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IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE INDUCTION PROGRAMME ON PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

- Case: Sector Alarm

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This thesis concentrates on how an employee induction programme affects the development and performance of new employees during and after the recruitment process. Employee induction programme (EIP) consists of various areas and stages to be recognized, analyzed and implemented at Sector Alarm. Nowadays, one of the most important goals for every company is to make their new employees a valued resource for their profitability. This research was commissioned by Sector Alarm Finland. The goal of the work is to address three main issues; what are the expected outputs of an induction programme, why is induction important at the case company and how the current induction programme could be improved.

The concept of employee induction programme (EIP) has been an important topic among numerous companies no matter the field. The programme is often a longer process that consists of a few different stages such as; orientation, competency building and result orienting, throughout an employee's career in the company. These topics became more familiar to the author during the research for this thesis and the author's employment period as a field sales agent at Sector Alarm.

Continuous improvement in various areas of their business is a crucial factor for Sector Alarm. With this research Sector Alarm is able to find ways to improve their current employee induction programme. A research by qualitative method was conducted in order to implement the solutions for adequate induction. The literature review covers the theoretical part of the research topic and is applied in this case study. The literature review gives additional relevant theory about the EIP process. The main purpose of this thesis however, is to look at the effects of the current EIP process on employees and possibly improve it.

Based on the results of the research conducted, Sector Alarm has been able to plan and implement the current induction programme quite effectively. An effective induction programme is crucial for employees working field sales, because they are usually the point of contact between the company and potential new customers. The results of the survey indicate that the the induction process could be developed further by including some more practical and concrete lessons in the programme. The benefits in integrating these aspects is that new employees are able to get a better picture what the job is actually going to be like in practice.

KEYWORDS:

Induction, employee performance, employee motivation, employee development

Viljanen Keijo

PEREHDYTTÄMISEN VAIKUTUS TYÖNTEKIJÖIDEN KEHITYKSEEN JA SUORIUTUMISEEN

Case: Sector Alarm

Tässä opinnäytetyössä keskitytään siihen, miten työntekijöiden perehdyttäminen vaikuttaa uusien työntekijöiden kehitykseen ja suoriutumiskykyyn rekrytointiprosessin aikana ja sen jälkeen. Työntekijöiden perehdytys koostuu erilaisista aihealueista ja vaiheista, jotka on tunnistettava, analysoitava ja toteutettava Sector Alarmilla. Yksi yrityksen tärkeimmistä tavoitteista on tehdä uusista työntekijöistään arvokas resurssi heidän kannattavuutensa kannalta. Työn tarkoituksena on selvittää kolme tärkeintä asiaa perehdytykseen liittyen; mitkä ovat perehdytyksen odotetut tulokset, miksi erehdytys on tärkeää Sector Alarmilla ja miten nykyistä perehdytys ohjelmaa voisi mahdollisesti parantaa?

Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantaja on Sector Alarm Suomi. Työntekijöiden perehdyttämisestä on tullut erittäin tärkeä aihe monille yrityksille toimialasta riippumatta. Perehdytys on usein pidempi prosessi, joka koostuu muutamasta eri vaiheesta, mm. suuntautumisvaihtoehdon, osaamisen rakentamisen ja tuloshakuisuuden kehittämisestä, koko työntekijän uran ajan. Nämä aiheet tulivat tutummaksi tekijälle tämän opinnäytetyöprosessin aikana ja työelämässä Sector Alarmilla.

Jatkuva parantaminen eri toimialueilla on ratkaiseva tekijä Sector Alarmin kannalta. Tämän opinnäytetyön avulla Sector Alarm voi mahdollisesti löytää keinoja, joilla parantaa nykyistä työntekijän perehdytysohjelmaa. Tutkimuksessa käytettiin kvalitatiivista menetelmää, jotta voitaisiin löytää ja toteuttaa riittäviä ratkaisuja perehdytysohjelman kannalta. Opinnäytetyön kirjallisuuskatsaus kattaa teoreettisen osan tutkimusaiheesta ja sitä sovelletaan tapaustutkimuksessa. Kirjallisuuskatsauksessa esitellään teorioita perehdytysprosessista. Tämän opinnäytetyön päätehtävänä on tarkastella nykyisen perehdytys prosessin vaikutuksia työntekijöihin ja mahdollisesti parantaa sitä.

Tutkimuksen tulosten perusteella Sector Alarm on pystynyt suunnittelemaan ja toteuttamaan nykyisen perehdytysohjelman tehokkaasti. Tehokas perehdytysohjelma on ratkaiseva kenttämyynnin työntekijöiden kannalta, koska he ovat yleensä ensimmäinen yrityksen ja mahdollisten uusien asiakkaiden välinen yhteys. Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittivat, että perehdytysprosessia voitaisiin kehittää entisestään lisäämällä ohjelmaan käytännönläheisiä ja konkreettisia opetuksia. Näiden osien lisäämisen edut ovat, että uudet työntekijät voivat saada paremman kuvan siitä mitä työ tulee olemaan käytännössä ja he ymmärtävät kuinka opittua teoriaa voi hyödyntää.

ASIASANAT:

Perehdytys, kehittäminen, motivaatio, suoriutuminen

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

EIP	Employee Induction Programme
HR	Human Resources
SWA	Sector Way Academy

1 INTRODUCTION

This study mainly uses qualitative research methods in a case study about how the current induction programme for new employees in sales of home security services at Sector Alarm affects employees' development and performance. Sector Alarm's headquarters in Finland are located in Helsinki.

The idea for this thesis developed along the author's studies and when he gained a position as a field sales agent at Sector Alarm. This meant going through some of the steps in the current induction programme. At Sector Alarm, the importance of internal communication, leadership and peer support was highlighted very much, as the managers are very aware of the effects of the internal communication and leadership on employees. Even though the author only went through the first step of the induction programme during his month employment at the company, the induction process seems to be quite well planned and executed. This also influenced the authors' decision to write a thesis about employee induction.

Together with the HR director of Sector Alarm Finland, it was agreed to carry out a research on how Sector Alarm's induction programme impacts the employee performance and development and how to possibly develop it. Additionally, it is crucial to consider the importance of choosing the right people to perform the training. Making the current orientation programme more efficient and provide the company with better knowledge for the line managers and new employees is a focus for Sector Alarm and this case study. Effective induction of employees is a crucial part of human resource management for any company and thus it became a very interesting topic to the researcher.

Sector Alarm offers comprehensive security services for households and SMEs. The company was originally established in Norway and is now the second largest in Europe, having more than 500,000 customers in Europe. The countries where Sector Alarm currently operates are Finland, Sweden, Norway, Spain, and Ireland where Sector Alarm operates under the name Phonewatch LTD. See, figure 1, the structure of the entire Sector Alarm Group. (Sector Alarm, 2017)

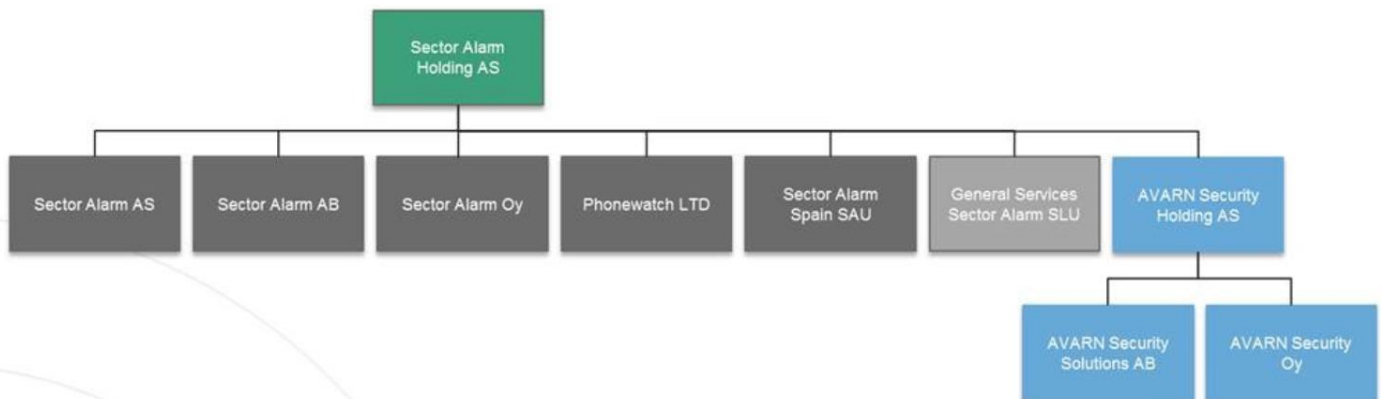


Figure 1. Sector Alarm Group structure (Sector Alarm, 2017)

The company's ultimate goal is to be one of Europe's leading suppliers of security solutions. When Sector Alarm entered Finland in 2016, it purchased the operations of Turvatiimi and G4S from the Finnish market, merging them and establishing Avarn Security. As figure two shows, in 2016 Sector Alarm had around 1600 employees and Avarn Security had around 6400. (Sector Alarm, 2017) See Figure 2, the two brands that are part of the Sector Alarm Group.



Figure 2. Sector Alarm concepts/brands (Sector Alarm, 2017)

The thesis was commissioned by Sector Alarm Finland. Based on discussions with the HR director, the aim of the thesis is to address; what are the expected outputs of an induction programme, why is induction important at the case company and how the current induction programme could be improved. All these elements are analyzed in the case company. The scope and implementation of the induction process is looked into mainly through surveys aimed at Sector Alarm employees, and possible semi-structured with managers, and through personal experience.

According to Ahmed (2014), a well-structured orientation programme, whether it lasts one day or six months, increases employee retention, and enhances their performance. With the help of this research Sector Alarm will be more aware of the impact of the current orientation plan on their employees and gain better clarification to their induction process.

The research questions are:

Q1 What is the impact of the Sector Way Academy on employees?

Q2 How can Sector Alarm develop its SWA programme to improve employee development?

Q3 What is the impact of the Sector Way method in approaching customers?

It is crucial for the induction programme to be well designed in order to streamline the hiring process and help pay dividends in the future. Having an effective employee induction programme (EIP) is an important topic in the Finnish working society as a whole. Many employers have recognized the value of an effective EIP and its uses in practice. In order to get the greatest benefits, the implementation of an EIP does not happen in an instant, it is a very time consuming process and requires constant planning and monitoring through out the entire programme. (Kjelin and Kuusisto 2003, 246)

Additionally an effective induction programme also establishes good communication chain and a better relationship between the new employee and their supervisor and employer. (Leading Point, 2015)

This thesis can provide Sector Alarm with more in depth knowledge about how their Sector Way Academy programme currently affects and motivates their employees. The SWA programme has four different steps and each step is done after a field sales agent has reached certain sales goals. In addition to gaining experience in the field, it is important that team leaders and field sales managers have discussions with their teams and so that the sales agents will have the best chances to adjust to their work and share their experiences.

After introduction, research background, objectives and research motivation are presented, the research questions are presented in the first chapter and literature review makes up the the second part of the thesis. The literature presents the crucial factors, tools and methods used in employee induction programmes (EIP). Chapter three discusses the methodology used in this particular case study, and so the methodology part consists of qualitative data methods, participants, and focus group and sampling methods used. The main data collection methodology that was used in collecting the research data was a survey design that used the census sampling method. Chapter four presents the findings of the research done for this thesis and aims to present more in-depth knowledge on how the current EIP programme effects Sector Alarm's employees and what aspects of the programme could be improved.

2 INDUCTION PROGRAMME

During his five month employment at Sector Alarm, the author worked as a member of a field sales team and thus went through some of the steps in the SWA programme. In this literature review section, some existing theories about employee induction are discussed provided to the reader.

2.1 Employee induction theory

According to Ahmed (2014, 7), employee induction can be defined on a broad scale as the familiarization and adaptation to a new working environment. It also refers to the process by which a new employees are introduced to their organization, their work group, and to their new job. He also states that normally, organizations approach employee induction by describing the organization's history, structure, benefits, rules and regulations to their new employees. Employee induction is also a very good opportunity for a company to effectively communicate its vision and values to its new employees. Additionally, the first few months within a new organization is the critical period during which an employee can gain the crucial knowledge on how to become a high performer in their company.

A well designed and executed induction programme has several benefits for the company itself. For instance, it can create a positive perception of the organization and helps employees better understand its corporate culture, values, vision, mission and goals. Additionally, an effective programme can help motivate existing employees that are included in the process. In addition to the benefits to new and exiting employees, a good induction program can cut down recruitment costs as new staff is more likely to give longer term commitment to the company. In addition to the benefits for the company, an induction programme naturally provide benefits for employees as well. Employees can feel welcomed and comfortable which reinforces the employee's decision to join their new organization. It also helps to build self-esteem, morale and motivation. Effective induction programme also establishes good communication and relationship between the employee and their supervisor. (Leading Point, 2015)

According to Arthur (2006, 290), the overall goal is that new employees leave at the end of their first day feeling like a valued employee instead of feeling like a new hire. Arthur further explains that with this objective in mind, some organizations are proactive at converting a person's new hire status to that of employee before their induction even begins. Some examples of this could be sending a welcome packet to the employee in order to begin the psychological conversion process. Some companies might give away T-shirts, mugs, and other paraphernalia bearing the company logo. The reason behind this is that the the new employee would feel like they already work for the company before their first official day on the job. When taking the case company into consideration, well planned and executed induction is very important. This is important because often, field sales agents work purely on commission so it is crucial to keep them motivated as they are the first contact with possible new consumer clients. Technicians are responsible for making sure that the security system is working properly so providing them with proper technical skills and knowledge is crucial.

2.2 Ensuring adequate induction for new employees

Every company must choose at least one person to be responsible with training new employees, telling them about some of the experiences from the work they will be doing, what the environment is going to be like and the company's vision. The person responsible for the induction process should also be genuinely interested on helping the new employees adjust to their new work place. The person responsible for training new employees should have at least some basic knowledge about adults as learners so that they will be able to provide new employees with the big picture on how things will happen during first day of induction. (Kjelin and Kuusisto 2003, 196) Additionally, having only one or two trainers for the induction process, allows new employees to create better understanding and relationship towards the person training them.

Kjelin and Kuusisto (2003, 20 – 22) point out that a weak induction programme will affect a company's credibility externally and internally as well. Employees have the most energy to be productive and provide quality service for customers when they are well motivated by their employee. When company management is not fully committed to deliver an effective induction programme for its employees, the motivation levels of these new employees can and most likely will decrease over time. The loss of motivation may not occur immediately after starting a new job, because new employees often are ready

and eager to prove themselves to the company and their managers. Employees are often most motivated when they start their new job but a poor induction process can cause their motivation to deteriorate in early stages of their employment.

There are certain factors that an organization and the trainer in the induction programme should consider when planning and organizing an induction programme. The figure below will provide further explanation on these factors. Figure 3, which is shown below, demonstrates how an instructional plan for an induction programme can be laid out.

	Trip	Training Session
<i>WHO</i>	Who is going?	Who should participate?
<i>WHEN</i>	When are we going?	When will I conduct the training?
<i>WHERE</i>	Where are we going?	Where am I taking the participants (in terms of outcomes)?
<i>WHY</i>	Why have we chosen this destination?	Why am I conducting this training?
<i>WHAT</i>	What do we want to see and do?	What do I want the participants to know or be able to do?
<i>HOW</i>	How will we get there?	How will I communicate the information or develop the participants' skills?

Figure 3. Instructional plan (Lawson, 2016, 96)

Lawson (2016), states that an instructional plan helps to identify what the organization and the trainer want to accomplish when it comes to the learning outcomes for the employees who participate, what will be presented to them in the content, and how the content will be communicated to the employees using various methods and media. The purpose of the instruction plan is to create the best possible learning experience and to meet learning outcomes as effectively as possible. (Lawson, 2016, 96)

According to Lawson (2016), after the trainer or organization has determined the objectives of the induction programme, it is helpful to first design or layout the programme using a design matrix. Figure 4, (below) shows an example of a design matrix.

Duration	Content/Learning Points	Methods/Activity	Materials/Aids

Figure 4. Design Matrix (Lawson, 2016, 96)

The design matrix is meant to be a rough sketch of the whole training session or course. It can be used to identify and sequence the content subtopics by estimating the time required for each subtopic, how to communicate the content of these topics and to identify the materials that are needed in order to present these topics. (Lawson, 2016, 97)

According to Torrington (2011, 251-252), employees' performance improves through influencing their attitudes toward their employer and job by using various human resource methods. The ultimate goal for any company is to gain committed and loyal employees through the use of human resource management. This in turn, results in higher motivation and performance in employees and as a result, employee turnover and absence costs can be reduced significantly.

The theory mentioned above by Lawson is one of many useful ways to plan, design and implement an induction programme for new employees. Naturally the nature of work and the environment in which the work takes place, have a large impact on what is the best way to structure and induction programme. In the end however, it is highly important that all induction programmes are planned and executed to their highest potential, regardless of the challenges at the work place.

2.3 Current induction practices

Currently the SWA programme is structured so that there are 4 main steps and each step of the programme is performed mostly as a group training and so that there will be at least few employees in each training step. Step-1 takes place the very first day of training for new sales employees at Sector Alarm. This step takes place at the headquarters of Sector Alarm Finland in Helsinki. The other steps are usually organized at selected dates when a large enough group of sales employees have reached the necessary sales goals. The advantage in this is that employees can easily interact with each other and share their experiences about their work and each employee can also learn something new from their colleagues. The current induction is well organized and provides very good information and new skills to the new employee.

The EIP process is organized in a way that right from the beginning, new employees are provided with all the necessary information regarding the company and its history, what the job itself is going to entail and some basic instructions on how to interact with

customers when going from door-to-door. All employees also get their working clothes, such as jackets, shirts and ID-badges on the first day of the induction programme. New employees will be provided with information from the HR unit regarding sick leaves, payrolls and contract issues mostly during the first day of work. In the case company, the different steps on the induction programme are designed for the field sales agents in a way that after meeting a certain amount of sales, the employee goes through a new step in the programme. There are certain pros and cons in this method. The advantage is that this gives time for a new employee to experience the field work and develop the basic skills before going through the more advanced steps of the programme. The shortcoming of this method is that for some employees it may be challenging or it can take a lot of time to meet the required sales goals.

For an induction programme to be executed in the most effective way possible, all possible responsibility areas should be clearly defined in addition to extensive planning. The ideal outcome is that there are mutual feelings of a shared responsibility through out the entire organization and that everyone in the working community takes part in the induction process. Additionally in the planning stage for the induction programme it is crucial to decide which issues will be taught first and which can be postponed to a later stage in the process. Since people learn in different ways it is very important to take into consideration that the methods of training should be at least partly chosen, based on how various individuals can be taught most effectively. The reason for this is that certain people learn best by reading different educational materials where as others simply learn best by doing. Lawson (2006, 39), points out that adults learn in different ways, some might learn better by listening where as some may be more visual oriented and learn best by reading instructions. Additionally some people might learn best when the trainer gives them an actual demonstration on how to perform a certain task. (Lawson, 2006, 39)

There are also various ways on how managers and employees can follow up on the progress of the give training in the induction programme. An employee could write a learning diary where s/he writes once or twice a week. Another method used regularly in many companies is having feedback sessions with managers at the workplace once a month or once every few months. (Kjelin and Kuusisto 2003, 199 – 201).

Additionally, it is crucial that the proposed outcomes of the induction programme are assessed in some way. The reason for this is that in order to effectively evaluate the performance and development of its employees, organization must clearly communicate the desired goals of their induction programme. (Monster 2018)

There are also some issues that can affect the success, content and length of the whole induction process, that actually depend on the new employee rather than the employer. These issues can be e.g. previous work experience, the employee's expectations towards the induction programme and the new job itself. As in the case company of this thesis, the induction programme is performed in groups rather than for each individual employee on their own, it becomes more difficult to manage these factors. Additionally, concerning the younger employees, they generally require more guidance when compared to an older and more experienced employee. (Great Place to Work, 2012)

It is also important for the organization and the trainer to identify the current skills and knowledge of a new employee and then compare them to the skills their new job requires. Therefore the training needs of individual employees could be assessed so that the requirements for the necessary skills for the new job are met as effectively as possible. (Shivarudrappa, Ramachandra, Gopalakrishna, K.S. 2010, 66)

2.4 Performance management in employee induction

When it comes to employees, achieving high performance levels requires well motivated employees. There has been a great amount of debate concerning monetary rewards and how much rewarding employees only with money actually motivates people in their every day work. More and more companies and employees as well are seeing money as a very limited source of motivating employees, and this can be noticed especially in the long term.

According to Bratton and Gold (2003, 288 – 289), monetary rewards can only motivate employees when they are considered as recognition for their work. They suggest, that it is actually the way a company treats its employees that boosts not only development but performance as well more effectively just a good salary. It is also crucial for a company to create opportunities for their employees so that employers can encourage their employees to take initiative and help further develop the skills needed in their job.

Creating these opportunities can additionally influence decision making processes regarding employees' own jobs and potentially even the entire organization.

For the case company, it is highly important to provide the field sales employees with a good quality induction programme so that they have the proper knowledge and skills to effectively and professionally interact with new and existing customers on the field. Additionally, providing employees on the field with independence and opportunities to develop their own working method can directly effect their performance and motivation.

When an induction programme is organised well, it significantly helps to reduce the amount of errors employees make doing their jobs and over all will improve the quality of their work and this will eventually lead to a higher customer satisfaction (KT Kuntatyöntajat, 2011).

When an induction process is designed and executed poorly, it can often increase the risk of an employee to make errors when doing their job which on turn can deteriorate the quality of any services or products delivered to an existing or a potential new customer. Poor service or product often leads to customer demanding refunds or other form of compensation, and this could result in additional and unnecessary costs for the company. Nowadays when social media plays a large role in peoples lives, any company that provides poor service or products may cause significant damage to their reputation in the eyes of consumers, and thus leading to losing existing and potential customers. (Kjelin and Kuusisto 2003, 20 – 22)

By looking at the two factor theory by Frederick Herzberg (1959), in a practical way. The author understands the core of this effectiveness theory about motivating employees. Herzberg conducted his research by interviewing a group of people about their good and bad experiences at work. The research revealed that people answered questions about their good experiences differently, compared to the ones about their bad experiences. Based on his findings, Herzberg developed the theory that there are two factors that affect people's job satisfaction. Motivators and satisfiers affect satisfaction, hygiene factors and dissatisfiers affect dissatisfaction. (Kuijk, 2017)

Motivators and satisfiers include performance, recognition, job status, responsibility and opportunities for growth, whereas hygiene factors and dissatisfiers are about salary, secondary working conditions, the relationship with colleagues, physical work place and the relationship between supervisor and employee. (Kuijk, 2017)

Kuijk (2017), states that, Herzberg claims that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not polar opposites. This means that, for example by offering a higher salary in order to reduce or completely take away an employee's dissatisfaction, does not necessarily mean the employee actually will be satisfied. See figure 5, which shows the structure of Herzberg's two factor theory.



Figure 5. Herzberg's two factor theory (Kuijk, 2017)

Kuijk (2017), notes that there are four different combinations that can exist at work:

1. High hygiene and high motivation

This is the ideal situation. Employees are very motivated and barely have any complaints.

2. High hygiene and low motivation

Employees have few complaints, but they're not really motivated, they see their work simply as a pay check.

3. Low hygiene and high motivation

Employees are motivated, their job is challenging, but they have complaints about salary or work conditions.

4. Low hygiene and low motivation

This is the worst possible situation, employees are not motivated and have a lot of complaints.

These four situations can be seen in Figure 6, which demonstrates how Herzberg's two factor theory actually works in practise.

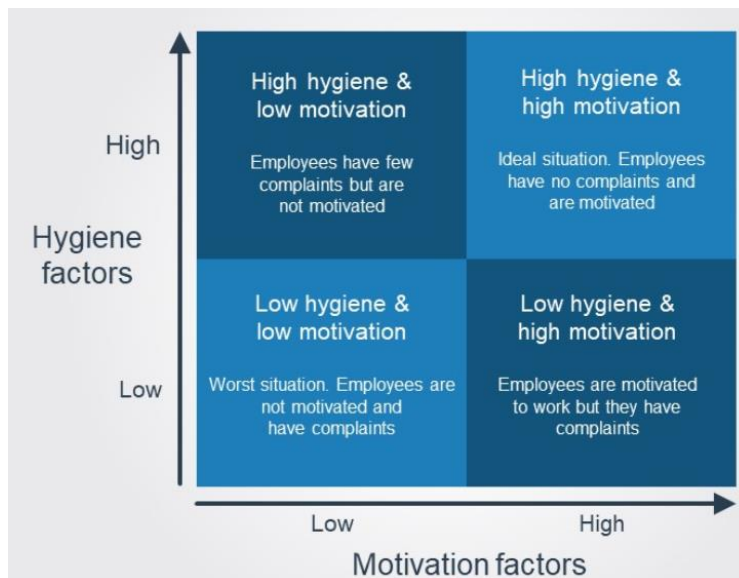


Figure 6. Illustration of the two factor theory in practise (Kuijk, 2017)

Kuijk (2017) states that, adjusting the hygiene factors, also called the KITA (Kick in the Ass) factors by Herzberg, usually tend to have a short-term effect that doesn't last very long. On the other hand, changing the motivation factors often has a more lasting, long-term effect on employee performance.

It is natural for companies and managers to want employees to perform to the best of their abilities at work. Sometimes it can be quite challenging for managers and organizations to effectively motivate their employees. Kuijk (2017), notes that there is not much point in trying to motivate one's employees if the hygiene factors are not properly taken care off, because motivating people works best when the things that actually bother them disappear.

Kuijk (2017), states that when attempting to remove employee dissatisfaction, it is crucial for companies and managers to figure out what the important factors are. Firstly, what are the employees actually complaining about, what is going on in the work place and how employees interact with each other on everyday basis. Kuijk also gives us examples

on what aspects should be taken into account when trying to take away employee dissatisfaction:

- Work on the bureaucracy within the organisation
- Make sure there's supportive and effective supervision
- Create a work environment where all employees are respected
- Pay an honest salary
- Make sure all employees do worthwhile work to build up the status of their functions
- Give job guarantees

Kuijk (2017) also tells that when creating opportunities for satisfaction, companies and managers should take the following factors into consideration;

- Creating conditions for good performance
- Appreciating your employees' contributions
- Tailoring the work to your employees' talents and abilities
- Giving each team as much responsibility as possible
- Offering opportunities for growth within the organisation
- Offering training and development opportunities

Kuijk (2017), additionally notes that, organizations are inclined to take Kick In The Ass measures in the short term. The reason for this is that these measures do not affect the company's organisational structure that much, for example, a higher salary, better work conditions etc. However, sufficient measures for motivation require bigger investments and changes to the company's organisational culture.

There is also some critique towards the two factor theory. Kuijk (2017), tells us that eventhough the two factor theory is widely used, one issue is the fact that people tend to look at the aspects of their work that they like and project them onto themselves when things are going well, where as, when times are bad, external factors tend to have a larger role. Kuijk also notes that another point of criticism is that the two factor theory assumes that job satisfaction equals higher productivity. Herzberg did not take into account that there are external factors which can influence employee productivity.

Through the two factor theory, the case company can look at which aspects of the existing content might need improvement and which ones are already in sufficient level. The theory can also help in developing the induction programme, as it can give some insight about what could be added in to the programme on top of the existing content. The theory can also enable Sector Alarm to look at its current organizational culture and if there are any aspects within the culture that could be developed, this might provide more opportunities to gain better insight as to how better motivate employees throughout the entire organization.

In his report, Ahmed (2014) notes the cause effect relationship between an induction process and its effects on an employee's commitment towards an organization, their job satisfaction and their performance. Ahmed's research also demonstrates that the increase in the overall effectiveness of the whole induction program will result in an increased productivity of employees as well. Once an employee has committed to stay and work in their respective organization, it is more likely that their performance will increase because they feel that they are an important part of the working community and their work benefits not just their employer and but also the employee themselves.

2.5 Commitment and Staff Retention

(Kular, 2008, 3), notes that when it comes to working life, commitment basically refers to an individual employee's psychological connection to their employer. This of course includes things such as; job engagement, employee's loyalty and belief in the vision and values of the organization they work for. When it comes to employee retention, it is, at its core, an organization's systematic efforts to try and maintain as many employees as possible in the organization with minimal employee turnover. Over the years, improving employee commitment in general has clearly become one of the most popular subjects for HR professionals because of its very significant role in employees' motivation, development and performance and in the overall staff turnover of an entire organization.

Wangui (2010, 15), state that employee resignations will increase when an organization has not provided enough opportunities for employees to learn and develop themselves, or if the employer's demands are too high compared to the provided conditions. According to Kavoo-Linge & Kiruri (2013) usually, during the first six months, most employees will make the decision whether to stay or resign from an organization, and roughly around 50% of those employees who resign, fail to deliver what their

organizations expected of them. The implementation of an employee induction programme greatly influences various factors all the way from employees' commitment to their company to the overall quality of an organization's management.

Kiruri (2013) also notes that the role of induction process has significant weight when it comes to the performance of employees in the first six weeks when they begin their new job. This time frame is often crucial in securing an employee's long-term adaptation and success in the company.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

In this thesis, qualitative research method was used in order to approach the study of the case company and investigate the given research questions. The objective of the research was to gather reliable data about the current situation and needs regarding Sector Alarm's current induction process.

Saunders (2009, 480) explains that, by its nature qualitative data is non-numerical information or data that have not been quantified. Saunder's also notes that qualitative can range from a short list of responses to open-ended questions in an online questionnaire and to more complex data such as transcripts of in-depth interviews. Additionally, qualitative data analysis procedures include deductive and inductive approaches. (Saunders, 2009, 480)

The reason that the author decided to use mainly qualitative method in this research is that most of the data collected in this research is non-numerical data, because employees can experience the induction programme differently and have varying opinions. Saunders (2009, 480), states that in order for the collected data to be useful, it needs to be analysed and its meaning understood properly and qualitative data analysis procedures assist this, allowing the researcher to develop theory from the collected data.

3.1 Preparation for the research process

The main method for collecting data for this research was a survey questionnaire that was designed and conducted online by the researcher. The questionnaire as Appendix 1. The survey is specifically targeted for field sales agents, field sales managers because these employees have the most interaction with potential new customers and the questions in the survey were designed to gather data on how the orientation affects the performance and development of these employees. Currently Sector Alarm has around 100 field sales agents and 14 field sales managers. Qualitative method approach was used at this stage to gain information on how these employees experience the current SWA programme and what aspects of it could be changed or improved from and employee's perspective.

In addition to those employees that work mostly on the field, the researcher designed semi-structured interview questions for the sales coach. The purpose of this was to gain some additional insight on the induction programme from the sales coach and what they saw as some of the challenges and advantages of the current induction programme. The questions as Appendix 2. There were both open and closed questions presented for both the coach and the employees. Through the survey, employees were able to answer questions anonymously, as some people may be concerned about the reaction of their managers or peers when presenting their honest opinions.

3.2 Data analysis and sampling methods

In addition to using the survey and questions provided for the coaches and employees, the author also used participant observation to some extent because the author worked briefly for the case company in question. Participant observation was useful to identify the challenges of the case company which helped in identifying the research objectives for this thesis. (Saunders, 2009)

The author used the census sampling method to collect the data for this research. The sample population in this case company used for the qualitative data collection amounts to 114 people because of the amount of field sales agents and field sales managers that have taken part in the SWA programme. The survey questions were constructed together with the HR-director of Sector Alarm. The author did not do a pilot concerning the online survey, but the survey was available for ten days to the employees. The survey was distributed through the HR-manager who sent to the sales team managers and the survey had a public web-link that the respondents could use to access the survey.

In addition to the census approach, this thesis uses inductive approach in order to analyze and evaluate qualitative data generated by this research. It also establishes a clear link between the research or evaluation objectives and the summarised findings derived from the collected raw data. Additionally to these two purposes, inductive method is used to develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that have become evident in raw data. (Thomas, 2003, 2)

The collected data is summarized into key points, and any common elements that emerge from the participants responses are underlined and possible relationships between common themes are identified. For instance, all comments that somehow relate to common obstacles that employees or coaches face are noted. Addition to this, comments that refer to organizational support for example are noted as well.

3.3 Validity and limitations

The validity of research results refers to the extent in which the findings accurately represent the researched phenomena. Reliability of a study on the other hand, refers to the reproducibility of the results a researcher has achieved. Quite often, qualitative research is actually criticized for being too biased, small scale, anecdotal, and lacking in rigor unlike the quantitative research method. (Anderson, 2010, 2).

The validity of this research can be reinforced by gaining a sufficient number of answers in the questionnaire designed by the author of this thesis. By getting an acceptable amount of answers, a large enough portion of the employees is represented in the research findings so that the results could be considered valid.

When considering the survey, even though the answers are anonymous, there is always the possibility that a participants' inability or unwillingness to provide accurate and honest answers to the questions asked, can actually cause respondent bias. The reason for this is that every participant will inevitably have more or less different perceptions, ideas, and attitudes that affect their observation of various phenomenon in the social world. In the end, the differences in these perceptions could have a material impact on the overall consistency and equivalence of reliability. Additionally, e-mail interviews and online questionnaires do not allow direct probing that may provide an opportunity to gain further elaboration and clarification to the participants' responses, but because of the amount of people that are required for this research, online questionnaire is the best method at this point to collect data.

There are also some advantages in conducting email interviews and online surveys because this way, the interview or survey can offer the interviewee a more convenient and peaceful environment without any excessive disturbances. Additionally when the interviewee can answer the questions in a comfortable environment, they may not be as

embarrassed to share unpleasant experiences or hesitate to give socially undesirable answers. They can also express their feelings and opinions in their own way without interruptions or feeling that the interviewer is pushing them too hard to get answers (Meho, 2006, 1287-1289).

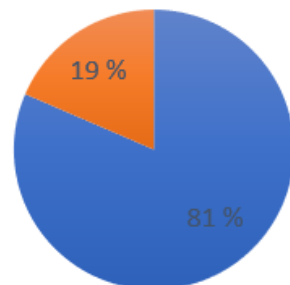
3.4 Research purpose

The induction programme of Sector Alarm aims to keep the new and existing employees satisfied with their job as long as possible but also give them a sense of value and make them feel that they are truly needed in the company. Since the case company is a fairly new in Finland it might be quite useful for it to see what the results of this research are. This study does not only aim to update the current induction programme, but also to possibly find any specific needs for accuracy of ensuring success of the programme in the future as well. The needed areas that will be covered are presented in the introduction as research questions.

4 DATA ANALYSIS

The main findings and data analysis are discussed in this chapter of the thesis. The researcher had an opportunity to work and be present in the case company during this research for some time and therefore was able to experience part of the induction programme personally and reflect on how it affected the authors peers as well.

Chart 1 (below), shows the distribution between field sales agents and field sales managers between the 26 respondents who answered the questionnaire at the time the data was collected.



■ Field sales agents ■ Field sales managers

Chart 1. Distribution between sales agents and sales managers

From the overall 114 possible respondents, 26 respondents had answered at the time the questionnaire data was collected, which results in a total response rate of 23,7 percent. Overall the response rate was not as high as the author had hoped, but the data can still give a fairly reasonable picture of what the employees think of the current induction programme at Sector Alarm.

4.1 Importance of induction at the case company

The importance of induction and training were highlighted throughout the questionnaire that was sent to the employees, and the questions that were sent to the sales coach also gave a good picture on how the coach himself experiences training new sales employees. This data was very useful, and it made the research more interesting, since there were many similarities in the responses that the employees gave. The author of

believes that this research does not only provide valuable information on the importance of induction, but also on training and development for the company management.

Majority of the respondents among the field sales agents stated that the induction programme gave them much more confidence and better skills in interacting with new customers when going from door-to-door. Additionally, the respondents were asked if they felt that the first step of the SWA programme in particular, which is simply called Step-1, was useful for their sales work. Most of the respondents stated that it gave them good base knowledge about the job itself and new information about sales in general even if they had some previous experience from sales work.

Based on the results of the questionnaire, the researcher finds that the participants were mostly very unanimous agreed on the importance of induction on their work. 81 percent of the respondents agreed that the current induction programme is well planned and organized overall. This shows that the case company has been able to effectively design and implement its current induction programme. The sales coach also finds it very important and useful in developing the induction programme is that every sales coach from different countries where the case company operates, work together and share their experiences with each other on daily basis.

When looking at the factors provided by Kuijk (2017) regarding employee satisfaction within the two factor theory by Herzberg, the high satisfaction percentage of the respondents indicates that Sector Alarm is able to fulfil at least the following factors to a good extent in the induction programme;

- Creating conditions for good performance
- Offering opportunities for growth within the organisation
- Offering training and development opportunities

In the case company individual sales teams are also given a lot of responsibility in finding ways how to best achieve the given sales goals and how to develop as a team overall. This gives the sales employees a sense that their opinions and input are appreciated in the organization.

When looking at employee satisfaction, 100 percent of the respondents felt that they were welcome in the company already on the first day of the induction and when they became part of their new sales teams around Finland.

These results support the statement made by Kjelin's and Kuusisto (2003, 20 – 22) on an induction programme's effect on employee satisfaction. When employees are still at the early stages of their employment, they usually have a high motivation towards their work, but if the induction programme is poorly implemented, it can cause the employee's motivation to deteriorate.

In the article by KT Kuntatyöntajat (2011) it is noted that a poor induction process will reduce work results and in turn can also harm customer satisfaction. For field sales agents and managers alike, it is crucial that the induction process provides clear knowledge about the practical side of their work as well.

While working at the case company, the researcher noticed that different sales agents adapted their own unique style in selling the products and service that Sector Alarm provides. Each sales agent had a different way to ask certain questions and the way they interacted with the customer in general varied as well. Some had a more direct and energetic approach whereas some were more calm and less direct. Of course each potential new customer reacted differently to different techniques and approaches so it was important that sales agents are able to adapt into various different people and situations.

During his employment at Sector Alarm, the researcher learned that, when a sales agent manages to find the ideal approach for each customer, it helps the sales agent to better understand that customer's needs and wants. As a result the chances to find a solution that satisfies both the sales agent and the customer is much higher, which in turn can increase customer satisfaction overall in the long run.

In addition to finding the ideal sales approach, it is also crucial that the sales agent can show the customer that they are highly familiar with the products and services they sell and that they are able to answer the customer's questions to the best of their abilities. This is when the induction process in particular comes to play, because if the sales agent shows a lack of expertise it is much harder to satisfy the customer's needs and gain their trust.

4.2 Performance management

In addition to the training provided by the sales coach and managers, new sales agents are given a handbook called the “abc of sales”. The handbook is meant to provide new employees with useful information on what are the most common questions and counter arguments that sales agents face from customers and what kind of questions the sales agent needs to ask as well. The handbook also helps sales agents to develop their own personalized sales pitch which may vary to some extent depends on type of customer the sales agent comes across. Below, Chart 2, shows among the questionnaire respondents in total, the amount of employees, who felt that they were given enough additional material regarding their work at Sector Alarm is 93 percent.

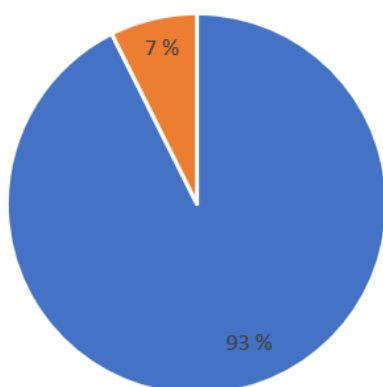


Chart 2. Satisfaction regarding additional training material

These results demonstrate that providing new sales employees with a handbook is an efficient way to reinforce the training that new employees receive from the sales coach and also the knowledge and skill received during the entire induction process. The researcher also felt that during his employment at the case company, the handbook provided valuable help learning how to interact with customers and how to approach certain situations in every day work.

4.3 Induction process

Based on the high satisfaction rate, it can be determined that the current induction programme at Sector Alarm is already well structured. However, based on the results of the questionnaire, some employees feel that the induction programme could be improved or changed in certain aspects. When asked what the employees felt that could be

improved in the current induction programme, the most common answer was that employees would like to have more practical and concrete aspects integrated in to the programme, especially in Step-1 of the programme. By doing this the case company could help further compliment some of the theory learned in the beginning of the induction process and give some employees a clearer and more practical picture about what the job itself is actually going to be like. An example of this is that new employees would go through a practise sales situation with the trainer or pair up with each other, so that they can get some sense about what a real sales situation can feel like and what it basically entails. Of course every sales situation can be different depending on the individual customer but having some basic idea and experience from a sales situation before the first proper day of work can help the employee to feel more relaxed.

The sales coach was also asked what he saw as some of the most common problems he faces when training new employees at the case company. The coach stated that various problems related to communication are the most common because often go through the same topic few times but some trainee's may have difficulties in understanding properly the theory side of the training. The most pressing reason for this is that every person has different views and experiences about sales work, which will affect the way they learn new things.

When asked what assistance the sales coach receives from the case company in training new employees he replied that there is a large amount of resources at his disposal for the training of new employees. He is free to use the office space at the case company headquarters or rent outside facilities if necessary. He also has a manager who over sees his work and supports and assists him when necessary. The coach also has an SWA team in Finland, which is supported by a Learning and Development manager. Additionally he receives regular training himself from Sector Alarm several times a year with internal and external courses.

When looking at improving the induction programme for sales personnel, the sales coach notes that the most important aspect that can be improved is the ability to measure the effects of the induction process and present the measured effects to the sales director.

5 CONCLUSIONS

As a natural part of its corporate culture, the case company seeks to continually improve the knowledge, understanding and commitment of its employees with the corporate business principles. It is clear at the case company that when employees are acquainted with the business principles as much as possible, all issues relating to their working environment and working safety as well, are much more convenient and understood. The more the employee knows about the company itself and that they can offer to their customers, the better and more efficient their skills are overall.

The main problem that some employees saw with the current induction programme was not the content or the amount of information given, but rather how the given information was presented during training. As mentioned earlier in this thesis every person learns best in a different way so it is always challenging for companies and trainers to find the best balance in how to communicate the necessary information to the employees during the induction process. Also some employees felt that the field sales manager should have provided more training instead of having to learn from other field sales agents, who work on commission because their work results may suffer because of the extra work they need to do.

The instructional plan and design matrix provided by Lawson (2006, 96) are valid methods and tools to take in consideration at the case company when doing further planning regarding the induction process, and in implementing the needed data that is collected in this research. The main findings that the researcher reached after doing the research and collecting all the data indicate that, enthusiasm and putting effort on developing various skills and learning more about different tasks helps an employee to become a true professional, and therefore the employee can become a highly valued asset in their organization. This effort needs to be given by the coaches and field managers, and both should be chosen throughout the evaluation of training and competency building.

As a conclusion, the current EIP process should be developed further to include more practical aspects that help reinforce the theory learned during training before new employees start their first day on field work. Additionally, some analysis of the new employee should be done by the field managers who mainly do the initial employee interview during the hiring process before starting the induction.

During the first induction day, the trainer needs to make sure that they clearly address all information regarding the sales work. When the induction takes place it would be effective that the trainer is at least somewhat aware of the new employee's previous experiences. It is also crucial for the trainer to remember that every new employee is going to learn in a different way from other employees. It would also be effective to implement a periodical evaluation of the training that the new employees receive and this evaluation could be given by the field sales personnel to their closest manager which is then handed forward. After this evaluation method steps in it would be effective for field sales managers to have a one-on-one evaluation discussion with new employees on their sales teams in every couple of months in order to help recognize areas that need more training.

Sector Alarm aims to constantly improve their functions and methods throughout the induction process and how the field work is conducted. Further research and collection of data is needed however to provide a more comprehensive and detailed picture on how the current induction programme could be further developed. The overall development of the current EIP process relies on the need of making more observations and having a greater amount of responses in the online questionnaire by the sales employees.

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Appendix 1. Survey questions/ Evaluation of induction.

These survey questions are designed for those employees whom have gone through at least through steps one and two of the SWA programme at Sector Alarm.

1. Valitse tehtävänimikkeesi? Choose your title?
2. Oliko sinulla tervetullut olo? Did you feel welcomed?
3. Oliko perehdytys valmisteltu mielestäsi hyvin? Was the orientation planned well?
4. Saitko materiaalia koskien yritystä/ työtapoja yms? Did you receive materials of relevant literature, such as company's employee handbook, operation manuals etc.?
5. Kouluttajani selitti minulle selkeästi mitä työnkuvaani sisältyy? My trainer clearly reviewed my formal job description?
6. Saitko tilaisuuden tutustua muihin työntekijöihin koulutuksen aikana ja miten? Were you able to meet other new employees?
7. Perehdytettiinkö sinut mielestäsi selkeästi itse työhön? Jos ei, miksi? Were you given clear instruction or training for your job assignment? If not, why?
8. Minulle kerrottiin työajoista, vaatetuspolitiikasta, sairaspöissaoloista ja muista käytännön asioista? Office hours, dress code, sick leave and other policies were explained to me?
9. Minulla oli mahdollisuus esittää kysymyksiä? I had opportunities to ask questions?
10. Viikon kuluttua tunsin olevani osaa tiimiä? I felt like a member of the 'team' after one week? If not, why?
11. Mitä kouluttajasi teki mielestäsi hyvin? What did the trainer do well in the orientation?
12. Miten perehdytys on vaikuttanut asiakkaiden kanssa toimimiseesi? How has the orientation affected your interaction with clients?
13. Koitko Step-1 koulutuksen hyödylliseksi myyntityösi kannalta ja miten? Do you feel that Step-1 of the programme was useful for your performance in sales?
14. Miten paranaisit jo saatua perehdytystä? How would you improve the induction process?

Appendix 2 Coach questions

1. Minkälaisia perehdyttämisen ongelmia olet kohdannut työssäsi? What are the possible and typical obstacles you face while conducting induction program?
2. Minkäläisiä kommunikaatiovaikeuksia olet kohdannut perehdyttämisessä? How does communication break-down influence the effectiveness of induction program?
3. Mitä pidät perehdyttämistehtävästäsi? Onko perehdyttäminen mielestäsi stressaavaa, miksi? How do you enjoy your induction task?
4. Minkälaista apua saat työhösi? (koulutusta, tiloja, työaikaa ym.) Do you receive any resources from the organization for your task? What are they? (courses, facilities, time) Saatko yritykseltäsi apua perehdyttämiseen?
5. Onko perehdytyksessä mielestäsi kehitettävää? Is there anything that could be improved in the current induction programme in your opinion?