



Ensuring High Employee Performance

Logistics Coordinators' Training Process Optimization

Maria Niinimaa

BACHELOR'S THESIS

November 2021

Degree Programme in International Business
Supply Chain Management

ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in International Business
Supply Chain Management

NIINIMAA, MARIA

Ensuring High Employee Performance: Logistics Coordinators' Training Process Optimization

Bachelor's thesis 58 pages, appendices 9 pages
November 2021

This thesis has been created for the use of a commissioner which by their request remains anonymous throughout the process. The commissioner is a large international company that has spread agencies to multiple countries around Europe and non-EU countries. The company has operated for few decades with successful results and rapid growth. They employ personnel from various professional backgrounds with certain skill sets.

One of the commissioner's core business functions is logistics. Once a new logistics coordinator trainee enters the company, they are introduced with a vast number of concepts, tasks, terms and technical functions. During the first few weeks of an intensive onboarding process the logistics coordinator trainee is expected to learn the topics on a basic level which eases landing to the actual work position. Learning continues actively in the daily work.

Successful training increases employee retention and satisfaction to their work. The objective of this thesis is to optimize the training process of logistics coordinators at the commissioner company. A qualitative and quantitative research is conducted to locate inefficiencies and well-functioning areas of the current training process. Interview and survey have been conducted in commissioner's logistics unit with company representatives. Theories, such as active training and OJT from literature and various online resources are applied into the project of developing efficient learning methods. Alternative ways of training process are presented to ease the role of an inductor which allows more than one designated person to share the responsibility of trainee onboarding.

Based on empirical research and theory, a potential standardized training program has been developed. This training program consists of a feedback form, OJT design and tutor program. The commissioner is guided through the application of the new optimized training program. This thesis creates value for the commissioner by suggesting this method to eliminate harmful effects of an inefficient training program.

Key words: onboarding, training, induction, logistics, supply chain management, optimization

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	6
2	THESIS PLAN	7
2.1	Thesis topic	7
2.2	Thesis purpose, objective and research questions	8
2.3	Key concepts.....	9
2.3.1	Logistics, SCM & outbound distribution	9
2.3.2	Logistics coordinator.....	9
2.3.3	Onboarding process	10
2.3.4	Training continuum	11
2.4	Theories for efficient induction	12
2.4.1	Active training	12
2.4.2	On-the-Job training model	14
2.5	Data collection methods	15
2.6	Thesis structure.....	16
3	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	17
3.1	Commissioner	17
3.1.1	Current practices	17
3.2	Link between training and performance	18
3.3	Assessing current training	19
3.4	Setting active training objectives	21
4	DATA ANALYSIS.....	23
4.1	Research objectives.....	23
4.2	Research plan and conduction.....	24
4.2.1	Limitations	25
4.3	Logistics coordinator trainees	25
4.4	Inductor	29
4.5	Summary of data analysis.....	32
4.6	Validity and reliability.....	34
4.7	SWOT-analysis	34
5	TRAINING PROCESS OPTIMIZATION.....	37
5.1	Feedback: tool in tracking employee learning	37
5.2	OJT design & standardized tutor program	38
5.3	Action plan summary.....	40
5.4	Inductor and tutor incentives	42
6	CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS	44
7	REFLECTION	47

REFERENCES	48
APPENDICES	50
Appendix 1. Interview Questions for Inductor	50
Appendix 2. Onboarding Experience: Survey Questions for Employees 51	
Appendix 3. Feedback Tool	53
Appendix 4. OJT Design	57

GLOSSARY

SCM	Supply Chain Management
OJT	On-the-Job Training
ROI	Return of Investment
HRM	Human Resource Management

Word “they” has been partially used to describe a person in singular to retain gender neutrality.

1 INTRODUCTION

Continuous training is a fundamental area of an individual's professional development in modern, continuously changing and quickly developing business environment. Successful training has a direct positive impact on company performance. It is essential for companies to frequently map the need for training in their units, create plans for training conduction and setting learning objectives for employees. The first weeks and months are critical in onboarding a new team member. Onboarding is a process in which a new employee is introduced to their task and company culture. The aim of an onboarding is to usher the trainee in becoming a productive team member in a short time frame. Effective training benefits an organization with lower rates in turnover which has a direct impact to saving costs in recruiting and training (Davila & Pina-Ramirez 2018, 1). The commissioner of this thesis is a large, international organization which owns a great asset: Employees with various skillsets.

Skills can be learned by gathering experience at daily work, but the first months are crucial for a new trainee to learn basic skills to be able to work independently and finding their place in the organization. Successful onboarding can avail the trainee in feeling confident in their new position and finding purpose in their daily tasks. In addition to role-specific onboarding process, general training can help the trainee to better understand company values, visions and purpose. Onboarding is not only learning to work, but also the first touchpoint to an organization's environment and culture (Davila & Pina-Ramirez 2018, 1). Onboarding is an important starting line for each trainee, but authentic learning requires ongoing training throughout the career. Assessing training needs and applying a standardized training program to company's processes are necessary to ensure training success and reduce employee dissatisfaction (Lawson 2015, 267).

Acknowledging these social, financial and performance related effects of employee training, the commissioning company is ready to participate in a development project. As the company is large with a great number of employees with different backgrounds, it encourages the organization to keep an eye on trainee onboarding and training satisfaction levels and act upon emerged inefficiencies in the current process.

2 THESIS PLAN

This section of the thesis covers thesis topic, topic background, thesis purpose, objective and research questions. Key concepts and theories of active learning and OJT, which are applied to the research, will be introduced. For data collection, qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used and are further described in this section.

2.1 Thesis topic

The core topics of this thesis are onboarding a new logistics coordinator and process optimization of training. As for the background of the thesis topics, it has been initiated by an author who has been serving as a seasonal employee at the commissioner company as an outbound logistics coordinator. The author has taken part in onboardings in the beginning of each seasonal employment period and worked full-time with specific countries' logistics operations as a substituting employee. When attending the first onboarding, the author had minor experience in the field of logistics. One year later the author attended onboarding with mainly identical contents for the second time with previously accumulated experience, advanced skills and knowledge. Second participation allowed the author to observe the onboarding process and training from the perspective of an advanced employee and compare it with the first-year experience.

Thanks to the opportunity of taking part of the onboarding two times, the author has discovered areas of improvement in the logistics coordinator onboarding and training process. An onboarding forms a bridge between the new employee and the organization. A successful onboarding process provides necessary tools for a new employee that they can apply to the daily work. An optimal training will create sense of security in the beginning of one's new career. The onboarding and continuous training shall serve the organization efficiently with minimum burden caused and with successful results. The commissioning company has approved this thesis topic and sees the potential in training process development.

The following issues, which have surfaced in the beginning of the thesis process based on general discussions with team members are investigated further:

- New employees adopt and learn on different levels. Some trainees need notably more support than others, yet the current onboarding session has the same contents for everyone.
- Onboardings are currently causing additional burden for the inductor during and after the onboarding session. Only one inductor is currently assigned to arrange onboardings.

2.2 Thesis purpose, objective and research questions

The purpose of this thesis is to ease and enhance the onboarding learning process and training of a new logistics coordinator and to reduce burden of an inductor. The objective is to create optimized training program for the commissioner and to increase inductor capacity by providing alternative training methods.

Research questions are derived from thesis purpose and objective. This thesis aims to answer following research question:

“How to optimize the current training process of logistics coordinators?”

Following sub-questions support in answering the principal research question:

“Which areas of the current training process need improvement?”

“How are the new training methods applied in the commissioner’s use?”

The aim of this thesis is to add value to commissioner company’s operations by reducing the pressure caused by the training process and diminishing a risk of employee dissatisfaction and turnover that can be resulted by flaws in training process. Adaptation of new training program and methods intends to boost trainees’, inductors’, and logistics unit’s motivation.

2.3 Key concepts

Key concepts of a thesis formulate the foundation for the research. In the following sub-chapters, the concepts of a logistics coordinator and an onboarding process are encapsulated. Familiarizing to the concepts will help understanding them in the research context.

2.3.1 Logistics, SCM & outbound distribution

Logistics process consists of multiple stages from the acquisition of a material, storing and finally shipping the material onwards to the receiving customer. At the commissioner company, purchasing and inbound teams select material suppliers by determining their time and cost effectiveness in aim to import the goods to the company's own warehouse (Kenton 2020). Once goods have been acquired from the supplier and stored to a warehouse, the next step is transporting the goods to the end customer. The process of goods exiting the warehouse to the final destination belongs to outbound logistics team (Lopienski 2020).

Supply chain management (SCM) is a term to describe the entire life cycle of a product from its producing to end customer receiving it. Supply chain is a multi-stationary process which includes several people and entities working to ensure a seamless flow from the start to the end of a product's life cycle (Kenton 2021).

2.3.2 Logistics coordinator

Outbound logistics coordinator's responsibility is coordination and monitoring company's purchase and sales orders in the state of dispatch. Once an order from a customer is received by the supplying company the requested products are packed at the commissioner's warehouse. The coordinator observes the delivery progress closely to ensure the shipment is well received at the customer sight. Logistics coordinator communicates with freight forwarders. Other daily contacts are company agents around the globe, warehouse personnel, end customers and colleagues in the team. Logistics coordinator is not usually physically

present at a warehouse but administrates the logistics processes through enterprise resource planning software such as SAP and the companies' private transportation portals.

Logistics coordinator is arranging shipments with different modes of transportation. These modes are by ocean, air, rail and road. Other tasks of a coordinator are invoicing, solving tickets that are usually created due to an issue with a delivery and keeping an eye on key performance indicators. Ideal characteristics of a logistics coordinator are ability to perceive large entireties, to prioritize, to perform under pressure in a fast phased work environment, to continuously adapt new working methods, being highly organized and having a will to develop. Good communication skills and mastering languages is a virtue. Per se, English is used as a working language. Excellent teamworking skills and ability to seamlessly communicate with several culture representatives in international surroundings are in a core of a successful logistics coordinator career.

2.3.3 Onboarding process

Onboarding process is the first touch point to the organization for an entering employee. An onboarding process is typically a short period of time which includes the introduction of technical information and theory. Relevant tools and applications for daily work are presented. The goal of an onboarding is to get a trainee familiarized with the key concepts and tasks with the constant help of an inductor. A successful onboarding process allows the new employee to adapt their daily tasks faster and work independently. It also gives inductor insight of gaps in employees' skills (ExactHire n.d.).

An entering employee can be onboarded generally or role-specifically. General onboarding focuses on introducing company itself. This introduction is given to every employee from trainees to managers. General onboarding usually contains information about universal topics of an organization, such as history, values, goals and code of conduct. During this session a new employee will be provided with a set of information that will help understanding the company-wide basic practicalities. Role-specific onboarding focuses on teaching specific tasks,

knowledge and skill for an employee that has been selected for a certain work position (Davila & Pina-Ramirez 2018, 1).

2.3.4 Training continuum

After onboarding week is completed, the trainee is faced with all the discussed topics concretely. Starting new career can be exciting but on the other hand the amount of information can be overwhelming in addition of knowing the responsibility that each employee bares in logistics. Onboarding period has provided the trainee basic skills and knowledge but during the onboarding week the new information is applied in real work scenarios only a little or not at all. Right after onboarding at the commissioner company, a trainee is either helping the entire team with non-regulated tasks, assigned to take care of specific counties' logistics tasks as the "country responsible" or performing as a seasonal worker and learning specific countries' logistics with a full-time employee in preparation of substitution period. The commissioner company offers some online trainings which primarily focus on company-wide topics. Additional trainings regarding logistics systems and concepts are optional per se and take place irregularly. Currently trainings are provided online as most of the employees are working from home.

Onboarding is an accelerator for further learning in the work. Companies acknowledging the direct impact of training has increased as today's demanding and ever-changing work climate calls for training continuum. As employees are the main resource in creating results, upskilling and reskilling organization's members insures companies' future success. Continuous training will increase an employee's sense of validity thus improving loyalty and increasing employee retention rate. As an employee is trained, personal learning objectives can be assessed. The met goals induce a will to learn more (GetSmarter 2021).

Feedback is in a centrum of professional development. Poor team and employee performance can be a sum of many different factors from insufficiency of skills and confidence, lack of goals and purpose to poor communication within a team. If an employee faces a lack of motivation, the root cause can be unclear from even person's own perspective. These causes can be rooted by having frequent

feedback sessions which can be organized as a confidential event. When the causes for performance issues are located, the need for designated trainings can be better understood. A foundation for improving performance is determining clearly what is expected from an employee. Frequent feedback and training are not limited to the employees only but are as important for company management (Lawson 2015, 17).

2.4 Theories for efficient induction

The following chapters introduce the theories applied to the research.

2.4.1 Active training

Active training is a method that emphasizes on the positive effect on learning when a learner is actively involved mentally and practically to the training process. According to Silberman, Biech and Auerbach, active training is happening when the learner takes an active role in adapting new information. Traditionally the roles of inductor and learner are distinctive. Typically, the inductor is the person introducing and explaining the new topic whereas the learners listen and try to absorb the information. Active training encourages the learner to acquire new information and not only receiving it (Silberman et al. 2015, 1). As the commissioner's inductor has worked in the organization for a longer period, it is natural for them to present the information from their personal perspective as "obvious" which can unintentionally lead to learner passivation. When new information is displayed and explained, the receiving person can process it only partially and will forget parts of the training. Active training's aim is to create clear purpose and objectives for the learner to pursue which eliminates the risk of solely leaning on inductor's presentation and memorizing information on surface level (Silberman et al. 2015, 5).

Training does not only include the intensive onboarding week but continues throughout the entire career. Training and learning new information regularly in the fast-evolving work environment can awaken negative and burdening feelings in an employee. When a person is obligated to choose between learning and growing versus safety and familiarity, the latter can feel more tempting. Basic

human psychology explains the need for safety and belonging. Therefore, training in groups or pairs of colleagues incentivises a person to learn with close support. Social learning groups offers optimal environment for active learning to thrive as the participants are solving a problem together and teaching each other (Silberman et al. 2015, 7).

Active training can be delivered in person or digitally. As the global pandemic Covid-19 has limited organizations' possibilities of being physically at the office space, flexible and innovative trainings are adapted. Today, a learner has greater possibilities to choose the ways they are studying. Active learning eliminates linear classroom teaching setup, which handles the topics in a specific order. Active learning switches the power to choose for the learner who can decide what materials are studied and in which order. This method is present in e-learning which is getting more common in large organizations to cut training time and costs (Silberman et al. 2015, 11).

Active training method switches teaching responsibility to the learners themselves, but it does not mean the role of an inductor is less important. Inductor is usually one of the first company representative new employees come across in the beginning of their careers. The inductor has a great impact on how the new trainees perceive the organization. An ideal beginning of one's career is as organized and hassle-free as possible. In addition to initiating the onboarding and learning process, mental encouragement and a sense of recognition for the new employee provides them a welcomed feeling. An effective onboarding is connected to employee engagement and therefore shall not be seen as a quick event to be completed but more like a process which determines a team's efficiency and coherency (Silberman et al. 2015, 362).

Active training has been selected as an applicable theory for this thesis as the field of expertise demand practicality and employee's active contribution in learning to work efficiently. Active training is a modern and flexible teaching and learning method suitable for today's fast paced and development driven business environment. Constant need for professional development is calling for modern teaching methods which motivates a team and an individual to expand their skill set without feeling pushed or anxious to process new information non-stop.

2.4.2 On-the-Job training model

According to Lawson (2015, 267), on-the-job training (OJT) model's fundamental purpose is to eliminate common yet inefficient training methods. As discussed in the previous chapter of active training model, the traditional layout in training is an experienced employee explaining topics to the trainees. While working, a similar layout takes place when a trainee tries to learn by watching and imitating an experienced employee. A misconception of expecting a trainee to learn the job well by "just doing it" will result dissatisfaction and lower employee engagement. Instead, an efficient training process includes well defined steps to complement adult's learning. Haphazard and non-standardized training also exposes for higher chance of errors, low productivity and overall frustration for the inductor and the trainee. OJT is a standardized process of teaching an employee new skills and knowledge. It is a one-on-one setup with an inductor and a trainee. Each OJT session has a designated start and end time. OJT model can be applied in various training situations from new employee training to additional training for experienced employees. Training is frequently needed in modern business environment as processes are improved, technology is upgraded continuously, new tasks emerge and old processes are abandoned (Lawson 2015, 267).

An inductor does not have to be the most experienced employee at the office. The working manner of a person that has served a company for several years is effortless, quick and surely admirable for a new employee. The setup of an experienced employee showing their working methods for a trainee will leave behind blank areas in memory. OJT model suggests that an inductor shall be passionate about their work, they know their work tasks well, have good communication and empathy skills and are able to be organized and stay in certain time frame with the training. These personal skills are supported with a training plan developed to serve certain company and training situations well. Keeping track on progress and pinpointing easy and difficult subjects enables both inductor and trainee to understand the learning objectives clearly with less confusion and forgetting topics that will result difficulties later at work (Lawson 2015, 270). This plan is applied to commissioner company context in chapter 5.

2.5 Data collection methods

Data will be collected by sharing a survey to commissioner company's employees who have taken part in onboarding during recent months or years. Google Forms has been used to collect survey responses. In addition, one inductor is interviewed to broaden understanding from their point of view. Analysing both survey results and interview comments, the data is combined and used in uncovering current optimal and weak areas as well as finding new perspective to process optimization.

Interview is a qualitative research method. In this thesis a semi-structured interview has been completed with the company outbound logistics unit inductor. The aim has been to amass data with questions prepared beforehand. Semi-structured interview is discussion driven and allows the participants to present new topics and questions that are not pre-planned. Questions exist to give direction, help staying focused and prevents interviewer in forgetting important topics. Qualitative research methods may likely lead to nuanced information. This means the answer is not a "yes or no" but has many aspects to it. Rich information is desirable and can be gathered by asking the interviewee to elaborate on their responses (Evers & Boer 2012, 31). Interviewee shall keep research questions in mind throughout the interview process as the ultimate goal is to find answers to help formulating a solution to them (Evers & Boer 2012, 58).

Survey is a quantitative research method. In this thesis a survey has been conducted among employees that have entered the company in the recent months or years and who have taken part in the same onboarding. The survey's aim is to collect data by looking into statistics of the respondents. Averages and patterns can be drawn from the survey results (Bhandari 2020). The survey created for this thesis has scaled questions as well as few open-ended questions.

2.6 Thesis structure

Chapter two has introduced thesis topic, purpose, objective, research questions, key concepts and applicable theories. This chapter's purpose is to familiarize the reader generally with the themes and topics handled throughout the project. Chapter three forms a theoretical framework for the project by discussing commissioner company's business environment, current training practicalities and deepens the concept of an efficient training. Applicable theories are discussed in depth and are encapsulated for easier application later in solution creation phase.

In chapter four, qualitative and quantitative research data of an interview and group survey is introduced and analysed. Chapter five focuses on offering the commissioner company solutions to optimize the current training program. The employee's current experience of onboarding and working as a new trainee provides data that will be utilized in the creation process of an efficient training. The final chapter six concludes the thesis and offers recommendations. At the very end of this thesis, the author provides a reflective section to describe the flow of work and thoughts about thesis process successes and areas of improvement.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter focuses on describing the commissioner company more in detail and discusses about their current practices. This chapter creates the theoretical framework for the study. The theoretical framework eases solution creation and answering of the research questions later in chapter 5.

3.1 Commissioner

As indicated in the very beginning of this thesis, the commissioner of this project has expressed their wish to remain anonymous. In respect of the company's request, commissioner description and direct referencing to business sector, features and areas are limited. This, however, will not disturb the study as a type of thesis topic is chosen that can be handled without heavy censoring. The commissioning company has several agencies around the world and employs a large number of employees. The industry is widely branched and offers work for professionals with different educational backgrounds and skillsets. Commissioner's logistics unit, in which this thesis concentrates to, consists of twenty plus employees.

3.1.1 Current practices

Logistics is one of the key functions at the commissioner company. Logistics coordinators are grouped into inbound and outbound teams. The tasks of these two groups differ slightly. It is to be emphasized, that this thesis focuses on the outbound logistics operations. The coordinators daily work consists of tasks described in chapter 2.3.2. Throughout the outbound shipping process, the coordinator will be in contact with freight forwarders, such as DHL, FedEx, Kuehne & Nagel etc. At the commissioner, all typical modes of transportation are in use. This includes shipments by air, ocean, rail and road. If any issues emerge during the transportation process, the coordinator will aid in finding fast and feasible solutions via taxi companies.

The current general onboarding process at the commissioner for outbound logistics coordinators is in total six working days. The general onboarding is a short

and intensive period which purpose is to familiarize a new employee with basic daily tasks. Topics covered during this time are for example, different order types, incoterms, export documentation, delivery monitoring, booking system training, SAP transactions, invoicing and navigating in all daily applications and systems. In addition to theoretical introduction, trainees have a chance to complete few practical tasks such as transportation bookings in the system. On top of technical onboarding, the trainee will meet new colleagues and have a chance to introduce themselves in the work community. During the pandemic, trainees have participated in daily team meetings online as majority of the employees work from home. As onboarding takes place physically in company premises, the inductor is the first company representative they meet face-to-face (excluding the interviewing managers).

After the current onboarding process, the trainee will be assigned to miscellaneous tasks or to substitute a full-time employee during a vacation season. These seasons usually take place during summers. Great amount of responsibility is handed over to a new employee relatively quickly after entering the office. Few team members are available in office but majority of them can be contacted via Microsoft Teams as they are working remotely. Help is always available but as all employees, including the inductor, have their own responsibility areas, interruptions for offering help in some extent might result additional burden.

3.2 Link between training and performance

“In an ever changing and fast paced corporate world, training and development is an indispensable function.” (Chopra 2015).

Digitalisation has changed the working environment profoundly from routine heavy to fast evolving and changing. The change requires a modern approach in employee training. As technology plays a key role in nearly every sector today, a business's productivity is leaning on operating systems, applications, master data etc. Above all, savvy employees are companies' primary virtue. Businesses value an individual's ability to work independently and being self-driven. As proper training is provided, an individual will have more courage to fulfil these traits. It enables

an employee to think critically and to even provide development ideas for business procedures. Efficient training transforms into high employee performance. Therefore, companies shall map their training program and evaluate the process' efficiency from time to time and make the needed upgrades. Training objectives and outcomes shall be assessed tangibly in a similar manner as business results and performance. As training has a heavy impact to company's overall productivity, it should be valued (Chopra 2015).

3.3 Assessing current training

Return of investment (ROI) means that a company has invested in resources at a certain business area and is expecting something in return. ROI measured target could be a newly purchased machine that is expected to improve daily production or investing in developing training programs for employees in expectation of higher performance (Mayhew 2020). In addition to using ROI in assessing monetary gains, it can be used to evaluate process effectiveness. Pre and post assessments of a training process helps to map employee needs and the success of a training program. Pre assessment aids in determining training topics that are incorporated in the training of a certain group or an individual. Post assessment of a training can be conducted by distributing a survey or having a feedback session. These methods can be used to measure the actual ROI of a training program (Staron 2018).

Training is often not linked with company's key performance indicators when assessing the overall results and can be excluded from a strategy. The topics to be taught might be chosen by management and the learners themselves do not have options to choose what will be studied and when. If the need for training is mapped, outcome of a training is likely more successful and desirable for learner, inductor and management. In addition to need, the current potential and skillset assessment will help in defining appropriate training for a group or an individual. The final design of a training can be complemented with research data information about the training participants (Silberman et al. 2015, 19). Following figure illustrates the core information to be taken into account when designing a training.

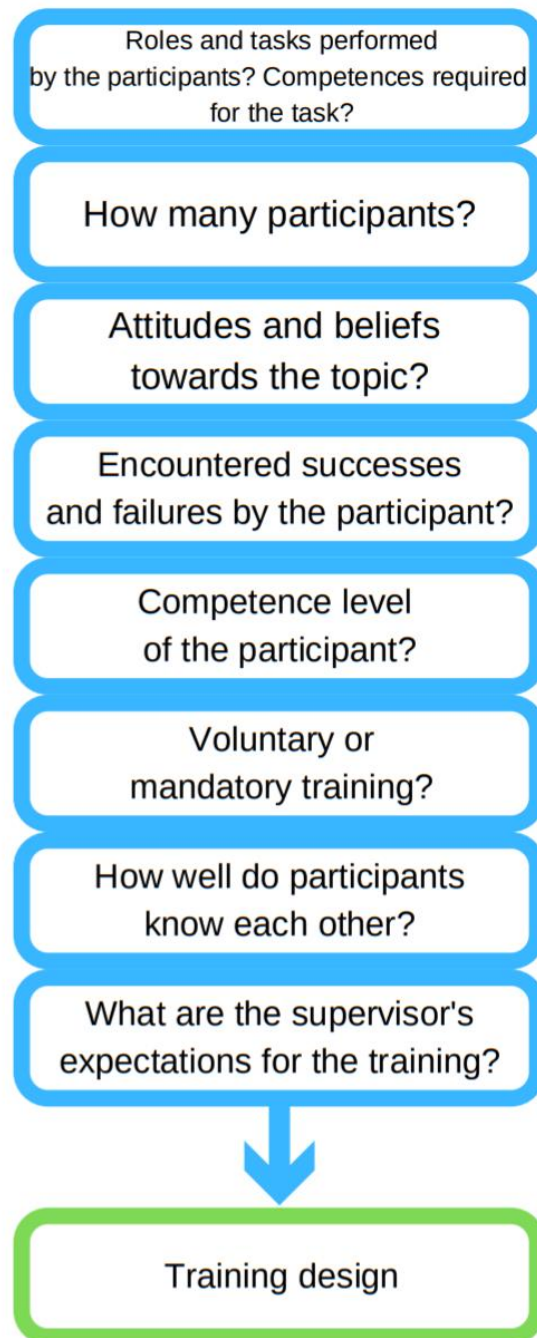


FIGURE 1: Participant assessment for designing efficient training program (Silberman et al. 2015, 19)

Performance issues are not always due to weaknesses in the training. Lack of clear expectations and feedback of performance, lack of tools and resources, poor incentives to do the work and employee's skills not matching with the work

position are all to be taken into account when mapping root causes for unsatisfactory work results. Pinpointing the root cause might save resources by determining if training is a suitable solution to the situation.

3.4 Setting active training objectives

When training participant assessment has been completed and the inductor is familiarized with the trainees' features, next step is to plan a suitable active training program. Instead of listing topics that will be covered during training, the topics to be taught are viewed as achievements in the end of each training program. Sense of direction and accomplishing is in a core of active training. Active training objectives require ability for long-term planning as each step of a training is building a new talented professional who will have notable effect on company results. If an objective is missing, the core purpose of the training is unclear which can result overlooking of topics. Limiting the number of objectives assigned for one training program prevents the blurring of the goal. Too many goals diminish the meaning of them for the inductor and learner (Silberman et al. 2015, 44-46).

Lawson (2015, 85) encapsulates the concept of setting learning objectives as planning a trip somewhere. Objective is the place the participants want to go. A plan for a trip is necessary. Tools, such as map, or in training context teaching methods and training materials, assists in achieving the final destination (Lawson 2015, 85). As the participants are assessed properly (Figure 1.) the training objectives can be created to best serve the learner and not only get listed by the inductor. The ultimate aim is to determine, what exactly is expected of the learner to understand after the training without only going through topics monotonically. Three main categories of training goals are attitude, skill and knowledge development. Attitude objectives focus on mental development and train an employee to react a certain way to a phenomenon that awakens feelings. Setting skill objectives is aimed to help an employee to learn a work task or doing something. Skill training results are easier to measure than attitude related training results. Knowledge objectives are set to develop employee's thinking and cognitive learning. Cognitive learning means an individual's ability to analyse, comprehend and apply the newly learned information.

A carefully built training program will standardize in the company's use over time. Standardized training program further improves employee performance. Successful training results can be a company's strength when recruiting new employees and further developing current employees (Lawson 2015, 86). Positive results of an efficient training program can inspire potential work force to reach out for new career possibilities and it creates convincing image of the organization. Company performance and reputation walk hand in hand.

4 DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the research results gathered from qualitative interview and quantitative survey conducted in the commissioner company's logistics unit. Primary research data is in a core of the research. Combined with thesis theories, an efficient solution can be formulated.

4.1 Research objectives

These research questions are presented in chapter 2.2:

“How to optimize the current training process of logistics coordinators?”

“Which areas of the current training process need improvement?”

The objective of the qualitative interview is to locate the efficiencies and inefficiencies in the commissioner's current onboarding process from the point of view of an inductor. The objective of the quantitative survey distributed for commissioner's logistics unit employees is planned to pinpoint areas that work well in the current onboarding process and which areas need to be developed from trainees' point of view. The information collected from all participants will create an overall image of the current training situation. The research gives insight to the experiences of new trainees, and they can be contrasted with the inductors view on the current state of a training program. The collected information is analysed and used in choosing the solutions for training program development together with theoretical framework.

Survey has been conducted anonymously which has given participants a chance to give honest feedback and comments without external pressure. The respondents of the survey as well as interviewed inductor have been informed, that their name nor references to their current position will not be published in this thesis. Honest and unbiased research environment ensures the production of reliable data and eases the creation of a suitable solution. Thesis research questions have been created before research conduction to provide a foundation for the entire research process.

4.2 Research plan and conduction

The following step after setting research objectives is research plan. The plan begins with deciding which research methods will be used to collect primary data. Semi-structured interview as qualitative research method was selected to be conducted with the commissioner's logistics unit inductor. This method was particularly selected as it allows ideal setup for open conversation. The interview contains eight pre-planned questions which allows the author to remain focused in the principal topics. It is natural and ideal for the conversation to flow from a topic to another which are not planned to be covered beforehand. The author and the inductor are colleagues and therefore are familiar with each other. The inductor has had a chance to familiarize themselves with the interview questions before agreed interviewing date. Interview questions (Appendix 1) were created based on the thesis research questions in aim to find answers and alternative perspectives to the issues. One person, the inductor, has been interviewed. The interview has been conducted via Microsoft Teams and has been recorded for thesis purposes only.

For the collection of quantitative research data, a Google Forms survey platform has been selected. The target group for the survey is commissioner's logistics unit employees who have served in the company for maximum two years. Respondents are limited to the "newer" employees as they are likely to remember their personal onboarding and training process better than employees with multiple years of experience. As the respondents have taken part of the onboarding during recent months or years, they have been onboarded by the inductor who has been interviewed for this thesis. From fifteen employees who have received invitation to participate in the survey, eleven have responded. The timespan from opening the survey to closing has been two weeks. Survey link (Appendix 2.) has been distributed to the respondent candidates via email. The Google Forms survey includes eleven questions from which eight are scaled questions. The respondent is given with instructions to choose the best describing option from the scale. The lowest option (one) means that the presented claim does not describe the respondent at all. The highest option (seven) means that the claim describes the respondent well. The last three questions are open-ended, where the respondent is given a possibility to type an answer. The survey has been directly

forwarded to the logistics unit employees' emails by the author, as the author has access to company network.

4.2.1 Limitations

Due to thesis schedule, project outcome cannot be applied to company's use during thesis creation timeframe. The commissioner is welcome to exploit the thesis in their future processes but result data of an optimized training program is not included to this thesis. As new employees are not onboarded during the thesis creation at the commissioner, it is not possible to apply research solutions into practice.

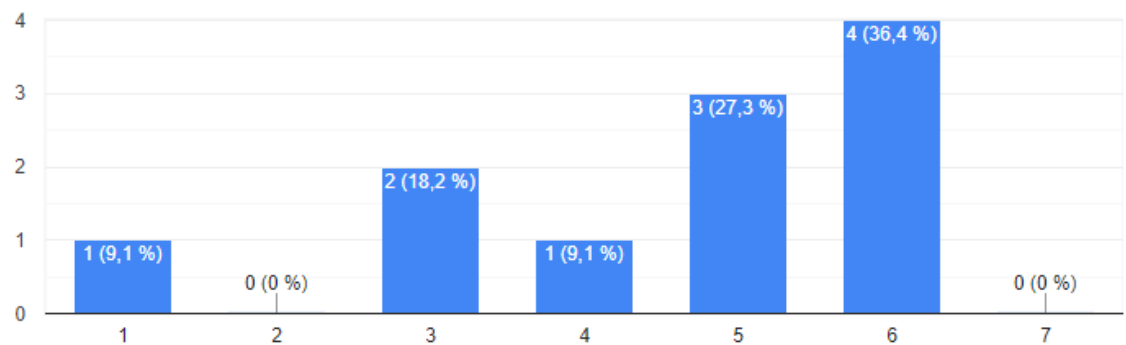
As the author of this thesis is a member of the commissioner company, it can provide strengths throughout the research project. However, personal connection to the work community and relationships to respondents may create an environment for biased view on certain topics which is difficult to pinpoint by the author. As author has own experiences, attitudes and preferences, they can be mirrored in certain parts of this thesis unintentionally. Objectivity is preserved to the best of ability.

4.3 Logistics coordinator trainees

This section summarizes the quantitative research results of the survey. Out of fifteen logistics coordinator trainee candidates, eleven has responded the survey. The respondents have participated in onboarding process hosted by the inductor, who has been interviewed for this thesis. The respondents have taken part in onboarding during recent months or within two recent years. Please see Appendix 2. for survey instructions and questions.

According to the study's open-ended question section, respondents have been working in the field of logistics between one to seven years. The respondent average of working in logistics is 2,7 years. First, respondents were asked if they have learned the basics of the job well during one-week onboarding. See picture below.

1. I learned basics of the job well during the one-week onboarding.

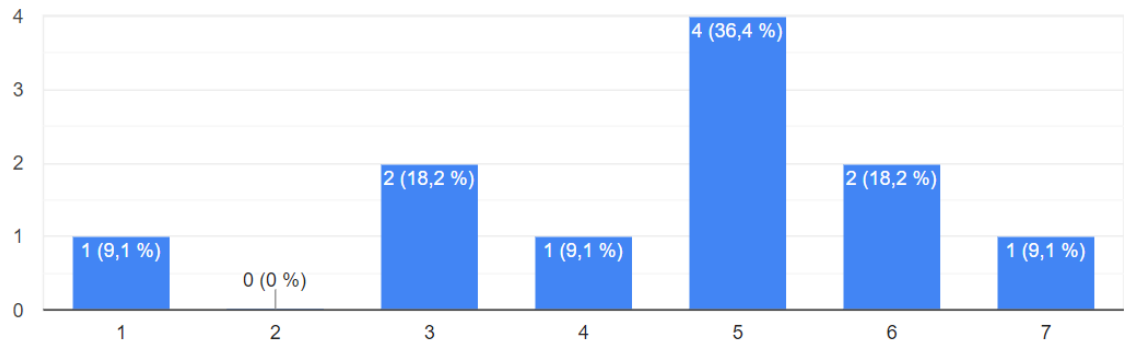


PICTURE 1. Level of trainees' learning the basics of the job during one-week onboarding (11 responses).

36,4% of respondents have selected second highest option 6. Rest of the respondents have selected below option 6. Dispersion occurs in second question when asked if making connections between topics and forming a "big picture" was easy. This figure is the first one to indicate the difference in levels of learning.

In third question, respondents were asked if training materials used in the onboarding were easy to follow. 45% of respondents have experienced that the training materials used in the onboarding have been clear and easy to follow by selecting the third highest option 5. 27,3% respondents have selected option 6 and the rest below option 5. This indicates that the quality of onboarding materials is on a satisfactory level. Fourth question, dispersion occurs when asked if onboarding contained enough practical exercises. See picture below. This figure indicates that respondents have either had unequal chance for practical exercises or the respondents need a different amount of them.

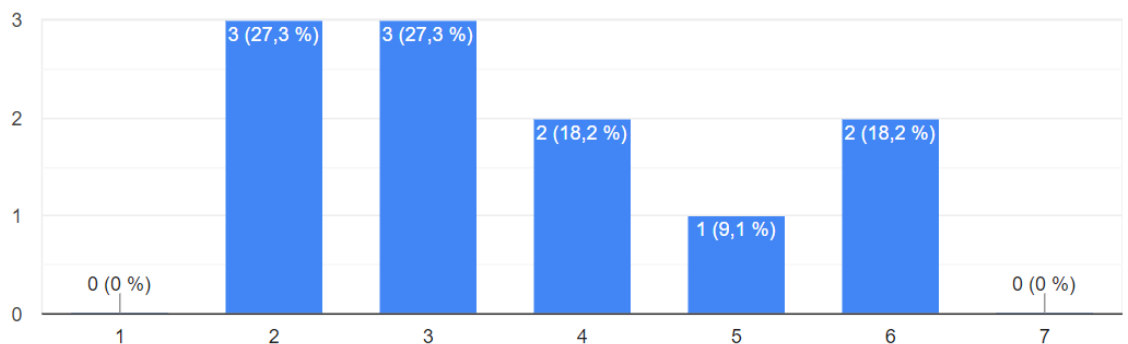
4. Onboarding contained enough practical exercises.



PICTURE 2. Trainees' opinions on having enough practical exercises in the onboarding (eleven responses).

Fifth question, all the respondents have selected rather evenly between highest options 5 to 7 when asked if the speech of an inductor has been easy to follow. This indicates that most of the respondents are content with the quality of inductor's teaching. Sixth question, 81,8% of respondents have selected the highest option 7 when asked if they had a chance to interact and ask questions during the onboarding. 18,2% have selected the second highest option 6. This indicates a good level of communication and dialogue in the onboarding. Seventh question, dispersion occurs when asked if they were confident in beginning to work in the real job after onboarding. See picture below.

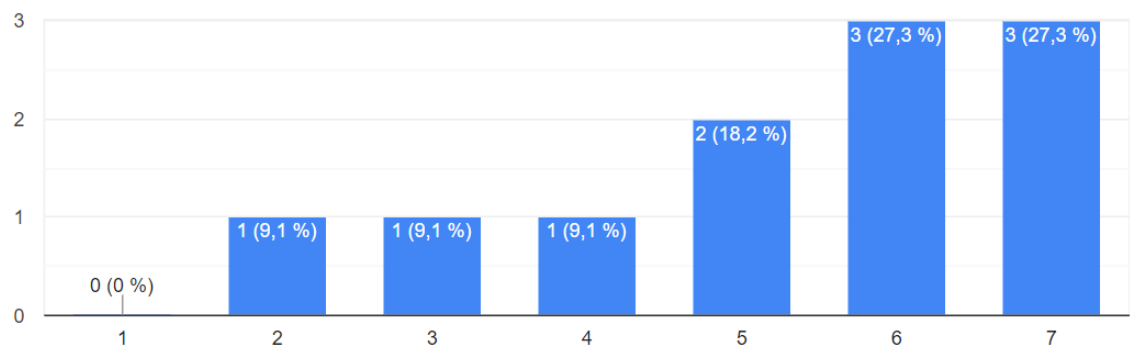
7. I felt confident to start the real work after the one-week onboarding.



PICTURE 3. Trainees' level of confidence in beginning to work in the real job after onboarding (eleven responses).

This figure indicates that majority of respondents do not feel confident in the beginning of their career which leads to the next issue. Eighth and final scaled question, dispersion occurs when asked if they felt the need to ask help frequently from colleagues during the first weeks/ months after the onboarding. See picture below.

8. During the first weeks / months after onboarding, I felt that I needed support and help from others frequently.



PICTURE 4. Trainee's level of need for guidance after onboarding in the beginning of their career (eleven responses).

This figure indicates a need for additional guidance after onboarding.

The rest three questions are open-ended. Respondents have had a possibility to propose development ideas, give feedback and provide other comments. Ninth question, respondents are asked if they have suggestions for topics that were not taught during the onboarding, but they experience important. Below are few responses quoted:

"There are plenty, I cannot remember specifically. Problems and questions pop up daily."

"Cannot remember specific topics, but there were quite a lot that came up. Of course, not everything can be covered in onboarding."

"Many of them, as situation that occurred later were never standard ones."

Respondents have noted that it is indeed impossible to go through every topic in detail since the work includes numerous topics and tasks that need repetition to learn. In addition, daily work brings new aspects to the tasks which are not included in onboarding. Few technical ERP related tasks are mentioned which some trainees would have wanted to be included in onboarding which they later encountered in work. In addition, more detailed orientation to organizational structure and contacts have been mentioned.

The final question requests respondents to type in their development ideas. Suggestions that came to the surface are clearer written instructions that can be found easier, few extra days of orientation to have more time for practical exercises and more practicality in general, monitoring of trainee learning, a co-worker to work with a new trainee in the beginning of the career and additional technical training. Below are few responses quoted:

"I would assign a working buddy in the beginning for a month or so, so that the questions or all the related topics will be only directed to one person. In case the worker does not know the answer, the question can be escalated to the other team members."

"The big picture was very complicated and difficult to understand. It would be nice to have additional training of SAP for those who had never used it before."

"There might be different needs regarding the position/responsibilities on which the new employee is coming, so it probably is good to evaluate the needs for the orientation depending on the level of the newcomer. For trainees, it might be good to go through the whole responsibilities list "step-by-step" so that he/she would be able to form a good overall picture regarding the possible different responsibilities. However, the overall process seems to be in a fairly good condition."

4.4 Inductor

This section summarizes key points of the interview with commissioner's logistics unit inductor. Currently, the inductor is the only person providing onboardings for new trainees in the unit. They have been selected to the role for being a key user

and this has been a practice at the commissioner for a while. Reason for this is the thought, that the key user is most familiar with logistics processes. The inductor started giving onboardings after a little over a year of working at the commissioner. During a relatively short time span, they have oriented over twenty trainees. According to the inductor, practical tasks during the onboarding is the strength of the one-week onboarding. Trainees are given with a few tasks, such as bookings in the company transportation portal. For the improvements, inductor hopes that other employees could serve the role of an inductor. As the concept of logistics work is wide and time for onboarding is limited, thinking ways of binding topics together to form a clear and logical entirety is challenging. As there are several topics, tasks and subtasks, it is a bit unclear which order in teaching would be the most efficient. Many tasks require a lot of repetition to be properly learned.

From inductor's perspective the one-week's sufficiency for the onboarding depends on how many trainees are oriented simultaneously. When only one trainee is oriented, they have more tasks to complete privately. Naturally the trainee's experience level affects greatly as well. For example, trainees with previous experience in logistics usually learn quicker than trainees with no experience. In these cases, for the experienced trainees the one-week period could have been shortened as they have adapted quickly. According to the inductor, contents of the onboarding are comprehensive. Thus, no content needs to be removed or added. Extra topics can be covered if there is time left. The inductor emphasizes, that the purpose with some topics is to mention them, but there are no possibilities to go through everything practically during the short time span. The inductor has been asked if the onboarding results excessive burden. They consent and experience that it adds burden significantly:

“Well, yes. During the week of onboarding, I have an employee substituting my responsibility areas. However, preparations for the upcoming onboarding takes time and even that I have the substitutive colleague, tasks assigned specifically for me tend to pile up. Therefore, I sometimes need to start early or stay overtime after onboarding days to complete those tasks.”

The inductor has their own country logistics responsibility areas and other tasks as a key user. Even though there is a substituting employee during the onboarding, catching back up with the processes after the week causes extra work. The preparations for onboarding take time. The inductor may stay at work overtime after onboarding days to complete work tasks that the substituting employee cannot complete as inductor has specifically indicated tasks. Key user needs to assist the team with technical support continuously regardless being in onboarding with new trainees and uncompleted work waits for the inductor after the onboarding week. The office practices have changed due to the pandemic and many work from home. The inductor is the first support person physically present for the new trainees and therefore, trainees typically contact the inductor for help after the onboarding as they are not familiar with other employees.

“Especially now during the pandemic, I am usually the only person trainees meet face to face. Therefore, after onboarding, I am relied on with questions a lot.”

Few tasks, such as account creation is one of the only steps where key user cannot be replaced. The inductor says that they are content with onboarding results and can personally assess how well a trainee has adapted information during the week. Currently there is no concrete process for evaluating and measuring the trainee learning. Previous experience of a trainee affects the learning and people learn differently. The inductor asks for unwritten feedback on the last day of the onboarding process. Feedback can be given directly to the inductor or the managers. There is a significant lack of feedback for the inductor currently. Little to no feedback does not allow them to have an image which parts of the onboarding works well, and which could be improved. The inductor would be interested to receive feedback from the team or singular team members who later work together with the trainee.

“Feedback would be very useful so I could better find the areas for improvement and what areas are already working well. Feedback from the onboarded ones as well as team members that will possibly work more closely with a trainee could provide me information what has been learned well and what is not.”

Colleagues could possibly locate the strong and weak areas in trainee's skills and knowledge precisely as they work together after onboarding. Currently all the topics are handled together with the inductor during onboarding being physically present at the office. The inductor experiences being present with the trainees is the most efficient way of teaching tasks and topics in company context. Some concepts could possibly be studied independently but preferably later in line once the new trainee has gained enough confidence in the work and is experienced with the daily work.

4.5 Summary of data analysis

The most notable discovery drawn from the survey for employees is the alternating levels of satisfaction towards the onboarding. As the respondents have worked in logistics for different amounts of time, the gap between levels of experience, skills and knowledge is wide. In the majority of survey questions, respondents do not share a common outlook and responses are scaled widely. The presented pictures 1-4 from the survey questions are the most crucial ones in illustrating the spread of trainees' opinions and experiences. As practical exercises are the key for authentic learning, both the inductor and employees emphasized on the importance of them. The inductor has noted that some trainees learn faster than others mostly based on their previous experience in the field. In addition, some trainees have been able to complete more practical exercises than others depending on how many participants have taken part in the onboarding session. These factors are reflected in employees' varying responses regarding practical exercises (Picture 2). By having an experienced trainee together with another inexperienced one puts both in unfavourable position. Either the teaching phase is too slow for the experienced one or too fast for the inexperienced one. This is connected to the learning experience, how well trainees have adapted new information and connect topics with one another to create a clear image of the daily work.

Majority of the respondents did not feel very confident in starting to work after the onboarding (Picture 3), and the need for frequent help has been essential (Picture 4). The inductor has faced a plentiful of trainees needing help and approaching the inductor as they are the only person the trainees are familiar with personally

from all team members after the onboarding. It is not ideal for the inductor to always be present for the trainees after the onboarding as they have own responsibility areas outside training. As there is scarcity in the feedback for the inductor, they do not have a chance to locate the areas of improvement. Currently, no practical learning evaluating systems exists, and majority of trainees enter the office without having a clear image which areas are their strengths and which are the weaknesses that they need more assistance with. The overall opinion on onboarding teaching materials and the professionalism of the inductor are on a good level. The current factors creating training program inefficiencies based on primary data analysis are the following:



PICTURE 5. Factors creating training program inefficiencies based on primary data analysis.

It is impossible to for everyone to learn everything in the brief onboarding session at a same pace. The following areas of the current training need to be improved:

1. Training continuum

2. Personalized and structured goal-oriented training design to complement a trainee's needs
3. Standardized active training programs and practical methods for tracking learning results

4.6 Validity and reliability

As the author has taken part in commissioner's logistics unit onboarding and training, it is a privilege while planning relevant contents to the interview and survey. The author has experienced two onboarding sessions and has been working in the community for few years. Focusing on research relevancy and understanding current situation may be easier for company member that is familiar with current practicalities. Several aspects of the current training process are included in the research. The survey does not only focus on technical training features, but also maps feelings it has evoked in both inductor and trainees. Questions are carefully planned and directed to a limited target group. Irrelevancy and topics out of context are avoided. The chosen data collection methods have been efficient, as survey was planned to be easy for participants to read and respond in five to ten minutes as employees are busy. The survey had 73 % respond rate which is satisfactory for the research.

4.7 SWOT-analysis

SWOT-analysis offers a clear illustration for logistics unit's current training program strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats based on the research results discussed in previous chapters. SWOT-analysis is a tool that can be applied rather universally to any area of a business. Once the topics around a theme, in this case training, have been categorized under a strength, weakness, opportunity or threat slot, it is easier to start a development process towards reduced weaknesses and threats (Smith n.d.).

Strengths

Strengths are internal assets that the unit possesses. The logistic unit has employees with several years of experience in commissioner's service or in logistics in general. These employees' expertise can be benefitted from while onboarding trainees and continuing training on the job. The current onboarding inductor is excellent at their work and has potential in sharing their knowledge onwards.

Weaknesses

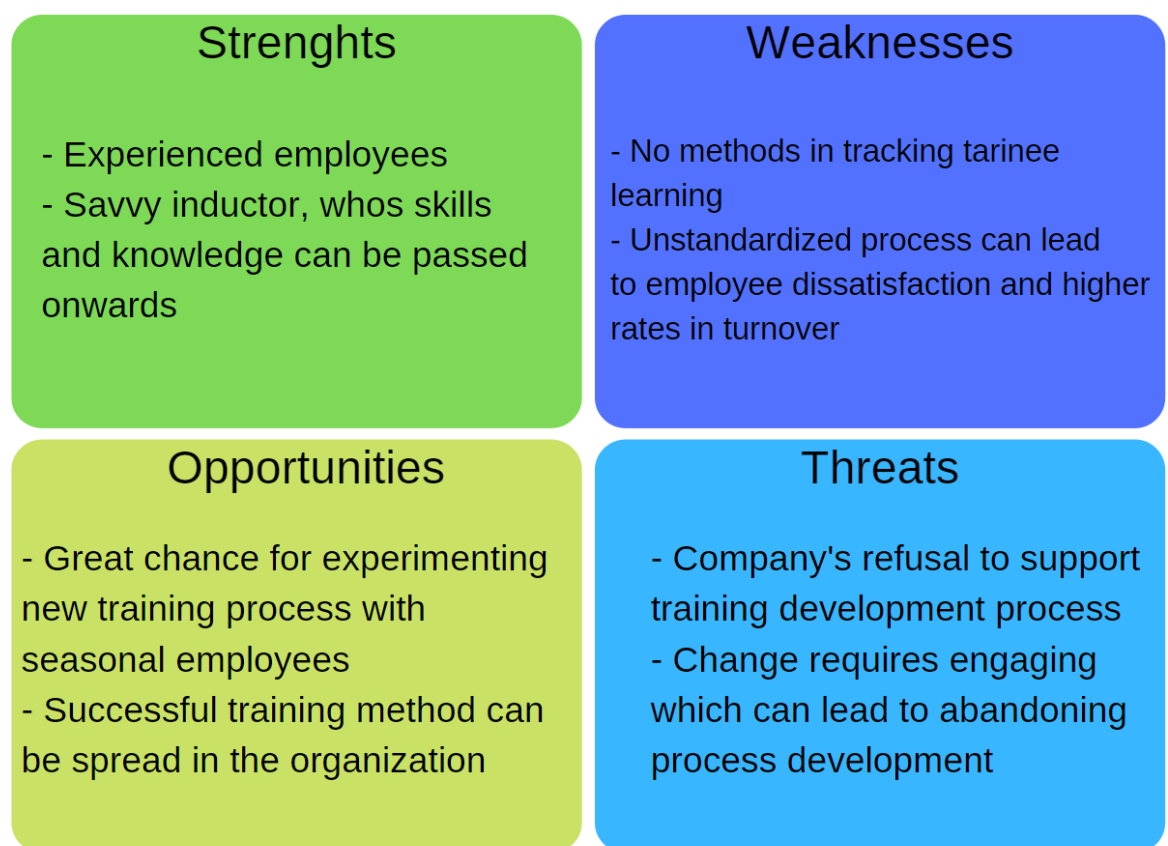
Weaknesses are internal faults that the unit possesses. As pictured in chapter 4.5, the standard training ends once onboarding week is complete. After the onboarding, no method is currently used to concretely track trainee learning. According to Chopra (2015), the lack of standardized processes will lead to employee dissatisfaction and affects performance negatively. This might ultimately lead in higher rates of employee turnover (Davila & Pina-Ramirez 2018, 1). Currently, inductor's and trainees' professional development suffers from a lack of sufficient feedback regarding teaching and learning. Skill and knowledge gaps are not directly a weakness, but if trainee's level of expertise is ignored, potential can be bypassed and needed support may be offered improperly.

Opportunities

Opportunities are external factors that can be exploited. A new standardized training process could be adapted to complement current existing processes well. The logistics unit has enough personnel to start a pilot process for new training technique test run. As the commissioner recruits seasonal employees for summertime substitutions, the seasonal trainees could serve as candidates for the process testing. If the new training process is perceived successful it could be expanded to other commissioner's units via HRM.

Threats

Threats are external factors that can hinder training process success. One could be the organization refusing adaptation of the new process. Thankfully, units are rather free to develop their own training processes freely but as the method offered in this thesis requires process standardization and engaging, it can be refused if the process is suggested for adaptation on a larger scale in the company. Failing to offer incentives for the training personnel might turn employees away from the solution.



PICTURE 6. SWOT-analysis of the current training.

5 TRAINING PROCESS OPTIMIZATION

This chapter provides commissioner the suggested solutions for logistics coordinator training process optimization. The solutions have been created by analysing trainees' and inductor's needs which are uncovered by the primary research data. Feedback tool and tutor program are suggested techniques to optimize and standardize the training process. Appendix structures of OJT design and feedback tool are drafts which can be transformed into digital form under commissioner's standards. After the introduction of the new training tools, process steps are presented to ease the adaptation process for the commissioner.

5.1 Feedback: tool in tracking employee learning

Feedback tool provides an inductor a concrete database to interpreted onboarding results and gives a trainee and a tutor clearer image of topics that feels difficult or easy. The feedback form leading to tutor program is following the technique of Silberman et al. (2015), of participant assessment for designing efficient training program. Feedback tool prepares the trainee for the following training step, the standardized tutor program. After the onboarding week a trainee will be provided with a survey form (Appendix 3). The aim of this tool is to assess the current learning status of the trainee and mapping the need for training. Per se, a role or a task has been chosen for a trainee before starting to work. Feedback tool helps in pinpointing areas that possibly need more training in that certain task or role and those areas will be emphasized in following training.

Trainee competence, attitude and previous experiences are measured by asking a respondent to choose between scaled options, which number between one to six describes them the most. The survey presents the principal topics that have been covered during the onboarding week. The topics regarding daily work are same ones that are on the commissioner's current onboarding schedule. Once a trainee has chosen options that best describe their current outlook on their own learning the survey offers a possibility to provide an open word for additional feedback for the inductor or other matters that are in the trainee's mind. After completing and submitting the survey the inductor can create patterns of topics that have been adapted well and areas of onboarding that require improvement.

This serves as a feedback tool for the inductor but most importantly as a tool to design following training.

Currently, trainees begin working from the same starting line regardless of their level of skill and knowledge. As the gaps between expertise levels are significant, feedback tool gives inexperienced trainee a chance to receive more support on the topics that they are unfamiliar with and an experienced trainee a chance to proceed to more advanced tasks. The commissioner is able to match certain skills with tasks and direct employees' full potential to correct areas. As previously mentioned in chapter 2.3.3, new trainees are assigned to miscellaneous tasks or to work few weeks with a full-time employee to learn their tasks before a substitution period. Training is not standardized and therefore creates a difficulty to measure training success. In addition, lack of follow ups with a trainee may lead to the loss of goal orientation and feeling of purpose in work. The feedback tool is not only designated for entering employees but also for employees taking part in latter trainings for upskilling and reskilling. More about this on chapter 5.2.

5.2 OJT design & standardized tutor program

Before trainees start working in the company, a specific tutor is assigned for them. Tutor is an employee that has been working in the company for a while and has adequate skills and knowledge to guide a new employee. Tutor is a support person to whom a trainee can always turn to for questions and help. A standardized tutor program is the key to make training continuum and successful active training model possible in commissioner company's environment. Onboarding session inductor will not work as a tutor except if training for a specific task or role obligates to do it. It is important for the company management to choose a new trainee's role or task clearly and communicate their plan for both the inductor and the tutor. This makes training design, learning objective creation and appropriate tutor candidate selection possible. These factors together will allow a fruitful learning environment for a new trainee who will later prosper and perform well in the work community.

Once onboarding week is complete and the feedback form has been completed by the trainee, the form is forwarded from the inductor to the tutor. If needed, the

inductor can leave comments regarding the trainee in addition to sharing feedback results. Inductor and tutor will go through the responses together and pinpoint the areas that requires additional attention and create a training design and objectives based on it. On-the-Job training design draft has been created to help in initiating process standardization. Please see Appendix 4. Once inductor and tutor have finalized the OJT design and agreed on training objectives and schedule, the trainee is forwarded to meet with the tutor either at the office or in Microsoft Teams. On-the-Job training model by Lawson (2015) is put into use once the training design is complete and tutor is ready to start practical work training for the trainee. An essential factor in building trainee confidence is to familiarize them with the new work environment, culture and personnel. Tutor is a great support for a new employee. Continuous presence diminishes the risk of trainee feeling to be left alone to learn and work.

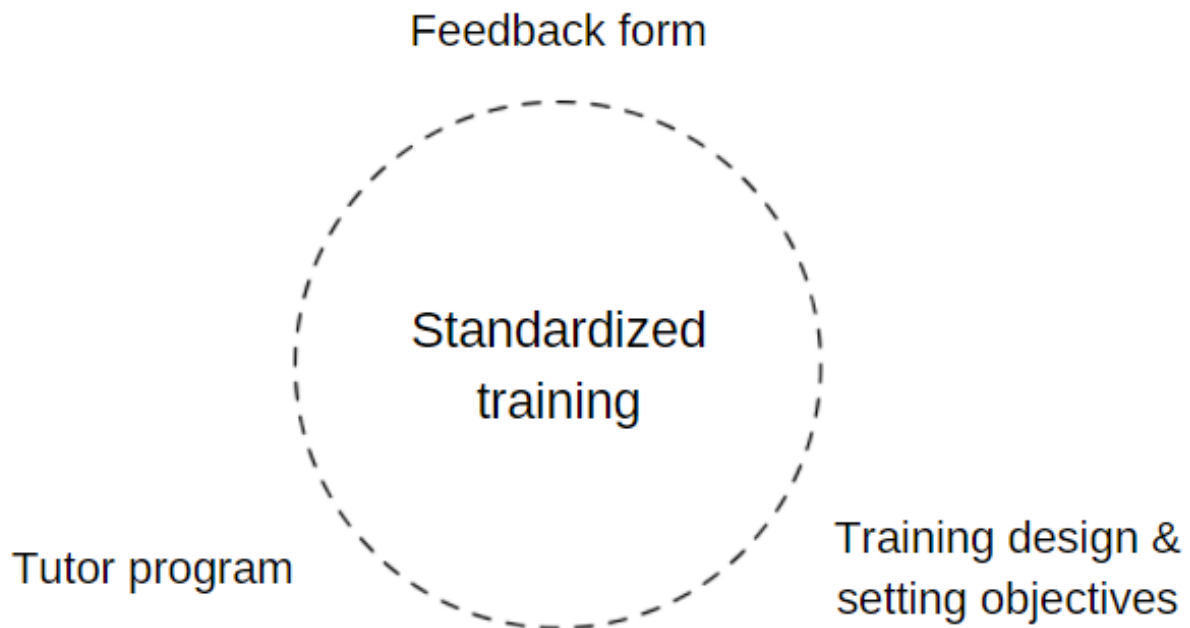
Communicating learning objectives for the trainee is in a core of a successful training for allowing the trainee to understand clearly what is expected from them. Learning objectives are listed in OJT design that inductor and tutor have created together before trainee has started working with the tutor (Appendix 4). Once the OJT is completed, tutor can discuss with the trainee which objectives have been met and which tasks still need more practice. Ideally, the feedback form (Appendix 3) is used to map learning results again, similarly as to after the onboarding but with altered contents of questions to match trainee's learning areas of the recent training. Training shall aim for continuum which creates a loop of mapping training needs, creating training design and providing feedback. The process can be standardized in this manner, the learning results can be better evaluated, trainees receive appropriate and personalized support which increases their level of confidence, the inductor receives data and feedback on onboarding successes and failures and the overall performance of the team increases. What is to be emphasized is the management's role in boosting team morale and motivation by setting clear universal and personal objectives for employees. Ability to reach goals creates the sense of purpose which is a key for performance excellence.

5.3 Action plan summary

Action plan provides the commissioner with concrete strategy for new process application. This chapter answers the research question presented in chapter 2.2:

“How are the new training methods applied in the commissioner’s use?”

This chapter summarises how the commissioner can take the optimized training process into use. Once onboarding week is complete, the inductor will share feedback form for the trainees that participated (Appendix 3). Once a trainee has filled in their response, the inductor and a pre-assigned tutor will go through the answers together. Based on the level of trainee’s skills, knowledge, confidence and attitude, suitable training objectives are set, and OJT design is created (Appendix 4). When these steps are complete, a trainee is transferred to a tutor. A tutor and a trainee will go through the objectives together which allows them both to track training successes and failures. This creates a chance for goal completion which creates purpose to the process. Tutor program has an agreed start and end date. Once tutor program has come to an end, a tutor and a trainee will go through the OJT design once more. This time, they observe if they met the set objectives.



PICTURE 7. Continuum of a standardized training program.

After these steps, a new feedback form is offered to a trainee (Appendix 3). This feedback form is similar to the first one provided after onboarding, but the topics on the feedback form can be altered by a tutor to match themes of the most recent training. Trainee will again have a chance to communicate which areas of work feel difficult and which are adapted well. A tutor can go through the answers and concretely measure the results of their training. This data can be filed for later when new trainings take place.

This strategy eliminates the problem of setting all entering trainees on a same starting line with different backgrounds and levels of expertise. Onboarding week will remain similar to current process, as the research proved it is not the problematic area. Onboarding week's purpose is to familiarize trainees with the topics and have some practical exercises so they can have a glimpse of what the real work will be. This does not allow a trainee to learn authentically but it cannot be expected from one-week intensive onboarding. Each trainee is provided with a possibility for efficient learning and having personalized objectives by taking OJT design in use. As the onboarding inductor is provided with trainees' feedback after the session, the process can be altered and developed if repetitive patterns in feedback occurs. Standardized training program provides employees with a

practical method of tracking the quality of teaching and the level of learning. This helps in defining what exactly is the need for training.

5.4 Inductor and tutor incentives

A primary task to complete before starting training process optimization is to build a group of tutors and inductors. Currently, only one employee is working as an onboarding inductor and after onboarding, trainees will either ask for help randomly from employees that are not assigned for tutor's task or working with employees that will be substituted during a vacation season. Currently, inductor is not incentivised in any manner. Inductor will not receive bonuses or other perks for working in the role. If employees are not offered with any positive accelerators to become a tutor or an onboarding inductor, it can severely reduce the possibilities for a successfully developed training program. The roles might be perceived to bring more burden on an already busy employee and if the employee does not receive concrete benefits for the task, they will most likely decline working as one and the development process can fail. This is a fundamental issue that requires prompt action before moving on to training program development.

Incentives will boost employees' morale and is a crucial tool to increase employee engagement. A reward on well completed work will encourage an employee to perform well in the future as well. Unrecognized efforts and achievements increase a risk for employee dissatisfaction and higher turnover rates. Cornell University has studied the effect of incentives in human behaviour. According to the study, rewarding an employee immediately increases motivation substantially. In addition, companies that offer immediate incentives reach their goals with a higher chance. A traditional method of incentivising an employee is with an annual gift. This, however, is not linked to a particular achievement or goal. It is usually a companywide gesture targeted for every employee (Wong 2020).

A study by Bennet and Levinthal (2017) shows how incentivising has a great effect on companies' growth rate. As employees are the primary source for a company's development and successful project motivate individuals, direct incentives further increase the volume of motivation which converts to employees' active innovation and participation in company development. Bennet and Levinthal call

process development projects as extra-roles. Extra-role tasks are not necessarily desired assignments as they are outside an employee's standard workload and typically require excessive effort. As extra-job is completed and a desired outcome is met, the process development will reduce cost and time inefficiencies on a long run. When a process development is ongoing, company management shall locate all employees that are taking part in it to target incentives for correct personnel with appropriate measures. According to the study, large and established companies are under a larger risk for stagnation and inability to develop with a rapid pace comparing to smaller competing companies (Bennet & Levinthal, 2017).

The commissioner could apply incentive system to a specific business unit with unique features. As each unit's tasks, development processes and objectives differ from one another, incentives could be matched to serve a certain team's needs well. A companywide reformation for incentive system is not required to reach desirable outcomes in process development. In the case of commissioner's logistics unit, a reasonable bonus for acting in a role of an inductor or a tutor would be desirable to engage employees to a task. The small price against an extra-job will reward the company in a long run as training results would improve. When an employee is working as an inductor in onboarding, their workload needs to be designed and shared in a way that their responsibility areas are handled efficiently during their absence. Having a larger number of inductors reduces the growing burden on one person. As tutors and trainees work with daily tasks and are not absent, tutors' workload does not need to be shared with other employees during training.

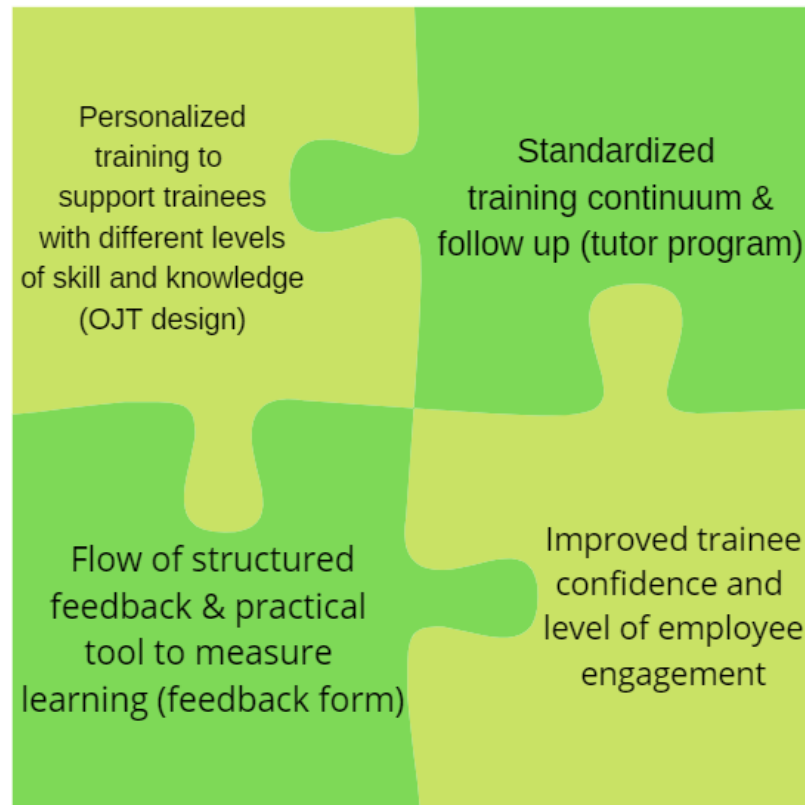
An alternative for incentives could be an extension to an employees work contract. If they work as an inductor or a tutor, their task could be rewarded in their salary which has been separately agreed on a contract. If employee's participation for training others is frequent a raise in salary shall be discussed.

6 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

As new trainees enter a logistics team, they participate in weeklong onboarding session which purpose is to offer a trainee a chance to familiarize themselves with basic terms, tasks and technical information that are present in logistics coordinators' everyday work. Trainees come from various backgrounds and serve in different tasks at the commissioner. Some have worked in the field of logistics for several years. These employees have typically applied for full-time positions. On the other hand, there are students that come to work as seasonal employees. Seasonal work placements provide a trainee a great chance to learn the work and possibly later apply for a full-time career. Despite of the work position, levels of expertise alter greatly. The original objective of this thesis was to improve the current onboarding process of the commissioner's logistics unit. After conducting empirical research, it became evident, that instead of the weeklong onboarding session having fundamental inefficiencies, a lack of training continuum and a standardized training program results in employee dissatisfaction particularly in the beginning of their career. This led to a shift of focus from onboarding development to training continuum.

Research questions were created in aim to find solution for an optimized training program, finding inefficiencies in the current process and creating guidelines for commissioner company to take proposed solutions into use. Theories of active training and On-the-Job training were introduced to support in creating practical and realistic training program based on employees' and inductor's needs. Current state of training and process inefficiencies were investigated by sharing a survey for logistics coordinators that have entered the office recently and by interviewing the unit inductor. After research data analysis, most outstanding issues were presented (Picture 5). **Skill gaps** between trainees results in different levels of learning during the onboarding week. Some individuals are ready to move on towards advanced tasks and some need notably more support in learning basic daily tasks. **Training is not standardized.** The first weeks and months consists of miscellaneous, non-goal-oriented training. **Lack of feedback** for both the inductor and the trainees is present in the current process which hinders professional development. The study showed that majority of new **trainees did not feel confident** after onboarding and needed help frequently during the beginning of their

career. These training process inefficiencies call for training continuum, personalized and structured goal-oriented training designs and supportive tutor program with a method to track the level of learning. Below picture encapsulates the suggested training process optimization solutions that displace the current process's issues.



PICTURE 8. Solutions displacing training program inefficiencies.

By combining Lawson's (2015) theory on OJT and Silberman's et al. (2015) theory on active training a new standardized training process steps were developed. **Feedback form** eliminates the problem of not receiving feedback and not being able to track trainee learning concretely by accessing a trainee's thoughts and experiences on learning, thus being able to track the level of information adaptation. Feedback form is a primary tool to map the need for training. **OJT design** eliminates the lack of personalized training for trainees equipped with different levels of expertise. OJT design creates structure for the training and provides a tutor and a trainee with learning goals that can be assessed in the end of a training session. **Tutor program** eliminates the lack of standardization in the training and provides a trainee a chance to learn authentically with reduced feeling of not

being confident in the job. The trainee will receive the right amount of needed support in a safe environment and has a person to turn to. Pre-assigned tutor eliminates the phenomenon of trainees solely turning to the onboarding inductor resulting excessive burden for the person. Despite the current inductor being a key user, and their expertise is inevitable while creating system accounts for new employees, this action is only a brief part of the whole onboarding process. Other employees are well capable of learning how to give onboarding excluding account creation. The commissioner company is proposed to take the presented standardized training steps into use. Possible target group for the optimized training process testing is new trainees starting to work in seasonal work positions.

The standardized training program calls for the effort of the whole logistics unit team from management to employees. The positive effect of incentives or alternative salary rewards have been presented briefly in this thesis to be considered by the commissioner. For a successful training process development, new tutors and inductors shall be recruited from the existing team with a chance for an incentive. The purpose of a successful training process is to engage employees, achieving full potential of an individual and translating these factors into overall performance excellence. Change requires time and effort but, in the end, this development project can have notable positive effects on commissioner's social, financial and performance related aspects.

7 REFLECTION

This chapter of the thesis discusses about the author's experience with this thesis project.

Choosing the thesis topic has been rather straight forward decision as author has had access to discuss about current topics with commissioner's employees. It has been a privilege for the author to be able to execute the project in a familiar organization environment. From author's point of view, being a member of a commissioner company provides deeper knowledge of the root themes and allows a writer to focus on relevant and realistic solutions that match commissioner's needs and expectations well. The original topic of this thesis was optimization of the current onboarding process. To recap, onboarding is the one-week intensive session for entering employees conducted by the one inductor. Research results, especially quantitative survey, switched the primary focus from onboarding to training continuum. Employees are mostly content with onboarding itself as it is acknowledged, that every topic cannot be learnt in such a short time span and training needs to be extended. This led to a new approach to the project.

Overall, author is pleased with the result. The applied theories have been in a significant role of solution creation. The theories provided a logical framework when planning a suitable training process for the logistics team. However, alternative theories for practical learning on job have been difficult to find that would contradict active training and On-the-Job training methods. These two principal theories support one another without adversarial. Adaptability of the new training solution is manoeuvrable and in realistic its measures. A downside to this research is that the new method cannot be applied during thesis project schedule and therefore results are not studied. However, this project can prove the importance of mapping employee's satisfaction levels on current issues within a unit to initiate the needed development projects and maintain or increase employee morale and performance.

REFERENCES

Bennet, V. & Levinthal, D. 2017. Firm Lifecycles: Linking Employee Incentives and Firm Growth Dynamics. 38 (10). Read on 9.11.2021. <https://web-a-ebsco-host-com.libproxy.tuni.fi/ehost/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=170dfcf5-6442-41de-8b99-7e95a50a3123%40sdc-v-sessmgr01&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIP-WNvb2tpZSxpcCx1aWQmc2l0ZT1laG9zdC1saXZlJnNjb3BIPXNpdGU%3d#AN=124833914&db=bsu>

Bhandari, P. 2020. An introduction to quantitative research. Released on 12.6.2020. Updated on 16.7.2021. Read on 18.10.2021. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/quantitative-research/>

Davila, N. & Pina-Ramirez, W. 2018. Effective Onboarding. Alexandria: ATD Press.

Evers, J. & Boer, F. 2012. The Qualitative Interview: Art and Skill. Hague: Eleven International Publishing.

ExactHire. N.d. What Does Employee Onboarding Mean? Read on 12.10.2021. <https://www.exacthire.com/hiring-process/what-does-employee-onboarding-mean-for-your-organization/>

GetSmarter. 2021. Employee Training and Development: The Benefits of Upskilling or Reskilling Your Team. Released on 20.5.2021. Read on 19.10.2021. <https://www.getsmarter.com/blog/employee-development/employee-training-and-development-the-benefits-and-why-its-important/>

Kenton, W. 2020. Logistics. Updated on 29.12.2021. Read on 5.10.2021. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/l/logistics.asp>

Kenton, W. 2021. Supply Chain. Updated on 29.9.2021. Read on 5.10.2021. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/supplychain.asp>

Lawson, K. 2015. The Trainer's Handbook. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Lopienski, K. 2020. A Guide to Inbound and Outbound Logistics Processes. Released on 14.8.2021. Read on 5.10.2021.

<https://www.shipbob.com/blog/inbound-and-outbound-logistics/>

Mayhew, R. 2020. Relationship Between Training and Employee Performance. Released on 8.10.2020. Read on 21.10.2021. <https://work.chron.com/relationship-between-training-employee-performance-4257.html>

Silberman, M. L., Biech, E. & Auerbach, C. 2015. Active Training. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Smith, W. N.d. SWOT Analysis for Organizational Training. Read on 6.11.2021. <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/webbased-training-process-mapping-42013.html>

Staron, L. 2018. Employee Training and Development: How to Measure the ROI of Training Programs. Released on 11.9.2018. Read on 21.10.2021. <https://www.hrtechnologist.com/articles/learning-development/employee-training-and-development-how-to-measure-the-roi-of-training-programs/>

Wong, K. 2020. 10 Employee Incentive Programs to Engage Your Team. Released on 2.10.2020. Read on 7.11.2021. <https://www.achievers.com/blog/employee-incentive-programs/>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Questions for Inductor

Q 1: What is your background as an inductor? (When did you start? Why were you selected to the role of an inductor? Are you the only inductor at the moment?)

Q 2: What works well in the current onboarding process in your opinion?

Q 3: Which areas of the current onboarding require improvements in your opinion?

Q 4: Is the given time for onboarding enough and should some contents be added or removed?

Q 5: Does onboarding result excessive burden for you?

Q 6: Are you pleased with the result (trainee learning) after the onboarding? Is the result measurable?

Q 7: Do you receive enough feedback for working as an inductor?

Q 8: Other development ideas, thoughts and questions for the interviewer?

Appendix 2. Onboarding Experience: Survey Questions for Employees

Directions: Read each question carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select an option that best describes you.

- 1. = Definitely false
- 2. = Mostly false
- 3. = Somewhat false
- 4. = Not true or false
- 5. = Somewhat true
- 6. = Mostly true
- 7. = Definitely true

Q 1: I learned basics of the job well during the one-week onboarding.

Q 2: Making connections between topics and forming a “big picture” was easy.

Q 3: Training materials used in the onboarding were clear and easy to follow.

Q 4: There were enough practical exercises.

Q 5: The speech of the onboarding person (teacher) was easy to follow.

Q 6: I had a chance to interact and ask questions.

Q 7: I felt confident to start the real work after the one-week onboarding.

Q 8: During the first weeks / months after onboarding, I felt that I needed support and help from others.

Open-ended questions:

Q 9: Some important topics were not taught during the onboarding that emerged later while working. What are these topics?

Q 10. Have you worked in the field of logistics before entering *the commissioner company*? For how long?

Q 11. Open word for development ideas and other thoughts?

Appendix 3. Feedback Tool

* This appendix is a draft that can be transformed into a digital form under commissioner's standards. As this thesis is published for an audience outside anonymous commissioner organization, some information has been altered and is not in a final form on this document. *

Feedback Tool

Instructions: Congratulations! You have now completed the one-week intensive onboarding. You have been introduced with many new topics, tasks, applications and technical features. You have had a chance to try some practical tasks that you will face during working as a logistics coordinator. During the next weeks, you will deepen your skills and knowledge by starting to work with real logistics cases and responsibility will come with it. Do not worry! There is a tutor waiting for you to help in learning the real job well and further familiarizing you with the company! Together with your tutor, you will learn tasks that might still feel a bit difficult and strengthen your skills. You two will also go through your learning objectives for the months to come.

This feedback tool helps you and us to map your current state of learning. As some of our entering employees have started working straight from a school bench and some have several years of experience, it is important for us to map and track our new employees' level of knowhow. This way, we can create a personalized and suitable training for you to complement your personal learning needs. Kindly select an option that best describes you. Honesty is a key for perfection!

1. = Definitely false
2. = Mostly false
3. = Somewhat false
4. = Somewhat true
5. = Mostly true
6. = Definitely true

Daily standard work

Q 1: I know what different order types are.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 2: I know what different delivery priorities are.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 3: I know how invoicing is done.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 4: I know what modes of transportation are used.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 5: I know how to book and track deliveries.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 6: I know how to create *documents* and archive them.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 7: I know which incoterms are used and how they affect the shipping process.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 8: I know what routes are.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 9: I know how to monitor deliveries.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 10: I feel like in need some more help with SAP.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 11: I feel like I need some more help with *transportation portal*.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 12: I feel like I need some more help with *other applications*.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Onboarding / Tutor training

Q 13: Forming a big picture of the daily work was easy for me during onboarding.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 14: The materials of the onboarding were easy to follow.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 15: I had a chance to interact and ask questions during onboarding.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 16: The onboarding contained enough practical exercises.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 17: The speech of an inductor was easy to follow and understand.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 18: I feel like I learned the onboarding topics well.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Q 19: I feel confident to continue working with real cases now.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Open Comments

Q 20: Have you worked in the field of logistics before? For how long?

Q 21: Here you can leave open comments, such as development ideas for onboarding, feedback for the inductor and other thoughts:

<p>* Contents of this appendix are subject to change. Material can be altered and added depending on training contents. *</p>

Appendix 4. OJT Design

* This appendix is a draft that can be transformed into a digital form under commissioner's standards. As this thesis is published for an audience outside anonymous commissioner organization, some information has been altered and is not in a final form on this document. *

General information

Point 1: Name of tutor and trainee.

Point 2: The role a trainee is assigned to (e.g., substituting employee during vacation season for employee X, support person for a specific project or task, new full-time employee with own country responsibilities)?

Point 3: Schedule for training (start and end time).

Feedback tool results

Point 4: Trainee's previous experience in logistics (beginner, intermediate, advanced).

Point 5: What has been learned well?

Point 6: Which areas require more support?

Point 7: Is trainee confident of working independently?

Learning objectives

Point 8: One to three learning objectives. Completion of objectives is evaluated in the end of the training.
