research aims to find out how the onboarding is implemented in Gdansk and Łódź offices and what are the new hires' experience of the onboarding process. The research will focus on the following questions

- What are the main improvement proposals for the onboarding process in Gdansk and Łódź offices?
- What methods should be used to make the employees in the Gdansk and Łódź offices feel more part of one Elomatic?

This research is valuable for the organization as they want an effective onboarding process for new hires in Gdansk and Łódź offices. In brief, this research is a current need for the organization. Furthermore, the subject is of personal interest to me. This research uses empirical research where results are based on real experiences and observation. The onboarding process of the Finnish offices is studied by reading the organization's materials whereas, the onboarding process of Gdansk and Łódź offices is studied by interviewing the office managers and new hires who have started their employment in 2021. Furthermore, results from employee survey 2020 will be used and literature and internet sources that are related to HRM (human resource management) are used as additional material.

This is a practice-based thesis with a theoretical section and a practical section. This thesis is divided into four chapters, the second of which provides a theoretical overview of an onboarding process, why onboarding is important for new hires in an organization, what the challenges of onboarding are, and what effective onboarding is. In addition, the chapter provides a general overview of organizational culture and why understanding different cultures are important in an international organization. The third chapter gives an introduction to the Elomatic organization and the current onboarding practices in Finland. The chapter will follow with an overview of the onboarding process in the Gdansk and Łódź offices as well as the results of the interviews and the reliability of the results. The chapter will conclude with analyses and recommendations for future onboarding processes. The fourth chapter provides a research summary that includes information about the main content and key findings.

2 Overview of an onboarding process

2.1 Description of onboarding

Onboarding is a process that controls what happens when a new hire is selected and fully integrated into an organization. It involves the welcoming of new hires and guiding them to commence their job. The onboarding process is the phase when the new hire's perception of the company culture is established and assuring that they build good relationships with colleagues. (Harpelund 2019, 9.)

Onboarding is one of the most crucial and costly processes in an organization. Successful onboarding is a competitive advantage, and it gives a good employer image to the audience. Onboarding should be equitable, qualitative, and transparent, and new employees should understand what the onboarding process consists of. Expectations are high at the start of new employment and new hires hope that their expectations of the job are met and that they feel welcomed into the organization. (Eklund 2018.)

The onboarding process consists of multiple events that help the new hire to integrate into the organization, departments, and own team. It includes paperwork, reviewing organization procedures, getting an insight into the organizational culture, job training, facility tour, and team introductions. Onboarding is also building relationships with colleagues and creating confidence and trust in the organization. (BambooHR 2021.)

The hiring managers are, usually, responsible for the new hire's onboarding process together with the help of the HR department. However, mentors, trainers, and colleagues are also part of the process somehow (SHRM 2021). It is essential to consider what happens on the first day, the first weeks, months, and how to introduce all the important tasks in a prudent order to produce the most profitable results. Onboarding, from a new hire's perspective, refers to everything that defines a new hire's entry and orientation into an organization, as well as everything that encourages them up for success. (Stein & Christensen 2010, 13.)

Pre-onboarding is the phase after the candidate accepts the job to the period before the start of employment (Bourhis 2020). The objective of pre-onboarding is to engage new hires before the first day and to provide an opportunity for them to feel valued and welcomed into the organization. The employer can gather and prepare some necessary information for the new hire before the first day and even introduce the future mentor for example, if some questions appear. Also, providing other material such as a corporate overview can be shared with the new hire to reduce information overload during the first days. (Deutsch 2016.)

2.2 Onboarding vs. orientation

The difference between onboarding and orientation can confuse many people since it is easily thought of as having the same meaning. Nevertheless, they are different processes. Lesiuk (2021) describes in her blog text “Onboarding vs. Orientation – Is there really a difference?” that onboarding is the process where a new hire becomes familiar with the organization’s culture, values, and unspoken rules. The orientation process is referred to inducting new employees into the organization by introducing technologies, organizational procedures, and policies (Quain 2018). According to Maurer (2015) in the orientation process, setting expectations and outlining objectives should be the two key focuses on the first day. In addition, training sessions are often included in orientation. Orientation is a simpler process and in a good orientation, process information is spread out over time and not for one day. Onboarding can last up to a year whereas orientation can last from one week to a month. However, the duration of both processes differs per organization. (Lesiuk 2021.)

The orientation process takes less time than the onboarding process since the objective is to teach the new hires about their role in the organization. Orientation should not be performed only for new employees, it should be provided for everyone when job duties change, working methods change, or there are found operational errors and flaws in the quality of products and services. (Ahokas & Mäkeläinen 2013.)

Nowadays orientation programs are starting to be mainly e-learning based however, nothing can replace people-to-people interaction (Kaijala & Tolvanen 2020). The orientation process does not replace the onboarding process of the new hires since the onboarding process is a more detailed and longer process.

For clarification, orientation is included in a good onboarding plan. The professional background of the new hire influences the orientation process however, a new organization with its goals, working methods, and people, is always new. It is crucial to consider and plan the orientation process for different levels in an organization, for example, new managers need a more extensive orientation process when compared to other levels in an organization. (Joki 2021.)

2.3 Effective onboarding

Effective onboarding is the key to employee success. When the onboarding is effective in an organization, employees attain new skills faster which can affect the employee's success in the organization. To reach an effective onboarding process, it should be guided and influenced by continuous employee feedback (Girardin 2107). When employees' skills improve, doors open inside as well as outside the organization. Also, the development of relationships increases the chances. In addition, effective onboarding helps employees feel that their work is meaningful and appreciated. (Stein & Christensen 2010, 34.)

A well-designed and performed onboarding process ensure employee retention and increases productivity among employees. When employees feel welcomed, it can be said that it leads to job satisfaction (Lesiuk 2021). The onboarding process should strengthen and support motivation and engagement in the first weeks and months of the new hire. In addition, the process should give directions to the new hire, and if this is achieved, from day one the new hire senses what is their role in the organization in the organization's plan and what the organization expects of the new hire to ensure success in the job. The key to successful onboarding is that all the practical aspects are arranged so that time and energy are not wasted on unnecessary hassle. (Harpelund 2019, 3.)

It is crucial, that the onboarding process lasts longer than just a few days. Organizations should proactively onboard new hires throughout their first year for an effective and successful onboarding experience. It can be said that successful onboarding increases employee engagement which is key to customer satisfaction. Effective onboarding means that the new hires are being immersed in the organizational culture from day one. This is done by sharing the organization's values, vision, and mission. While a new hire knows the motive beyond the organization (vision), how the organization plans to satisfy that purpose (mission), and the guiding of beliefs and behaviors that drive the organization to attain its purpose (values), the new hires can adjust their own beliefs and behaviors to the organization's long-term purpose. Moreover, the new hire not only adjusts with the values but also contributes to the overall purpose. (Newhouse 2020.)

As Joki (2021) highlights, when the onboarding process is planned thoroughly it is easier to implement. Some factors that organizations should consider when planning an effective onboarding program, or an orientation program, are preparation, welcoming, work orientation, and monitoring. For each step, there should be titled a responsible person and created a schedule. Preparation is essential, as the process continues to the direction of how it is prepared.

Effective onboarding can be seen as four "building blocks" that are presented as four c's which can improve employee performance, reduce employee turnover, and increase job satisfaction (Caldwell & Peters 2018). Bauer (2010) highlights the four c's of onboarding in her guideline which are the distinct levels to maximizing success in employee onboarding. Four c's refer to compliance, clarification, culture, and connection. In these levels, compliance is the lowest level which includes teaching new hires basic rules and regulations and filling out all necessary paperwork. Clarification ensures that employees are aware of their new jobs, any obligations that come with them, and what is expected of them. Culture includes explaining the cultural norms of the organization which is both formal and informal. Lastly, connection, the highest level, refers to the relationships and networks new

hires should establish during the onboarding process. New employees start feeling like part of the team. (Bauer 2010.)

Onboarding Strategy Level	Compliance	Clarification	Culture	Connection
1 Passive	YES	SOME	LITTLE/NONE	LITTLE/NONE
2 High Potential	YES	YES	SOME	SOME
3 Proactive	YES	YES	YES	YES

Figure 1. Onboarding strategy levels (Bauer 2010)

The execution of the four c's determines the overall onboarding strategy in an organization. Figure 1 presents the onboarding levels and how the four c's are executed in the process. To reach level 3, the onboarding process should cover all four distinct levels. In level one, compliance is covered which is, naturally, part of formal onboarding. In passive onboarding some clarifications of roles are given however, culture and connection are not brought up in the process. High potential onboarding is reached when culture and connection take place in an onboarding process. (Bauer 2010.)

2.4 Challenges of onboarding

Planning an onboarding process takes time and effort if an organization aims for an effective onboarding program. It can be said that organizations can lose great talents because the onboarding process was not in place. Some common onboarding challenges to highlight from Kaushik's (2020) blog text are, for example, too much information on the first day, no clear view of the role, what are the expectations of the role, and the content of the onboarding. In fast-moving organizations, it can be easily tempted to bring the new hire up to speed as soon as possible however, it can overwhelm them.

Lack of clarity of the role is a common challenge as new hires can sign themselves to some specific role but in the long run, they are doing something else. It is crucial to discuss this challenge with team leaders or managers. Onboarding content should be planned to match the role, for example, someone hired for sales should not be trained to customize a product. (Kaushik 2020.)

In addition, some other challenges in onboarding are time management which can be seen as unavailability, lack of involvement, and lack of guidance from managers (Ellis 2019). When the onboarding process is planned and it has a clear structure, these challenges should not appear. Defining the roles and dividing the responsibilities of each step, minimizes the challenges that can take place in an onboarding process.

2.5 Importance of onboarding

Successful onboarding educates and engages new hires. It is essential to educate new hires since it allows them to perform their job more adequately and confidently while meeting the needs of an organization's business. Employee disengagement can cost organizations money in the form of lower productivity and poor performance. A successful onboarding experience can have a long-term impact on the organization because it will help the organization to increase business growth, improve employee loyalty and retention, and gain profits. (Heller 2021.)

Empowering new hires to do their job is one of the keys to an organization's success. Proper, successful onboarding is critical to any organization's long-term success because it leads to higher retention and employee productivity. It is, definitely, hard work however, it is a long-term investment. (Alemany 2020.) When the new hires get a good start, their knowledge and competence can be utilized promptly (Huhtala 2021).

Successful onboarding has a huge impact on how new hires enjoy their work. Today, most employees are looking for more than a paycheck. They are seeking a job where they are happy and feel connected to something bigger (Stein & Christiansen 2010, 34). Onboarding gives employees the expertise, know-how, personal relationships, and to attain a level of security in an organization, as well

as cultural awareness. Employees will be motivated and inspired, adapting fast, remaining passionate, and empowered to perform at levels not typically seen, offering the organization a competitive advantage that can create top-and bottom-line outcomes. (Stein & Christiansen 2010, 14.)

From the international organization's point of view, it is essential to make everyone feel like part of the organization. An international organization is an organization that operates in several markets around the world. Even though the organization has its headquarters in one location, it has a subsidiary office in every country it operates in (Writer 2020). Feeling like part of the organization can be reached when the organization gives insights for the new hires about work culture, organizational structure, the whole organization's short- and long-term goals, and their place in the company. Because of the distance, employees around the world need to feel connected as early as possible. This can be achieved by strategic onboarding that focuses on role clarity and talent development. (Globalization Partners 2019.)

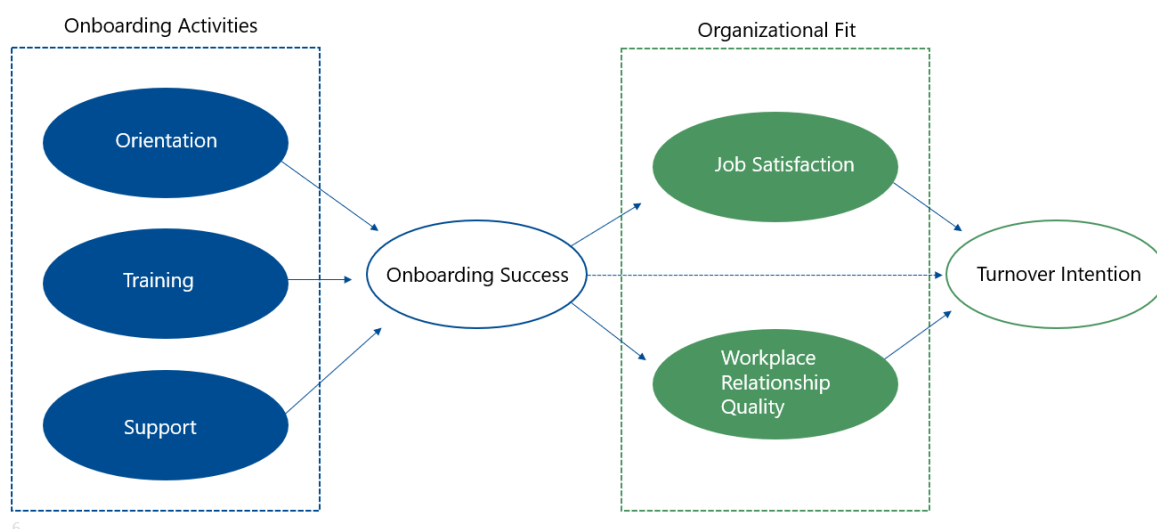


Figure 2. Research model (Sharma & Stol 2019)

Sharma & Stol (2019) argue that there is a positive link between the onboarding activities of an organization and onboarding success, which refers to the knowledge of organizational culture, role clarity, and social integration. The research model (see figure 2) is a hypothesis from Sharma and Stol of all the links through onboarding success to turnover intention. With turnover intention is meant the inclination to leave the organization. Providing various onboarding activities such

as orientation, training, and support for new employees correlate with successful onboarding if the activities have had a positive experience and impact on the new hire.

Successful onboarding correlates positively with job satisfaction. If the onboarding did not have a positive impact on the new hire, it is difficult to reach job satisfaction. In addition, job satisfaction correlates negatively with turnover intention. If employees are not satisfied with their job, they are more likely to change the workplace (Tainio-Keinonen 2020). The same applies to the quality of workplace relationships. It correlates negatively on turnover intention if the workplace relationship quality is poor, employees are not satisfied and in the long run, it affects negatively turnover intention. Job satisfaction and good relationships with colleagues reflect as employees “fit” with the job and within the social environment of the workplace. Also, as Sharma and Stol emphasize in their hypothesis, job satisfaction and workplace relationship quality mediate the relationship between onboarding success and turnover intention. (Sharma & Stol 2019.)

2.6 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

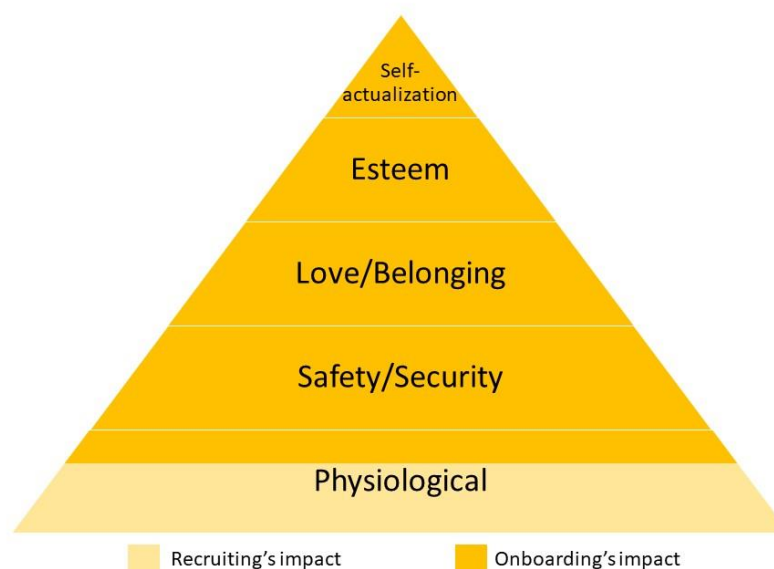


Figure 3. The impact of recruitment and onboarding to satisfy Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Stein & Christensen 2010, 37)

The model is a theory of human motivation which was an invention of a psychologist, Abraham Maslow in 1943. The theory of human motivation is a hierarchy of human needs where the needs are performed as five levels within a pyramid (see figure 3). The needs are physiological, safety and security, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Maslow has described that the bottom needs must be satisfied before the needs above can be reached. However, each level does not need to be satisfied 100 percent before the next level can be attained. (McLeod 2020.)

The onboarding process can be viewed from a more methodical point of view by using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs model. Originally, the theory was invented for human needs in human life but later it has been used to understand different sectors in business for example, in this thesis the needs are observed from the onboarding point of view and the needs of a new hire. The needs stay the same, but they are viewed from a different perspective. Maslow's hierarchy helps guide the thinking of employees in an organization.

As Christensen and Stein (2010) describe, in the hierarchy, the bottom level corresponds to physiological needs which are the employee's need for financial resources. People need money to eat and a roof over their heads. Nevertheless, this is the need that recruiting fulfills for a new hire, not onboarding. Employees have reached their first need as they have their most basic physical requirement which is surviving. Yet, the capability of the recruitment function to fill the employees needs ends. As seen in figure 3, the level of physiological needs is presented with a lighter color which presents the recruitment's impact to satisfy Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The impact of onboarding starts from the top of the physiological level since the onboarding process is part of the recruiting process.

Safety and security are the next level in the hierarchy that can be reached after the physiological needs are met. Now the employees have a steady income and which they enjoy however, they become anxious with keeping it. New hires need to feel convinced that their subsistence will remain undamaged, the company prevails healthy, their service will not be outsourced, and they bear the skills required to stay in the organization. In addition, the new hires need to feel that they understand the

organizational culture to prevent any complications for example, advocating an idea too roughly. (Stein & Christiansen 2010, 36.)

The third level of human needs is love and belonging which from the onboarding point of view stands for a sense of “fitting in” at work. Interpersonal network development is part of the onboarding process where new hires have the chance to make new relationships with colleagues in the organization. It can be said that it is the head start in making friends. Building a network is an important component of onboarding process as it supports people to work more efficiently while also feeling emotionally supported. (Jürgenson 2019.).

When new hires perform sooner than expected and at a higher level, their colleagues and managers take notice and begin to “love” them. In this context, love means the ability to have open and direct conversations with colleagues and managers. In addition, the employees are loved because of their strengths as an employee. At this level of the hierarchy, the new hires feel comfortable saying what they think. As a result, they can find themselves appreciated and acknowledged for their special qualities. (Stein & Christensen 2010, 37.)

Esteem is the level that comes after when the new hire has reached the level of love and belonging. At this level the new hire feels that they have achieved something good, they respect others, and they are respected by others. At this level, the relationships that have been established during the onboarding process have a big impact. Employees feel proud to work in an organization when they are satisfied. If organizations give employees more tools to succeed in the early stages, employees have the necessary skills and have the chance to impress others they feel proud of. As a result, they can satisfy the highest level in the hierarchy, self-actualization. (Stein & Christensen 2010, 36-38.)

In the level of self-actualization, the employee aims for improvement, chases for new challenges, and seeks meaningfulness in their job. Employees that reach this level are highly productive and engaged employees (Wholley 2020). The impact of successful onboarding is that it makes the new hires believe that their employer can help them reach the higher levels in Maslow’s hierarchy. Thereby, employees are more prone to feel that the organization is the place for them over the short and long term. (Stein & Christensen 2010, 39.)

2.7 Organizational culture in the onboarding process

As (Schein 1988) describes in his text, “organizational culture is property of groups, and can be thought of as the accumulated learning that a given group has acquired during its history.” The onboarding process is crucial considering that it is when the new hire’s perception of the organizational culture is established. Every organization has its own culture which determines how the people in an organization think, what are the shared values, beliefs, and how they come together to get work done. (Jürgenson 2019.)

Organizational culture can be said as unwritten rules which are behaviors or routines not voiced or written down. The most important matter is that organization takes time to understand the unspoken ways how business is done in an organization and implement a structured approach teaching them. For most new hires it is a difficult and gradual process to understand the organization’s culture however, it is learned through osmosis when interacting with new employees frequently. (Stein & Christiansen 2010, 88.)

HRM processes are the same all over the world. Recruiting, onboarding, orientation, rewarding, training, and work safety are practiced in each organization however, the content of the processes and how they are executed differs per culture, country, and even by region. It cannot be expected that a good onboarding process in Finland applies in another European country even though, organizational cultures are aimed to be brought together. (Viitala 2021.)

3 Case Elomatic

Elomatic is a family-owned business that was founded in the 1970s. The organization is operating globally, and the headquarters is in Turku, Finland. The core operation in Elomatic is the function of top engineering know-how in the design of industrial plants, machinery, and ships. The professionals deliver superior value throughout the entire life cycle of products, services, and software. Elomatic has over 80 corporate customers for who it offers reliable consulting and diverse engineering services. In the 1980s Elomatic developed CAD software for plant and ship design after which CADMATIC business was established. Elomatic's subsidiary, CADMATIC, is a leading global supplier of industrial 3D design and information management solutions.

Elomatic Consulting & Engineering business units have six offices in Finland, two in Poland, one in Kazakhstan, India, and Russia. This thesis concentrates on the Polish offices, Gdansk and Łódź, and the development of their onboarding process. The Gdansk office was founded in 2009 where mainly ocean engineering and shipbuilding are operated. Currently, 25 employees work in the Gdansk office. In 2010 Elomatic established the Łódź office which operated as one with the Gdansk office. However, at the end of 2016 Gdansk and Łódź offices separated and today Łódź office is Elomatic Engineering Ltd. Łódź office is focused on the mechanical and process industries and has 30 employees.

The values of Elomatic are: "We succeed together, We have a passion to improve, We are trustworthy!". These values apply externally and internally in the organization. As the topic of this thesis is the onboarding process and its improvement in the Polish offices, it highly relates to the second value: the passion to improve. Employees should feel valued and as part of One Elomatic. Thus, it is crucial to enhance the most important process for new hires: the onboarding process.

In Finland, Elomatic has its HR department that supports management, supervisors, and employees in all cases that are related to employment relationships and internal communications. The mission of HR is to provide HRM and HRD services as well as support in strategic planning, work organization, and

position analysis. The HR department in Elomatic is competent in strategic planning, change management, recruiting and orientation, people development and training, payroll, wellbeing and occupational health services, and motivation and retention of employees and administration.

3.1 Onboarding process in Finland

Elomatic has improved the onboarding process in the Finnish offices in 2020. The onboarding process includes the following processes: recruitment, preparatory measures, the start of employment, and work orientation. The onboarding process starts from the beginning of the recruitment process and ends when the employee's probation period ends. The entire onboarding process lasts around six months however, the employee will be fully integrated into the organization within eight months. Figure 4 presents the overview of the duration of each stage included in the onboarding process.

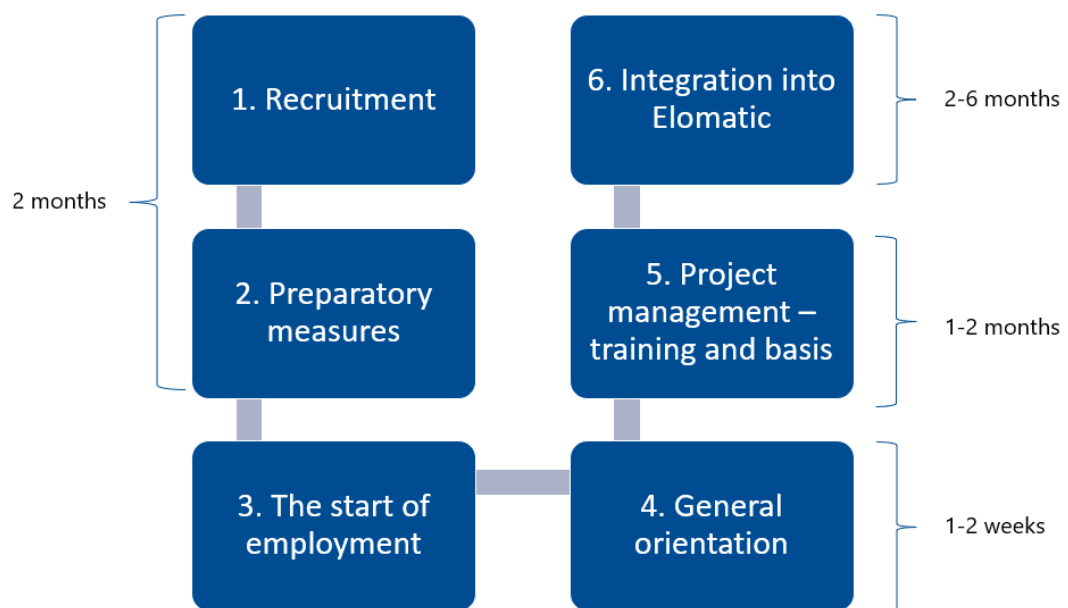


Figure 4. Overview of the onboarding process in Finland

This chapter uses data from the employee survey that new employees were asked to fill at the end of their probation period. The survey intended to receive feedback from the onboarding process and see how it has been executed in the Finnish

offices after the improvements made in 2020. The survey was answered by 18 new employees whose probation period ended during the period 11/2020-09/2021.

3.1.1 Recruitment

In Finland, the recruitment process starts when the need of a new hire is identified and informed through the HR system to all necessary departments: office services, HR, ICT, and the team. The recruitment process includes compiling, and publishing the job advertisement, interviewing potential applicants, and making the decision of the most potential candidate for the open job. When the decision is made the recruitment system automatically sends the contact details of the new hire into the HR system. The new hire will be informed as well as the applicants who were not chosen for the position. The recruitment process is managed by the HR department and the future manager.

In the 2021 employee survey the recruitment process had a positive impact on the new employees. The recruitment process has a clear structure, and it was performed effectively. There were no significant improvement ideas for the process however, Elomatic could aim for better visibility and make itself more visible to students.

3.1.2 Preparatory measures

Preparatory measures are done before the new hire's employment starts. The manager of the new hire creates and fills in all necessary information of the new hire in the HR system and registers the starting date of the employment. Thereafter, the contract is signed by the new hire and the future manager.

A mentor is titled for a new hire whose task is to help and support the new hire on daily basis. Payroll, office services, and ICT teams will get an automatic message of new employment. Office services and the supervisor will discuss and arrange the workstation for the new hire and ICT delivers all necessary work equipment, licenses, and account information. The office services deliver a welcoming gift to the new hire's workstation. Overall, the duration of the recruitment and the start of

an employment (see figure 4) lasts for two months. The preparatory measures phase involves the future manager, mentor, the HR department, office services, and ICT.

3.1.3 Work orientation

After the preparatory measures, the new hire starts the employment which will be followed by work orientation. The manager is responsible for arranging the orientation for the new hires. However, the orientation is provided by the mentor, HR, and the office services. The orientation is designed to provide employees an overview of Elomatic, its goals and operations, and the new hire's role. Those who have been titled to provide the orientation process are responsible that the new hire becomes familiar with the work environment, working circumstances and, the organization's goals, procedures, and policies. In addition, orientation is required for the employees who have changed jobs internally or have been away for a long period. For Elomatic, it is crucial to provide good working conditions which are built of safety and health at work, understanding the terms of the employment relationship, mental well-being, job satisfaction, and open and communicative culture.

Work orientation starts with a general orientation where the supervisor welcomes the new hire and introduces them to the team and key persons. The new hire receives an automatic email from the HR system with a welcoming message in Finnish from the CEO and chief of HR where the new hire is welcomed into the organization. The inductor marks the orientation day to the HR system. The general orientation will be performed by the inductors that are marked as general orientation inductors in the office.

Teams and ICT orientation, which is part of the general orientation, will be held by the named inductors. Teams and communication orientation will be held with all the new hires that started their employment in the past month. ICT orientation will be held every other week for new hires. The duration of general orientation is between one to two weeks.

During the first two months, the orientation of project activities will be held after which will be followed a test. Other orientations are supervisor, financial, and program orientations. After the orientation process, new hires will receive a survey for feedback. This way the inductors are aware of how the orientation process has been experienced and if there are any improvement ideas for the future. After the orientation, the supervisor will get a reminder via email that the orientation has been held. The project training will be executed within one to two months.

The supervisor and the new hire will receive a survey of the whole onboarding process after five and a half months when the probation period is six months. In Finland, full integration of the new hire presents within eight months. Once a year, a welcoming event will be held once a year for new hires where supervisors and heads of departments will attend. The manager, mentor, HR department, office services, ICT, and other key persons are involved in this phase.

In the employee survey, new hires had a chance to comment and present improvement ideas for the future work orientation program. In general, the work orientation was performed well and efficiently however, there were some improvement ideas. The main ideas were related to the training regarding the software. This can also be seen in figure 5 where it has the lowest mean rate of all statements. It is clear, that the software training still requires some improvements.

3.1.4 Conclusions

The onboarding process in the Finnish offices has been improved in 2020. The 2021 employee survey, from period 11/2020-09/2021, results show that the improvements have had a positive impact (see figure 5). The survey was sent to 18 new hires two weeks before their probation period ended. Figure 5 shows that all of the statements have increased since 2020, indicating that new hires have had a positive experience with the onboarding process. The number four indicates that the employee fully agrees with the statement, whereas number one shows full disagreement. Number two indicates that the respondent somewhat disagrees with the statement, while number three indicates somewhat agreement.

Rate the below statements from a scale of 1-4 according how you have experienced them. 1=fully disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=somewhat agree, 4=fully agree	2021	2020
I got a clear picture of the tasks during my interview	3,6	3,2
I got a clear picture of Elomatic during my interview	3,7	3,3
I got answers to my questions during my interview	3,8	3,5
The general orientation was well managed	3,6	3,5
I received sufficient general employment-related information at the start of my employment	3,7	3,3
I was assigned a good inductor who helped me with the practical matters in the early stages	3,6	3,2
I am satisfied with the guidance and support I receive from my mentor or colleagues	3,8	3,4
Training/guidance on design software was well managed	3,2	2,7
Training/guidance on ICT was well managed	3,5	3,0
ICT equipment and support was well managed	3,6	3,5
My manager paid enough attention to me in the early stages and ensured that the work went smoothly	3,8	3,4
I felt welcomed to my team	3,9	3,5
I am willing to continue working for Elomatic (for trainees and temporary employees)	3,9	3,4

Figure 5. Employee survey results regarding the onboarding process in Finland

The highest mean with 3,9 has the statement where the employee felt welcomed in his or her team, and that they are willing to continue working in Elomatic (this statement was only for trainees and temporary employees). It is critical that the new hires feel welcomed into their team, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic when employees may not have seen their team in person. Employees were mostly working remotely when the survey was sent, and the onboarding process was also done remotely. None of the statements had a mean under three in the 2021 employee survey when in 2020 the “training on software was managed well” had a mean under three. However, this improved in 2021 by increasing from mean 2,7 to 3,2. Also, the ICT training had a remarkable change increasing from 3,0 to 3,5 in 2021. Figure 5 shows that in the 2021 employee survey, all statements are closer to the number four than the number three, whereas, in the 2020 employee survey, the statements were more inclined to the number three.

3.2 Onboarding process in Poland

The onboarding process in the Polish offices differs slightly from the onboarding process in Finland. There is no HR department in Poland due to the small size of the offices, and the Finnish HR department is not involved in the onboarding process in Poland. As a result, the HR department in Finland has only a limited understanding of how the process works and what steps are involved in the onboarding process. In 2020 an employee survey was sent to all Elomatic offices to obtain a general overview of the satisfaction on various topics, and questions

about the onboarding process were critical for this thesis. In the Polish offices, other feedback methods have not been implemented when in Finland employee surveys are sent to new hires during the six-month probation period regarding their experience of the overall process.

The HR department in Finland created an employee survey for all employees in 2020, including offices in other countries, which dealt with different topics such as job motivation, communication, managerial work, leadership culture, employer image, and empowerment. The results are seen as how satisfied employees were of each statement percentually. The statements could be answered from five options: very negative, somewhat negative, somewhat positive, very positive, and don't know. The data from the employee survey was collected from the period 16.04.2020-04.05.2020 and this thesis concentrates on the data from the Gdansk and Łódź offices. In Gdansk, 23/50 employees responded to the survey, and in Łódź 15/24. Some statements that were related to the onboarding and are used as information to compare the results to the interview created for this thesis are

- I am well aware of the values and objectives of our company
- I know what is expected from me in my work
- The employer supports my professional development
- People are well inducted into new tasks in our group
- The development discussion was useful

As the objective of this thesis was to figure out how the onboarding process is performed in the Polish offices and what could be improved the best way to learn about the structure and duration of the process was to interview the office managers. The most appropriate method for determining how the onboarding process has been implemented and experienced was to approach new employees who began their employment in 2021 to acquire the most recent experiences.

The interviews with the office managers were scheduled through Teams. This was the most preferable way to obtain information since it was simple to ask follow-up questions if necessary. Because the current managers in Gdansk were unable to interview, the data and information from the Gdansk office are insufficient. Still, indicative information of the onboarding process was acquired. After interviewing

the office managers, the next step was to interview the new employees. Along with the project, a language barrier was detected with the employees. Thus, the new employees had an option to respond on a Word document yet, interviewing through a video call was a preferable way. The purpose was to interview new employees both in Gdansk and Łódź offices. After all, only Łódź employees were interviewed because the Gdansk office has not hired new employees in the past two years and due to this, the latest experiences could not be acquired.

3.2.1 Interview questions

The onboarding process and how it is implemented in Poland was learned by interviewing the Gdansk and Łódź office managers and new employees through Teams. In addition, a Forms questionnaire was created for new employees. The interview questions for the office managers and new employees were different as the objective of this thesis was to discover the structure of the onboarding and how it has been experienced in 2021.

The interview questions were created so that the employees had the chance to answer open questions in their own words. The idea of the Forms questionnaire was to get the opinion from a numerical point of view to be able to compare the results to a similar questionnaire implemented in Finland. The interview questions were divided by topics. The first questions in the interview for the office managers were about responsibilities, who is responsible for preparatory measures, orientation, and training. The questions followed were related to integration, how it is presented in the onboarding process, and how the integration is maintained in the office. In addition, questions about feedback, development ideas, and organizational and one Elomatic culture were asked.

Questions for the new employees were related to their experience, how they felt and experienced the recruitment, orientation, and the whole onboarding process. Also, questions were asked of the communication, integration, one Elomatic culture, and they could openly express their improvement ideas for the future onboarding process. Furthermore, a Forms questionnaire was sent to the new employees with multiple statements that were asked to answer on a scale between 1-4 where the

number four indicated fully agreement and the number one fully disagreement. The Forms questionnaire was created to compare the Finnish onboarding process and how new employees in Finland experienced the process after the 2020 improvements.

3.2.2 Current onboarding structure

Elomatic has an intranet for its employees, which it utilizes to provide essential information, necessary documents, and news. Regarding the onboarding process, there is defined a base structure for orientation why it is important, what factors need to be considered, and who is responsible for the process. This information applies to the Polish offices too. However, the offices in Poland design the detailed process themselves.

The onboarding structure in the Polish offices has resulted in them being very similar to one another. Nonetheless, the duration of each stage somewhat differs. Figures 6 and 7 show the duration of the process as indicative. The structure can be divided into six stages which both offices follow. The stages are recruitment, preparatory measures, the start of employment, general orientation, training, and integration into Elomatic, respectively.

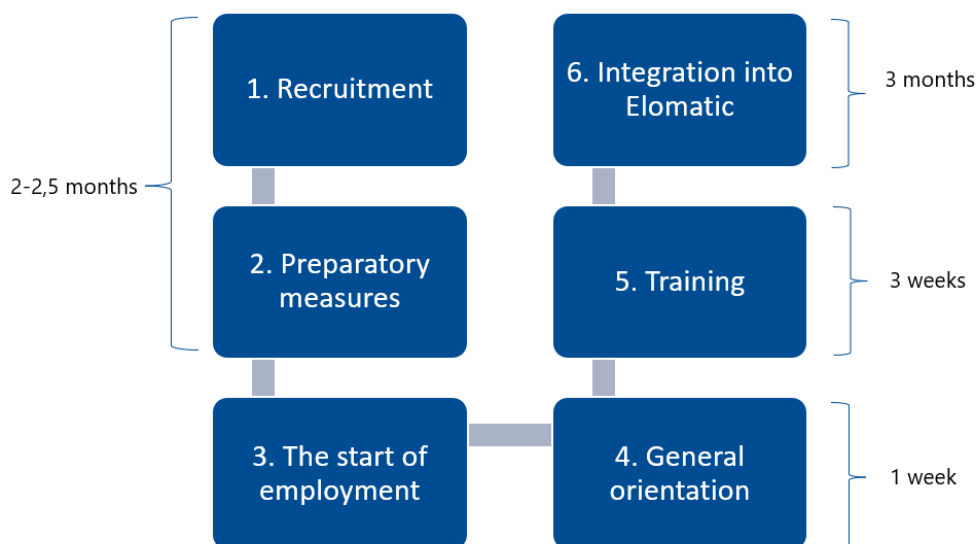


Figure 6. Overview of the onboarding process in Gdansk

In Gdansk, the recruitment process, and the preparatory measures last approximately two to two and a half months. The process includes identifying the need for a new hire, compiling, and publishing the job advertisement, receiving resumes, interviewing potential candidates, and communicating with candidates. Before the new hire's first-day preparatory measures are completed. This phase includes communicating with the new hire, creating a new employee profile to EloHR, preparing all necessary documents for the first day, selecting a mentor for the new hire, preparing the workstation and the welcoming gift, and requesting all necessary account and password information.

The orientation begins from day one and is completed within one week. The general orientation includes, office tour, meeting colleagues, reviewing organization procedures and policies, and filling in all necessary paperwork. New hires usually do not start working on their first day since it is dedicated to getting familiarized with the organization. The training phase lasts for approximately three weeks however, the duration of training differs per employee and their qualifications. The software training is performed by the project leader. In Poland, the probation period is three months and during the probation period, integration into Elomatic occurs. During the integration, the new hire has a development discussion with the mentor and the manager. In Gdansk, the BU manager, project leader, and office manager are involved in the onboarding process and responsibilities are divided into different tasks.

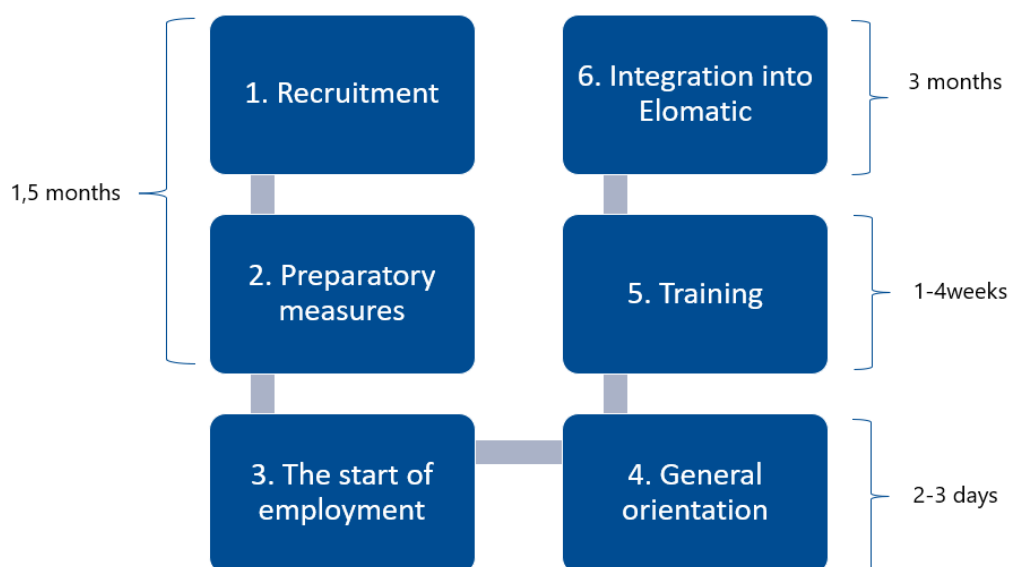


Figure 7. Overview of the onboarding process in Łódź

In Łódź, the recruitment process may be a little shorter process where the duration from the start of the recruitment process to the start of employment lasts for approximately one and a half months. The process includes identifying the need of a new hire, preparing, and publishing the job advertisement, interviewing potential candidates, communicating with candidates, and preparing all necessary material before the first day. Preparatory measures are done before the first day which includes preparing all necessary documents for the first day, creating a new profile to EloHR, selecting a mentor for the new hire, preparing the workstation and welcoming gift, and requesting necessary account and password information.

The first day starts with a general orientation by introducing the office, colleagues, key persons, and organizational procedures and policies. Usually, new hires participate in training or start working from day one. In Łódź, the training lasts only for a few days and continues alongside when taking part in projects. The integration of a new hire develops into the organization appears within three months. The general manager, team leader, mentor, and office manager are responsible for the implementation of the onboarding process.

3.2.3 Results

When discovering the results of the interviews and the employee survey some crucial conclusions were attained (see figure 9). There is no HR department in the Polish offices and the Finnish HR department is not involved in the onboarding process in Poland. Thus, there was a need to interview the managers who are responsible for the process in Gdansk and Łódź. Since the manager in Gdansk was not able to be interviewed, the information of the process is defective. The interview phase was implemented only for the new employees in the Łódź office because no new employees have been hired in the Gdansk office in the past two years. Interview questions for the new employees were created to evaluate how the onboarding process has been performed. The interview questions were open questions where the new employees had the chance to express their answers in detail. The questions were divided into different topics and this subchapter will inspect the answers to each topic. Eight out of nine of the new employees gave answers to the interview questions from which one was interviewed by a video call.

HR department	Information from Gdansk regarding onboarding process is defective	The change in duration of the onboarding process in Gdansk and Łódź	New employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR department in Finland but is not involved in the onboarding process in Poland • No HR department in Poland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office manager not able to be interviewed • Interviewed the substitute of the inductor → has not yet inducted new employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Łódź the orientation process is shorter → new employees start working nearly immediately • In Finland, the process is longer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new employees in Gdansk in the past two years • Nine new employees in Łódź from who eight were interviewed

Figure 8. Conclusions of the Gdansk and Łódź offices

The first questions covered the topic of recruitment and how the new employees experienced it. They also had the chance to convey their improvement proposals for the future recruitment process. The overall feedback was positive, and the recruitment had been implemented well and clearly. Employees felt that they obtained sufficient information of the future tasks, of Elomatic generally, and the communication before the first day was handled well. For the improvement proposals, one suggestion came up that could be considered in the future recruitment process.

” To check the candidate, we should conduct a test with questions on analytical thinking and programming knowledge”

The next topic in the interview was onboarding, how it is performed in Łódź, did the employees feel welcomed into the organization and team, how the Elomatic culture and values were presented, how they feel the Elomatic culture, and how they could feel more as part of one Elomatic.

The general orientation, which includes, for example, office tour, organizational procedures, and policies, and colleague introductions have been arranged well in the office according to the interviews. New employees have felt welcomed into the organization and their teams. Also, Elomatic values have been presented during the first day to the new employees.

One of the main questions of this thesis was what methods should be used to make the new employees feel as part of one Elomatic. The interview included a question *what could be improved to make you feel more as part of one Elomatic?* The

question divided opinions. Some employees felt instantly as part of the whole Elomatic organization when some did not, even today, feel like part of one Elomatic.

The main reason that came up in the interview was that some employees in Łódź are not in contact with any colleagues outside of Poland which leads to the fact that they do not have a connection with colleagues in other offices or with the offices generally outside of Poland. One requests that there could be arranged visitations to other offices to get to know the people. Before the global pandemic, software training took place mostly in Finland. It was the time when employees could visit other offices and get to know their colleagues from different countries. This thesis is conducted during the global pandemic when the training has taken place remotely. Also, some of the new employees started their employment when everyone worked from home.

The one Elomatic culture was also brought up in the office manager's interviews. They were asked if they feel like part of one Elomatic and the response was the following

“ We are one, one Elomatic, especially we feel it when we are doing projects together. Important that our office, Indian office, and Gdansk office are seen, and we are in the plan somewhere”

Every new hire is titled a mentor who supports and helps at the beginning of the employment and during the whole onboarding process. The interview also covered the topic about the mentor and the new employee's manager, how they supported the new employee, how the communication was handled and did they receive feedback during their development. Overall, each employee had a positive experience of how the mentor and the manager managed the support and communication during the onboarding process.

The next topic dealt with the general communication in the office, what channels are used for the communication, if they got an introduction to the channels used in Elomatic, and general questions about Elomatic's global intranet. Since the Łódź office is rather small, the communication with colleagues happens conveniently by walking to each other's desks and conducting a face-to-face discussion. Channels used for internal communication are Outlook and Teams. Elomatic's intranet is used

as a one-way communication channel, where important news is published, and essential documents are found. Some of the employees use the intranet on daily basis, some do not.

General questions regarding the job were asked to figure out if it is clear what is expected from the new employees, if the tasks are distinct, if the team is a source of motivation, how the training was implemented, and if it was sufficient. Most of the answers were that the tasks are clarified well enough for the employees to perform well however, one out of the eight claimed that it is not clear what is expected from them. The new employees are satisfied with how the team motivates them in their work and how they support and help each other. Nonetheless, questions about the training divided opinions. The questions in the interview where *do you feel confident using the software/systems you are required to use in your role?* and *have you been given enough training to get familiar with your job?* Most answers were that the employees are confident using the software yet, there were still some that expressed their hope to have better training on the software.

At the end of the interview, the new employees were asked to openly express development ideas for the onboarding process. Issues that were raised were regarding the recruitment process and the software training.

“The technical part of the recruitment should be more extensive”

“Better training materials, because these which are used, are outdated”

In addition to the open interview questions, a Forms questionnaire with ten statements was sent to the new employees in Łódź. The statements were created with the help of the 2020 employee survey (figure 5) to compare the results in Finland and the Łódź office. Of the new employees, seven out of nine responded to the questionnaire. Generally, the onboarding process has had a positive impact however, some parts of the onboarding process could be improved.

Rate the below statements from a scale of 1-4 according how you have experienced them. 1=fully disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=somewhat agree, 4=fully agree	2021
I got enough information about my tasks during my interview	3,4
I was provided with enough information about Elomatic during my interview	3,7
I received sufficient general employment-related information at the start of my employment	3,9
I felt welcomed to my team	4,0
I am satisfied with the guidance and support I received from my inductor or colleagues during the onboarding	4,0
I had a clear overview of Elomatic's values after my orientation	3,7
The general orientation was well performed (office tour, colleagues, procedures, etc.)	3,9
ICT equipment and support was well managed	4,0
My manager paid enough attention to me in the early stages and that the work went smoothly	3,7
Training on design software was well managed and sufficient	3,4

Figure 9. New employee satisfaction survey in Łódź

As seen in figure 8, three of the statements have 100 % satisfaction. The new employees have felt welcomed in their team, they were satisfied with the support and help they received from their inductor or colleagues, and they have been pleased with the ICT equipment and support during their onboarding process. The new employees felt least satisfied with the information sufficiency of their future tasks during their interview and the software training that was implemented. Generally, the new employees were satisfied with the information given about Elomatic and its values, and the attention the manager paid to the new employees in the early stages. Also, they received enough information related to employment and the general orientation was implemented well. Overall, the new employees are satisfied with the onboarding process in Łódź.

3.2.4 Reliability of results

The aim was to organize the interviews in a video format to be able to ask supplementary questions for additional information however, a language barrier was realized along with the project. For this reason, the new employees had the option to answer the questions on a Word document. To avoid misunderstandings, the interview questions were translated into Polish, and the employees had the chance to write their answers either in English or Polish. For translation, the questions were checked by the office manager in the Łódź office.

All answers from the employees are confidential and it was emphasized before the interview. Also, the employees were asked to express their answers with honesty

and truth to get a genuine overview of the process from the new employee's point of view. They also had the chance to adduce development ideas for the future process. Regardless, the interviews cannot be taken as 100 % reliable. The reason is that the video interview was conducted around colleagues and honest answers were perhaps difficult to adduce.

3.2.5 Analyzes and recommendations

The findings of the interview and questionnaire from Łódź employees may be analyzed as there is data available, but the information from the Gdansk office is inadequate. The reason for this is because there have been no new hires in the Gdansk office in the last two years, making it impossible to obtain current information on the onboarding process. However, some general recommendations for the onboarding process could be given.

Referring to the 2020 employee survey the employees in Łódź were, in general, aware of the organization's values and objectives. From the respondents, 27 % had a very positive opinion and 57 % somewhat positive opinion of the statement. Some could not answer the statement and a minor number of respondents chose somewhat negative and very negative. In the 2021 survey, the new employees in Łódź were aware of the organization's values partly because they were fresh in mind from the orientation. In Gdansk, the 2020 employee survey presents that 22 % of the respondents had a very positive opinion, 52 % had a somewhat positive opinion, 13 % could not answer, and 9 % had a somewhat negative opinion of the statement.

Employees in Łódź and Gdansk had a positive opinion about what is expected from them at work. In Łódź, 53 % were somewhat positive, and 40 % were very positive. The rest of the respondents had a somewhat negative opinion. Overall, the new employees in 2021 had a clear view of what is expected of their work expect one of the respondents expressed that it is not clear enough. In Gdansk, 65 % of the respondents on the 2020 employee survey have a very positive opinion about the awareness of what is expected from them at work.

One of the statements in the employee survey in 2020 was *the employer supports my professional development* which divided opinions in Gdansk. From the respondents 30 % were somewhat positive about it, 30 % were somewhat negative, 26 % were very positive, and 13 % were very negative. In Łódź, 67 % had a somewhat positive opinion about the statement, and 20 % had a somewhat negative opinion. The rest were equally divided to opinions somewhat positive and don't know. One of the interview questions for the new employees was regarding the support that the mentor and manager provided during the onboarding process and if it was sufficient. Mostly, the responses were positive, and the new employees got sufficient support and help. However, the results are not comparable to each other because the 2020 employee survey had a slightly different meaning since it was targeted for the employees who have worked in Elomatic for a longer period than the duration of onboarding.

One of the statements in the 2020 survey was regarding the orientation into new tasks. In Gdansk, 48 % of the respondents were somewhat positive, 35 % were very positive, and 17 % were somewhat negative about how it has been carried out. In Łódź, 60 % were somewhat positive, 20 % were somewhat negative, and the rest were divided into opinions very positive, very negative, and don't know. Similar questions were presented in the new employee's interview and Forms questionnaire. The questions were related to software training and how they experienced it at the beginning of their employment. As orientation into new tasks is crucial for employees to perform well, it should be improved both in Gdansk and Łódź according to the results.

The usefulness of the development discussion was as an additional statement in the 2020 employee survey. In Gdansk the opinions about the statement were divided as follows: 44 % were somewhat positive, 22 % were very positive, 22 % were somewhat negative about the usefulness of the development discussion. Of the respondents, 11 % could not give an opinion. In Łódź, less than five employees responded to the statement and for this reason, could not be reported.

When discovering the onboarding process in the Gdansk and Łódź offices, it was crucial to recall that what works in Finland may not work in Poland. Again, the purpose of this thesis is not to adjust the Polish ways to the Finnish ways. When

discovering the structure of the onboarding process in Gdansk and Łódź there can be found ways that Finland could take into practice. Even though, Elomatic aims to bring the organizational culture together for the one Elomatic feeling it is essential to value each country's own working cultures.

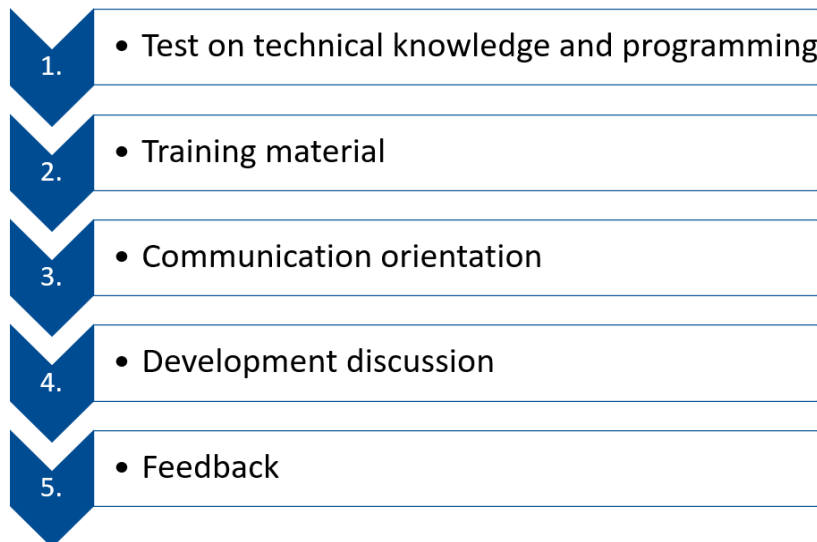


Figure 10. Overview of the recommendations for the onboarding process in Łódź

The objective of the research question was to consider the main improvement proposals for the onboarding process in Gdansk and Łódź offices. As the data and information from Gdansk are defective regarding the onboarding process, only general development ideas could be presented. When interviewing the office managers and the new employees in the Łódź office, some improvement ideas were identified after analyzing the interviews. Improvement ideas are related to the onboarding process in Łódź (see figure 10). In addition, there are general proposals that are related to the one Elomatic culture and how it can be developed for the Polish employees to feel more as part of one Elomatic. Recommendations for the onboarding process are the following:

1. Test on technical knowledge and programming

As shown by the responses of new employees in Łódź, the recruitment process could be improved in some parts. As the job in Elomatic Engineering requires technical knowledge and programming, it should be tested during the recruitment process. This way, the employer can identify who is the most potential candidate

for the open position and find the elements that the training should focus on for the new hire.

2. Training material

As the employees can self-study the program used in Elomatic by reading the training materials provided, they should be up to date. To avoid misunderstandings and confusion, the materials should be checked regularly. Developing the training materials not only helps for a more successful onboarding but also saves time for the new employee.

3. Communication orientation

In Finland, there is arranged a communication orientation for new employees. Even though Microsoft office tools are generally familiar for new hires, the tools develop continuously. In Łódź, the tools are not presented precisely, rather promptly because it is believed that new hires know how to use them. The ability to use communication channels, as well as knowledge of what features different tools have, is easily assumed. The idea of the communication orientation is that the new hire knows what channels should be used and what information can be found for example, from the Elomatic intranet.

When interviewing the office managers, it was clearly expressed that the communication channels are presented distinctly. Regardless, interviews revealed that one of the employees was not introduced to the intranet until two months after the start of the employment. This situation occurred when the employees were working remotely and therefore, there may have been shortcomings in the orientation process. However, to avoid these situations in the future, the communication orientation should be improved.

As in Finland, new hires either attend a communication orientation or listen to a recorded video related to the topic, the same could be implemented in the Polish offices. The same video that is used in Finland, could be recorded once in English, and used in the Polish offices. This can avoid any issues related to the use of the communication channels.

Elomatic aims to move from emails to Teams communication. In Finland, this process has been implemented and steps have been taken to encourage employees to use Teams rather than Outlook. In Poland, communication is conducted either face-to-face or by email. According to the responses in the interview, Outlook is used more often than Teams communication, and the essential information to employees is sent by email even though Łódź and Gdansk offices have their Teams groups to be used in these kinds of situations. Through empirical research, the Gdansk Teams group has not been active. The Łódź Teams group has become more active during this research. For the improvement of the communication channels, it would be essential to emphasize the use of each channel for the managers that are responsible for the orientation.

4. Development discussion

In Łódź, development discussions were implemented in 2020. Because it has not been in use for a long time, it is difficult to say how it has been implemented and how employees have reacted to it. In Gdansk, a development discussion has been part of the onboarding process where the new hire, the mentor, and the manager gather and discuss the development of the new hire. One of the new employees in Łódź thought that a development discussion during the onboarding process could be implemented as it is a good way to openly discuss the new employee's development and performance.

The preparatory measures of the development discussion could be completed in EloHR by the employee after which the employee and the manager arrange a meeting. The development discussion should be arranged once a year, but it could be part of the onboarding process, too. A meeting during the first months could be with the mentor, manager, and new hire so that the new hire could receive feedback on the performance. This could increase the satisfaction rate in the 2020 employee survey where the employees were asked to rate the statement *the employer supports my professional development* which divided the most opinions.

5. Feedback

According to the office managers' interviews, new employees are not asked to provide feedback on the onboarding process. Because the offices in Poland are

comparatively small, it is believed that face-to-face feedback is a preferable way. New hires are asked individually if they have questions during their orientation process but feedback from the overall onboarding process is not received. To achieve an effective onboarding, it should be guided and influenced by continuous employee feedback.

Each year the HR department in Finland creates an employee survey to compare the results to previous years. Questions regarding how the employees have experienced, for example, the induction into new tasks are asked. However, the general employee survey does not tell how the employees have experienced the onboarding process. Because of that, a feedback form of the onboarding process could be implemented in the Polish offices. For the implementation, the Finnish HR team could receive all the feedbacks and once a year they could be forwarded and to the right office managers. Thus, the new employees may express their experiences more openly knowing that they stay anonymous and that the feedback does not go directly to their managers.

6. General recommendations

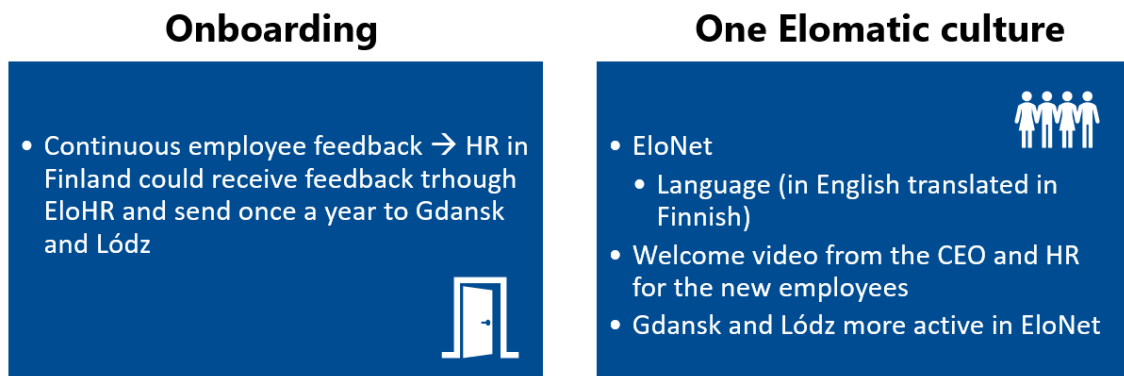


Figure 11. General recommendations

The general recommendations could be given related to a more successful onboarding process and the one Elomatic culture (see figure 11). For internal communication, the Elomatic intranet is used. Information about offices, important news, employment, Elomatic in general, services, and much more can be found on

the intranet. As the main language of Elomatic is Finnish, all the information and news are written first in Finnish and then in English. This also means that the heading of each news is written first in Finnish and then in English. Those who do not understand Finnish may lose interest in reading the news and in the long run, it can lead to frustration and employees ignoring critical information. If the information was in English, it is more likely that the employees would read the news because it catches their attention. After all, they immediately understand what the news is about. The general managers and employees were asked about the Elomatic intranet and their thoughts about it. From one of the interviews arose the following response:

“Sometimes the problem is that a lot is in the Finnish language which is a little bit difficult to read. But in general English would be of course, much better”

Information regarding all Elomatic offices is found on the intranet and employees can find facts and details about the Polish offices, too. Regarding the Łódź office site, the new employees were asked if they found the pages important and if they would develop the page or the intranet generally. The following responses were obtained:

“More technical articles translated to English or Polish”

“Maybe there could be more information about Polish companies, or situations of the Polish economy”

“A clearer page could be made for the Polish office sites”

As the intranet is a channel for project news and updates, the Polish offices could be more active in posting news and keeping the business up to date for other colleagues. This could be the way for the Polish offices to contribute to the one Elomatic culture. Furthermore, colleagues in other countries may be interested in what has been going on in the Polish offices, as some employees do not communicate with colleagues outside their office.

The one Elomatic culture aims to make the employees feel like they are a part of the organization and that they are working together. In Finland, new employees are greeted by a message in Finnish from the CEO and head of HR. A similar welcome

message in English could be sent to new employees outside of Finland. This way the new employees may feel instantly that they are valued and will perceive it as a nice gesture from management.

Other suggestions include, for example, each employee's effort and contribution to the one Elomatic culture. As there are offices in multiple countries, and employees are working together, pictures of the employees may be valued by colleagues. Employees might be working together with colleagues from other offices but are unaware of their colleagues' appearance. It could be suggested that Poland implement the practice of photographing employees and uploading the photos to their Microsoft profiles. Employees in Finland are encouraged to write a brief introduction about themselves on their profile, but this is not common in Poland, and employees rather not write about themselves.

The onboarding process took place remotely for some employees who began working in 2021 and were interviewed. Regardless, recent onboarding process experiences were preferred for this thesis. As the new hires started working during the pandemic as its worse, it caused challenges in the onboarding process and perhaps the new employees did not sense the "fitting in" at work, as in Maslow's hierarchy of needs the third level indicates. When new employees are hired, feedback on the onboarding process could be requested, as previously suggested. This allows previous experiences to be compared to more recent ones. As the onboarding process from now on will be executed at the site, the future new hires most likely have different perspectives and experiences of the overall onboarding process.

4 Conclusions

Onboarding process can be considered as the most important process when a new employee is hired in an organization. Thus, the objective of this study was to learn how the onboarding is designed and implemented at the Gdansk and Łódź offices, as well as how new employees have experienced it. Furthermore, determining how the employees in these offices feel the one Elomatic culture and how it may be improved to make them feel more as part of it. To conclude, this research aimed to give answers to the following research questions: what the main improvement proposals for the onboarding process in Gdansk and Łódź offices are and what methods should be used to make the employees in the Gdansk and Łódź office feel more as part of one Elomatic.

The research approach was chosen first. As the thesis is practice-based, it includes a theoretical part as well as a practical part. Furthermore, the thesis is based on the needs of the employer to help develop the practice of the onboarding process in the Gdansk and Łódź offices. This thesis uses empirical research, which means that the findings are based on real-life experiences and observations. Interviewing office managers and the new employees was the preferred approach of gathering information because the goal was to learn about the structure of the onboarding process in the Gdansk and Łódź offices, as well as how it is implemented and experienced.

After choosing the research method, the next step was to create questions for the office managers and the new employees. Because the topics were different for the office managers and the new employees, the questions remained distinct. The office managers were interviewed by video call, and it was preferable to interview the new employees by video call as well. However, due to a language barrier, the employees were given the option of answering the interview questions in a Word document in Polish. Yet, most of the responses were in English. After having an overview of the current onboarding process and the experiences, recommendations for the future onboarding process could be presented. As the data from the Gdansk is defective, only general recommendations could be provided. Since there could

be collected more information from the Łódź office, more detailed recommendations for the future onboarding process could be presented.

The recommendations for the future onboarding process include a test on technical knowledge and programming during the recruitment process, updated training material, communication orientation and development discussions during the orientation process, and feedback after the onboarding process. Tests on technical knowledge and programming skills should be considered in the recruitment process to identify the most potential candidates for the open position and to determine which aspects of training should be prioritized for the new hire. In addition, the training materials were out of date, as the interviews indicated, and should be reviewed occasionally by the employer.

One of the improvement ideas is a formal communication orientation which could be implemented in the Łódź office as it has had some deficiencies, according to the interviews. All the communication channels should be presented precisely, even though new hires are familiar with the various communication tools. It is critical to emphasize which channels the Elomatic organization uses for different purposes.

Yearly development discussions were implemented in the Łódź office in 2020 but cannot be evaluated since it is a new practice. However, based on the interviews, a development discussion would be valued during the onboarding process. The development discussion could be scheduled with the new hire, the mentor, and the manager and it could take place during the onboarding process, where the new employee receives feedback on his or her development.

The general recommendations apply to Elomatic generally, and to the Gdansk and Łódź offices. Since the main language in Elomatic is Finnish, all news and critical information in the Elomatic intranet are published in two languages: in Finnish and in English. However, the headlines and content of the news are written in Finnish first, followed by an English translation. If the content was written first in English, it would catch the attention of the employees who do not speak Finnish, potentially increasing the chances that all employees would read all important information published. Furthermore, when the used language is English, which the majority of employees understand, it may increase the sense of belonging to one Elomatic.

As the one Elomatic culture aims to make employees feel like they are a part of the organization, one way to increase the feeling is to adduce the offices in other countries by updating their business to the intranet. This can help the offices stand out more and keep colleagues in other countries informed of what is going on in offices such as Gdansk and Łódź. This may also increase the one Elomatic feeling for the employees in these offices because they see news published of their business. According to the interviews, some employees did not feel as part of one Elomatic because they are not in contact with colleagues outside of their office. Face-to-face training has been restricted by the global pandemic, which is one of the reasons employees have not met their colleagues in other countries.

This thesis was conducted during the global pandemic and some of the new employees started their employment when most of the employees worked remotely. Thus, the new employees have had an unusual experience with the onboarding process. As a result, feedback from the onboarding process could be requested from future new hires. It can be used to determine if there are any areas where the onboarding process could be improved, thereby endorsing successful onboarding.

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Interview questions for office managers

Interview questions for office managers by topic.

General overview of the onboarding process

- Who is responsible of the recruitment process (job description, interviews, decisions, etc.)?
- Who is responsible of the process before the new hire starts his/her first day (EloHR, contract, workstation, tools, welcoming gift)?
- Who welcomes the new hire on his/her first day?
- Who is responsible of the general orientation (introduces the office, own team, key persons, etc.)?
- Who is responsible of the communication orientation? (Teams, ICT, etc.)
- Could you describe what is a typical first day like?
- Can you say how long is the whole onboarding process in the Łódź office (weeks, months)? (Onboarding process from the beginning of recruitment to the new hires full integration into the company)

New hire

- Is English knowledge required from a new hire?
- How do you communicate with the new hire before his/her first day?
- Does the new hire get a general welcome message from Elomatic on the first day? Is it in English or Polish?
- Do the new hires ask easily questions from you (help for something or about general information) after the orientation process?

Integration into the organization

- Do you announce a new hire before his/her first day?
- Every 3 months there is published a news of new employees in EloNet. Have you seen the news and what do you think about it? New hires can write an introduction about themselves to the Microsoft profile. Do you mention about this during orientation?
- Do new hires get a welcoming gift from Elomatic?
- Is there titled a mentor for the new hire who supports and helps him/her on daily basis?
- Do you have coffee breaks together with employees (at the office or remote) so that employees can interact with each other?
- Are there arranged tests for employees on project performance, project management, or supervising a project to identify skills and training needs (for example, once a year)?

Feedback

- Do you ask/get feedback from the new hires on the onboarding process?
- Do the new hires get an automatic survey/feedback form from EloHR before the onboarding process ends? If not, would you be open to have an automatic survey/feedback practice as part of your onboarding process?

Development

- Do you feel like the onboarding process is sufficient in Łódź? If not, what could be improved?
- Do you feel like the onboarding process is effective in Łódź? If not, what could be improved?

- Do you have other development/improvement ideas for the onboarding process (should something be done differently, should you concentrate more on some specific topic)?
- Do you arrange trainings for your employees?

One Elomatic culture / organization culture

- Do you feel part of One Elomatic?
- Are you and the employees familiar with the values?
 - Do you have suggestions how to familiarize Elomatic values and build them to be part of way of work?
- How would you improve the communication with your people?

Interview questions for new employees

Interview questions for new employees by topic.

Recruitment

- Did you get a clear picture of the tasks during the interview?
- Did you get enough information of Elomatic during your interview?
- How did you experience the communication with your employer before your first day?
- Do you have any comments or development ideas for the recruitment process?

Onboarding

- How was the general orientation performed (office tour, procedures, etc.)?
- Did you feel welcomed into the organization?
- Did you feel welcomed into your team?
- How was one Elomatic culture brought up in your onboarding?
 - Where the Elomatic values presented well to you?
 - What could be improved to make you feel more as part of one Elomatic?

Mentor/Manager

- Did you feel like your mentor supported you enough? What about your manager?
- Did you feel that you could ask questions from your mentor during your orientation process? From your manager?

- Did you receive enough feedback from your mentor/manager during your onboarding process?

Communication

- How do you communicate with your team/colleagues/manager?
- How satisfied are you with the communication in your group? With your manager?
- Do you use EloNet on daily basis?
 - Do you feel like you got a sufficient introduction to EloNet during your orientation (what it is used for, where you can find materials that are essential for you, etc.)?
 - Do you think the Polish office sites should be improved in EloNet? If yes, what information could be added?

Job

- Do you have a clear idea about what is expected from you at this job?
- Is the job what you expected it to be?
- Does your team motivate you?
- Do you feel confident using the software/systems you are required to use in your role?
- Have you been given enough training to get familiar with your job?

Development

- Was there something you were missing from Elomatic's onboarding process (if you compare for example on your previous job's onboarding process)?
- Do you have any other development proposals for a more successful onboarding process?

Forms questionnaire for new employees

1. Answer the below questions on a scale of 1-4 how you have experienced them.

1=fully disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=somewhat agree, 4=fully agree

Odpowiedz na poniższe pytania w skali od 1 do 4, jak ich doświadczyłeś.

1=całkowicie się nie zgadzam, 2=trochę się nie zgadzam, 3=trochę się zgadzam, 4=całkowicie się zgadzam

*

	1	2	3	4
I got enough information about my tasks during my interview / Podczas rozmowy kwalifikacyjnej uzyskałem wystarczające informacje na temat moich zadań	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was provided with enough information about Elomatic during my interview / Podczas rozmowy kwalifikacyjnej otrzymałem wystarczające informacje o Elomatic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I received sufficient general employment-related information at the start of my employment / Na początku zatrudnienia otrzymałem/am wystarczające ogólne informacje dotyczące zatrudnienia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt welcomed to my team / Czułem się mile widziany w moim zespole	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1	2	3	4
I am satisfied with the guidance and support I received from my inductor or colleagues during the onboarding / Jestem zadowolony ze wskazówek i wsparcia, jakie otrzymałem od mojego induktora lub kolegów podczas wprowadzenia do zespołu.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had a clear overview of Elomatic's values after my orientation / Po wprowadzeniu do pracy miałem jasny obraz wartości Elomatic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The general orientation was well performed (office tour, colleagues, procedures, etc.) / Ogólna orientacja była dobrze przeprowadzona (zwiedzanie biura, koledzy, procedury, itp.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ICT equipment and support was well managed / Sprzęt i wsparcie IT były dobrze zarządzane	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My manager paid enough attention to me in the early stages and that the work went smoothly / Mój kierownik poświęcił mi wystarczająco dużo uwagi na wczesnych etapach i dzięki temu praca przebiegała bezproblemowo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1	2	3	4
Training on design software was well managed and sufficient / Szkolenie w zakresie oprogramowania projektowego było dobrze zarządzane i wystarczające	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>