RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION

THE POWER OF ENGAGEMENT:UNLEASHING IMPACT THROUGH THE SALES EXCELLENCE ONBOARDING

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
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ABSTRACT

In today's competitive business environment, companies acknowledge the critical role that efficient sales management plays in driving revenue growth and sustaining a market position.

The problem definition on which this research is based emerged from the increase of complaints related to the Sales Excellence Program onboarding considered not interactive, theoretical and dense. The goal of this research carried out from February 2023 to the end of May 2023, was to find out how Air France KLM Martinair Cargo can improve the onboarding process by making it more engaging, meaning interactive and motivating for sales managers and inside sales. Based on this, the following main question was created:

"What actions can Air France KLM Martinair Cargo take to create an engaging onboarding process for the Sales Excellence Program to enhance its impact?"

To answer this question, qualitative research methods were used, including a literature review and semi-structured interviews. Since the onboarding primarily targets sales and inside sales managers, their opinions and experiences were crucial, and these were gathered through the interviews. The literature review served to identify concepts, approaches, and tactics for creating an engaging and effective onboarding process.

The research presented the following main results:

- The research reveals the need for improvements in practicality and clear communication. Participants described the onboarding as theoretical, professional, motivating and challenging. The eNPS score at the end of March 2023 was -11.11, indicating room for improvement in employee engagement during the onboarding process.
- Regarding successful teaching methods in the workplace, a blended learning approach combining online and live sessions is preferred for onboarding new SMs and ISMs. E-learning combined with live sessions was considered the most effective method by 50% of respondents. Experienced professionals sharing best practices and examples were identified as valuable resources during the onboarding process. The majority of respondents suggested a maximum of 8 participants per session, with sessions lasting between 1 and 2 hours.
- Before the onboarding, it is important to update and efficiently organise the list of SMs and ISMs who require training. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents had a clear understanding of why they needed to be onboarded, emphasizing the importance of communicating the purpose of the onboarding. During the onboarding, using several tools can enhance employee engagement. After the onboarding, gathering feedback through surveys and conducting follow-up sessions are crucial steps for continuous improvement and knowledge retention.

Based on these results, recommendations have been formulated to address the main question and engage sales and inside sales managers during the onboarding of the Sales Excellence Program. The recommendations include:

- Adopting a blended learning approach that combines interactive e-learning modules for the theoretical part with live sessions featuring experienced sales managers, key account managers, and market managers.
- Demonstrating the importance of sales and inside sales managers' opinions by implementing a feedback form to track their feedback on the onboarding process and identify areas for improvement.
- Shifting the onboarding approach from theoretical to practical by sharing best practices throughout the entire course of the onboarding, both in the e-learning modules and live sessions. This will encourage interesting discussions on several topics and make the process more engaging compared to the current approach.

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PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document is the result of the research assigned by Air France KLM Martinair Cargo (AFKLMP Cargo) in the HUB of Amsterdam Schiphol, the Netherlands. The research aims to optimise the onboarding of the Sales Excellence Program, a program designed for sales managers and inside sales. This research is also one of the results of my graduation internship for the International Business program at HZ University of Applied Sciences.

I chose to do my internship at Air France KLM Martinair Cargo because I have always been fascinated by the airline industry. I wanted to see how things work and all the exciting processes that happen in a big multinational company. Before starting this experience, my dream was to become a sales manager. I am extremely grateful that I got to focus on the Sales Excellence Program during my internship as it gave me the chance to discover the role and all the behind-the-scenes processes. In addition to that, I got to meet amazing people inside and outside the company who inspired me.

This internship made me realise that in the future I would like to work in a dynamic environment, surrounded by people who motivate me and where I face new challenges every day. I really enjoyed this internship as I have also gained so many insights and I managed to make an impact by coaching sales and inside sales managers. The satisfaction after each session was priceless.

I would like to thank my wonderful team and in particular my supervisor Maaike Schotsman for trusting me, proving me with a lot of support and giving me the chance and freedom to focus on exciting projects. I am also thankful to Mr. Peter Raas who always encouraged me and believed in my capabilities, not just during this graduation phase.

Of course, I do not want to forget all the stakeholders for taking the time to be interviewed for this research and also for giving me useful pieces of advice.

Lastly, I would also like to express my gratitude to my parents who always invested in my education and future and to all the people who believed in me and always told me not to give up. I am extremely grateful to have wonderful people around me and to have had the possibility to study and work in the Netherlands.

Julia Dragone

Amsterdam, 28 May 2023

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
AFKLMP	Air France KLM Martinair Cargo
SE	Sales Excellence
SM	Sales Manager
ISM	Inside Sales Manager
MRQ	Main Research Question

TABLE OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION
INSIDE SALES MANAGER	An inside sales manager is a sales professional who generally contacts clients over the phone or online rather than visiting them in person. The number of accounts is higher and they are smaller, compared to the ones of a sales manager.
STATION	The location where AFKLMP operates and where employees are working.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Company analysis & trends and developments in their industry

Air France-KLM is a European airline holding corporation with 100% ownership of many major airlines, including Air France and KLM. The company is registered in France and trades on the European stock exchange (Euronext: AF).

Air France-KLM was founded in May 2004 by the merger of Air France and KLM, both SkyTeam members with unique identities, now it counts around 71.000 employees all over the world. (*Air France-KLM S.A. Airline Group Profile, CAPA*, 2023)

Every action taken is based on respect, trust, openness, and confidentiality, and is regarded as an act of honour to protect the data of their clients and staff. They adhere to all local, regional, national, and international rules governing the administration of personal data and privacy (*AIR FRANCE KLM, Purpose, 2023*).

This report will be focused on "AIR FRANCE KLM MARTINAIR Cargo", the Air France KLM Group's specialised air cargo company. They convey a wide range of goods to all parts of the globe using the combined fleet of three airlines. They supplement the passenger fleet's enormous cargo belly capacity with the complete freighter aircraft's rational and flexible main deck capacity. Through this adaptable idea, they can provide a diverse range of services and solutions to the market, as well as smooth global connections. With 295 shipping destinations in 110 nations, 3,500 cargo workers, and 453 aeroplanes that transported over one million tons of cargo in the last 12 months, AFKLMP is not only running the largest global cargo network in the world but also a force for connectivity (*AIR FRANCE KLM MARTINAIR Cargo - Our Company, 2023*).

The business is focused on building a more responsible, inclusive, and sustainable aviation industry that respects both the planet and people. The use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) to lessen the carbon footprint of the company's flights has become one of the major trends in recent months. (*AIR FRANCE KLM MARTINAIR Cargo - Sustainable Aviation Fuel, 2023*).

Another important element for AFKLMP is the Sales Excellence Program, a program for Sales Managers and Inside Sales Managers of AFKLMP.

The program's goal is to consistently enhance the performance of the whole sales organisation. Consequentially, they established a learning environment where the company's sales professionals may advance professionally and learn how to make the most of their interactions with clients. It is built on three pillars: people, processes, and tools. In 2019, AFKLMP collaborated with an external provider (SalesGenetics) to produce workshops and training, and the program was expanded internally in 2020 in response to the pandemic (*AIR FRANCE KLM MARTINAIR Cargo, Sales Excellence Program, 2022).* This program is designed to help SMs and ISMs make decisions about their sales tactics and communicate efficiently with customers. It offers a consistent approach to selling, boosting client involvement and team collaboration, increases productivity, keeps track of client interactions and sales, supports a worldwide plan locally and offers chances for professional growth.

1.2 Problem analysis

In this chapter, the problem analysis that will be the focus of this report will be described using the 6W questions to give the best overview of it.

What: The SE Program is a program created to give SMs and ISMs a better understanding of customers around the world to enhance sales tactics and results. The current onboarding of the program does not deliver the expected results and the biggest challenge for AFKLMP is to create a more **engaging**[1] onboarding process, this means generating more enthusiasm and motivation and having a bigger impact on SMs and ISMs. The process is currently perceived as too theoretical, not interactive and diverse. In addition to that, the current material was created by an external company and the resources used to teach the program are out of date and too dense with unneeded information.

Who: This problem directly affects new SMs and ISMs located in all the stations where AFKLMP operates.

Where: This issue can be observed worldwide in all the stations where AFKLMP is situated.

When: The problem occurs when a new SM/ISM joins the organisation and he/she should be onboarded to the SE program.

Why: The company does not have a proper onboarding program that motivates, explains its importance and makes it easily understandable. The material that is currently available is dense and out of date and it does not provide any practical example. Furthermore, because of the pandemic, the program was taught online and currently this approach is not as effective as before. That is the reason why a structured and engaging onboarding will have several benefits on the productivity and growth of AFKLMP.

How: The problem is observed on different occasions. Negative feedback from SMs and ISMs is one of the main signs. Changes need to be made to the onboarding process of the program because SMs/ISMs mentioned that the program is not fulfilling their needs and that some parts can be improved. Low adoption rates are another sign. If a lot of SMs and ISMs aren't using the program, it means that the process is not easy to use or that a proper explanation of all the tools that the SE includes has not been given correctly. This is a crucial point to take into account because the program's success depends on the SMs and ISMs' widespread adoption of it which directly depends on the onboarding of the program.

In conclusion, the SE Program is a crucial tool, but to maximise its efficiency, AFKLMP should start to focus on its training to make it engaging and adapt the way of teaching it based on the exigencies of SMs and ISMs around the world.

[1] Engagement: "the process of encouraging people to be interested in the work of an organization, etc.:" (*Cambridge Dictionary, engagement, 2023*). In this specific case, the term is referred to the SE onboarding.

1.3 Research question

The following research question has been formulated to reduce the problem that has been stated in the previous chapter. It has been decided to focus on one research question as the problem is very specific. Three additional sub-questions have been created to better analyse the issue. The answer to all of them will be helpful to reply to the main research question.

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

What actions can Air France KLM Martinair Cargo take to create an engaging onboarding process for the Sales Excellence Program to enhance its impact?

SUB-QUESTIONS

1. What are operational definitions of the terms "onboarding process" and "engaging" as they are used in the context of Air France KLM Martinair Cargo?
2. What are successful teaching methods in a workplace?
3. What are successful onboarding key processes in the context of the Sales Excellence Program?

1.4 Project aim

The following professional products will be delivered in June 2023:

1. "Handbook for an engaging Sales Excellence Program onboarding" with recommendations that AFKLMP Cargo should take into consideration to engage new SMs and ISMs during the onboarding of the SE program.

2. A PowerPoint that will be used for the SE onboarding that contains the material needed to teach the program engagingly and that includes the benefits that the SE Program has.

These solutions result in a SMART project aim. SMART refers to a certain set of guidelines for establishing goals and project objectives. They should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Every project aim should follow the SMART guidelines to be successful (*Eby, HOW TO WRITE A S.M.A.R.T. project objective, 2022*).

The project aim is the following:

To increase the impact and satisfaction of the Sales Excellence Program, the goal is to optimise the current onboarding training by making it more engaging for new sales managers and inside sales at Air France KLM Martinair Cargo by the end of May 2023 using a mix of different tactics and tools. The aim is to improve the eNPS score from -11.11 (current eNPS) to above 20.

In Appendix 1 "Current eNPS" more details regarding how the eNPS has been found can be retrieved.

S	SPECIFIC WHAT DO I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?	Increase the impact and satisfaction of the Sales Excellence Program for new sales managers and inside sales
M	MEASURABLE HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN IT IS ACCOMPLISHED?	Improve the eNPS score from -11.11 to above 20
A	ACHIEVABLE HOW CAN THE GOAL BE ACCOMPLISHED?	Use of a mix of tactics and tools
R	RELEVANT DOES THIS SEEM WORTHWHILE?	The project aligns with the company's goal and desire to create a more engaging onboarding training
T	TIME BOUND WHEN CAN I ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL?	End of May 2023

Own work

Figure 1: "SMART project aim"

These professional products will serve as proof of the author's competence in the IB programme learning outcome of "Organisation & People".

2. RESEARCH APPROACH

2.1 Sub-question 1

The first sub-question that has been analysed is: "What are operational definitions of the terms "onboarding process" and "engaging" as they are used in the context of AFKLMP Cargo?"

2.1.1. Review of relevant literature

For this specific sub-question, the two terms included in the main research question have been explained to give a better understanding of the context that this research justification is based on and to avoid misunderstandings.

Both field and desk research have been carried out to explore and clarify the operational definitions of these terms as they are used in the context of AFKLMP.

Field research is a qualitative data collection strategy that focuses on observing, responding to, and understanding people while they are in their natural surroundings (*Kayode-Sanni, What is field research: Meaning, examples, pros & cons, 2022*). For the field research, the opinion of SMs and ISMs who have completed the onboarding of the SE Program has been taken into consideration through semi-structured interviews and a survey. Particular attention has been given to the eNPS.

Desk research is market research that involves gathering and analysing data on a subject that is already published in print or online, in newspapers, magazines, or government reports (*Bhasin, Desk research: Definition, importance and advantages, 2020*). In this specific case, operational definitions that can be found online were gathered to give clear and complete definitions of the two terms in the sub-question.

2.1.2. Operationalisation of the variables contained in the sub-question

Operationalisation entails translating abstract ideas into quantifiable observations (*Bhandari, Operationalization: A guide with examples, Pros & Cons, 2022).*

For this sub-question, two variables have been operationalised: "onboarding process" and "engaging". Those variables have been transformed into measurable indicators and each of them leads to the creation of questions that have been answered through field and desk research. A table that can be found in Appendix 2 "Operationalised table sub-question 1" was created to give a better overview of the operationalisation process.

2.1.3. Units of analysis

The primary topic that the researcher plans to comment on in the study is referred to as an analysis unit. The research question is the major factor in determining it (*Avidnote, What is a unit of analysis?, 2021*).

For this first sub-question, the units of analysis were the onboarding process and the adjective "engaging". The goal was to identify how these terms are defined and applied specifically at AFKLMP. By answering this question, the reader will have a clear context of the research.

2.1.4. Data collection & data analysis

Both desk and field research have been carried out. Based on the "possible questions" established in the operationalisation phase, five semi-structured interviews were executed with SMs and ISMs who already had the onboarding of the SE Program in the previous months or years. All these interviews were conducted through Teams as all those SMs and ISMs are not based in Amsterdam, except one ISM.

Regarding the data collection, information has been gathered based on a survey that the researcher sent at the beginning of March 2023 to 20 SMs and ISMs in different stations around the world where AFKLMP operates. 18 of them replied to the survey. The researcher wrote a personalized email to each SM and ISM. An example can be found in Appendix 3 "Example email to sales managers/inside sales". The survey questions can be found in Appendix 4 "Survey onboarding Sales Excellence Program". The goal of the survey was to get a clear idea of what SMs and ISMs think about the current onboarding process for the SE program and what possible improvements can be made.
For this specific sub-question, most of the information has been gathered through field research. However, desk research was also an important element as articles and academic publications have been used to give an idea of the general definition of the terms.
After getting information, the data has been analysed trying to find common elements or controversial answers that could help answer the sub-question.

2.1.5. Expected limitations, reliability & validity

Limitations:

- The study's sample may not be fully representative of all SMs and ISMs at AFKLMP.
- Semi-structured interviews may be biased by the interviewer or fail to cover all relevant issues.
- The terms "onboarding process" and "engaging" can have different meanings and not all of them can be covered.
- The SMs and ISMs who have been interviewed and those to whom the survey has been sent received the onboarding in different timeframes and stations so their experiences are different. Sometimes this led to divergent answers to the questions.

- The researcher could not cover all the aspects related to the sub-question because of the word limit.
- Time constraints as the research has been carried out from March 2023 to the end of May 2023.

Reliability:

- SMs and ISMs who have been interviewed have been selected from all the areas where AFKLMP operates to represent the full population.
- Internal consistency reliability of the survey and semi-structured interviews are high, which means that the questions are consistent and reliable in assessing the same aspect.
- The survey and semi-structured interviews have high inter-rater reliability, which means that the outcome from the different SMs and ISMs is comparable.

Validity:

- The survey and semi-structured interviews have been created concerning the MRQ and sub-questions.
- The survey and semi-structured interviews went in-depth into the concept of the onboarding process and what is meant by engaging in this specific context.

2.2 Sub-question 2

The second question that has been analysed is: "What are successful teaching methods in a workplace?"

2.2.1 Review of relevant literature

For this sub-question, both field and desk research have been used. Articles on effective teaching methods have been analysed as well as opinions from different SMs and ISMs regarding this topic. The goal was to find methods and approaches that could be helpful for sales leaders to teach the SE program effectively and engagingly.

The article "Online learning vs face to face training" (*G. Cooke, Online learning vs face to face training, 2023*) has been used to reply to this sub-question. The article compares face-to-face and online learning. Employees can learn at their speed and from anywhere thanks to the convenience and flexibility of online learning. However, compared to in-person learning, it may be less engaging. Face-to-face offers chances for conversations and direct feedback, but it may also be time-and money-consuming. The author affirms that both approaches have a place in the learning environment (*G. Cooke, Online learning vs face to face training, 2023*).

Another concept that will be analysed is the blended method through the article "8 benefits of blended learning in the workplace". The article highlights the advantages of using a combination of online and face-to-face learning methods in corporate training. Blended learning is found to increase engagement, provide flexibility, personalise learning, and reduce training costs (*Bleich, 8 benefits of blended learning in the workplace, 2023*).

In addition to desk research, field research has been conducted. As for the previous sub-question, the same survey has been sent to SMs and ISMs in which the method that they prefer to use to be trained has been asked. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews have been carried out. Interview questions have been created to cover this topic through the process of operationalisation.

2.2.2 Operationalisation of the variables contained in the sub-question

For this sub-question, the focus was on effective teaching approaches and practices at work. To be able to reply to this sub-question in the most complete way, an operationalised table has been created (Appendix 5 "Operationalised table sub-question 2). This was useful to cover all the aspects of the main concept that in this case is "teaching methods at work". This variable has been transformed into measurable indicators and each of them leads to the creation of questions that have been examined both through field and desk research.

2.2.3 Units of analysis

For this question, the units of analysis were all the successful teaching methods that AFKLMP can use to teach more engagingly and effectively the SE Program.

2.2.4 Data collection & data analysis

To gather the data, a survey has been sent to SMs and ISMs who have completed the AFKLMP SE onboarding. For this sub-question, the survey sought information about teaching methods and all the aspects that have been already set-in in the operationalised table. Moreover, semi-structured interviews with a selection of SMs and ISMs have been conducted to acquire a more in-depth insight into their reflections and desires related to the teaching approach.

Furthermore, different sources have been used to collect information related to this topic through articles and academic publications.

Desk and field research were used to answer the sub-question, collecting data from semi-structured interviews, surveys, articles and academic publications. The goal was to find patterns and answer the sub-question covering all the sub-dimensions in the operationalised table.

2.2.5 Expected limitations, reliability & validity

Limitations:

- The study's sample may not be fully representative of all SMs and ISMs at AFKLMP.
- Semi-structured interviews may be biased by the interviewer or fail to cover all relevant issues.
- The term “teaching methods at work” can include even more dimensions than the ones that have been listed in the operationalised table.
- The SMs and ISMs who have been interviewed and to whom the survey has been sent received the onboarding in different timeframes and stations so their experiences are different. Sometimes this led to divergent answers to the questions.
- The research could not cover all the aspects related to the sub-question because of the word limit.
- Time constraints as the research has been carried out from March 2023 to the end of May 2023.

Reliability:

- SMs and ISMs who have been interviewed have been selected from all the areas where AFKLMP operates to represent the full population.
- Internal consistency reliability of the survey and semi-structured interviews are high, which means that the questions are consistent and reliable in assessing the same aspect.
- The survey and semi-structured interviews have high inter-rater reliability, which means that the outcome from the different SMs and ISMs is comparable.
- The sources that have been used present a clear author, are relevant to the research and the data is up-to-date.

Validity:

- The survey and semi-structured interviews have been created concerning the MRQ and sub-questions.
- The survey and semi-structured interviews went in-depth into the concept of teaching methods.

2.3 Sub-question 3

The third question that has been analysed is: "What are successful onboarding key processes in the context of the SE Program?"

2.3.1 Review of relevant literature

For this sub-question, both field and desk research have been carried out. The article "7 tools you need to build an employee training program" (*Pavlou, 7 tools you need to build an employee training program, 2022*) is one of the ones that has been used to reply to this sub-question. The article discusses the essential tools for creating a successful employee training program.

For this sub-question the goal was to search for different activities and techniques to create a successful [2]onboarding. Several articles and academic publications regarding onboarding processes have been taken into consideration.

Along with that, the researcher conducted a survey and semi-structured interviews to focus on the actions before, during and after onboarding.

2.3.2 Operationalisation of the variables contained in the sub-question

To reply to this sub-question, an operationalised table has been created (Appendix 6 "Operationalised table sub-question 3"). This was useful to cover all the aspects of the main concept, in this case, "onboarding key processes". This variable has been transformed into measurable indicators and each of them leads to the creation of questions that have been examined both through field and desk research.

2.3.3 Units of analysis

For this sub-question, the unit of analysis was the onboarding and more specifically all the techniques and activities that can make it successful.

2.3.4 Data collection & data analysis

As mentioned before, for this sub-question field and desk research have been conducted.

For the field research, specific questions related to elements of the onboarding process have been asked during the semi-structured interviews and in the survey. All the answers related to this specific topic have been collected and analysed. As this topic can be broad, the main dimensions related to "onboarding processes" have been set in the operationalised table.

For the desk research, several articles related to techniques and activities have been taken into consideration.

2.3.5 Expected limitations, reliability and validity

Limitations:

- The study's sample may not be fully representative of all SMs and ISMs at AFKLMP.
- The SMs and ISMs who have been interviewed and to whom the survey has been sent received the onboarding in different timeframes and stations so their experiences are different. Sometimes this led to divergent answers to the questions.
- The term "onboarding key processes" can include even more dimensions that the ones that have been listed in the operationalised table.
- Semi-structured interviews may be biased by the interviewer or fail to cover all relevant issues.
- The research could not cover all the aspects related to the sub-question because of word limit.
- Time constraints as the research has been carried out from March 2023 to the end of May 2023.

[2] In this specific context, the term "successful" is used to indicate techniques that generate engagement among the attendees during the SE onboarding.

Reliability:

- SMs and ISMs who have been interviewed have been selected from all the areas where AFKLMP operates to represent the full population.
- Internal consistency reliability of the survey and semi-structured interviews are high, which means that the questions are consistent and reliable in assessing the same aspect.
- The survey and semi-structured interviews have high inter-rater reliability, which means that the outcome from the different SMs and ISMs is comparable.
- The sources that have been used present a clear author, are relevant to the research and the data is up-to-date.

Validity:

- The survey and semi-structured interviews have been created concerning the MRQ and sub-questions.
- The survey and semi-structured interviews went in-depth into the concept of key processes.
- The sources that will be used will present true findings related to onboarding key processes.

3. RESULTS

The following chapter will provide several findings from the research. The results from this research have been divided by sub-question.

Most of the information came from interviews with SMs and ISMs (answers can be found in Appendix 7 "Answers survey") from different stations. The quality of the answers was essential and internal validity have been ensured. Internal validity is relevant when qualitative researchers explore cause-and-effect relationships (*Burke Johnson, Examining the validity structure of qualitative research, 1997*). In other words, the degree to which changes in the dependent variable are connected to the independent variable is known as internal validity (*Baldwin, Chapter 7 internal and external validity and threats to validity, 2018*).

3.1 Results sub-question 1

This chapter presents the results of the research on the operational definitions of the terms "onboarding process" and "engaging" as they are used in the context of AFKLMP. The results are presented in two parts, with the first part focusing on the onboarding process, and the second part focusing on the word "engaging".

ONBOARDING PROCESS

Onboarding is a process that companies provide to new employees. As Frear (*2007*) mentioned, an operational definition of onboarding is a "holistic approach combining people, process and technology to optimise the impact a new hire has on the organisation with an emphasis on both effectiveness and efficiency". An onboarding also entails establishing an environment in which the employees feel secure enough to converse freely with their co-workers and form social interactions at work (*Lalwani, What is employee onboarding process? definition, templates, and best practices, 2021*). In this specific research, the onboarding process refers to the SE Program, a program for SMs and ISMs created to give them the information and understanding of their needs to make decisions about their sales tactics and be able to communicate in the best way possible with the customers (*AIR FRANCE KLM MARTINAIR Cargo, Sales Excellence Program, 2022).*

To give a more detailed picture of how the onboarding process of the SE program is described and perceived, interviews have been conducted and a survey has been sent to 20 SMs and ISMs.

This section is divided into content, delivery and impact as mentioned in the first operationalised table. Related to the content, Patricia Petean, SM in Brazil was interviewed by the researcher in February 2023. The

transcript of the interview can be found in Appendix 9 "Interview Patricia Petean". She described the onboarding as "overwhelming, especially at the beginning, but once it is done you have everything in your mind" (*P.Petean, personal interview, February 2023*). She also mentioned that she understands that the process is a lot and that AFKLMP should find a way to be more practical as there is a lot of information in the onboarding. Regarding the onboarding itself, she underlined the fact that "…culture has a big impact during the onboarding of the program and it is essential to consider that (*P.Petean, personal interview, February 2023*). Similar thoughts also came from Eun Young, SM in Singapore who has been interviewed by the researcher in March 2023 (the transcript can be found in Appendix 11 "Interview Eun Young"). During the interview, she said: "The SE program is very heavy and theoretical. I do not know if you noticed, but in the presentation, the whole slides have a lot of text and there are too many slides." *(E. Young, personal interview, March 2023)*

Other insights came from the survey that has been sent to SMs and ISMs. One of the 18 respondents stated that: "the onboarding training was pretty challenging in terms of structure. Right now, the onboarding consists of several elements which are shared in a rather chaotic way (MyLearning/PowerPoint/Salesforce/Sharepoint). As a result, the required information was not easily accessible nor well-structured. In addition, the reason 'why' we need Sales Excellence was not fully addressed which does not seem logical to me. "(Appendix 7 "Answers survey" for full survey responses). Another one mentioned that "the training was too theoretical and it was not clear why it was needed". On the other hand, there are respondents who perceived it as "very useful, as it is focusing on essential skills that commercial people need" and "important for any new employees or anyone coming onto the commercial side."

Through the survey, it was also able to see that the main four keywords that SMs and ISMs would use to describe the onboarding process of the SE program are (*figure 2*):

- Theoretical
- Professional
- Motivating
- Challenging

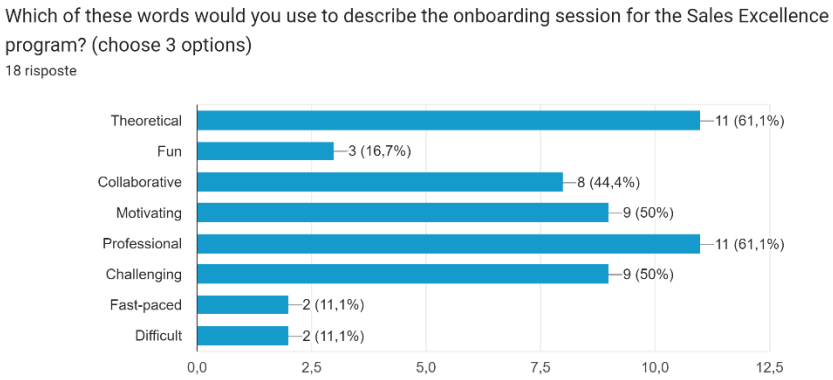

Figure 2: "How respondents would describe the SE program in 3 words" (survey)

Concerning the impact that the onboarding of the SE program has on SMs and ISMs related to success and productivity, the ideas of the interviewees are aligned. Patricia Petean mentioned that thanks to the SE program she was able to give the right solutions at the right time and started to build trust with the customers (*P. Petean, personal interview, February 2023).* To the same opinion is Sanne Bouleij, ISM Benelux, who has been interviewed in March 2023 (transcript can be found in Appendix 10 "Interview Sanne Bouleij"). In the interview to the question "What impact has the Sales Excellence Program on sales managers' productivity and success so far?" she replied "I believe that especially for new colleagues who have never been in the

sales industry or airline industry this program is very helpful to support them a lot." (*S. Bouleij, personal interview, March 2023*). However, she also mentioned that she cannot tell if this has a direct effect on sales colleagues who already work in this business for years and know their customers well. She thinks that it is also the character and drive in this business that can bring success.

ENGAGEMENT

The second term included in the MRQ that is crucial to definite is "engagement". Gallup, a management consulting company, defines this word as "the involvement and enthusiasm of employees in their work and workplace." (*Gallup, how to improve employee engagement in the workplace, 2022*). In this context, the term is specifically referred to the onboarding process of the SE program. The word can be substituted with "committed, interested, involved" (*Thesaurus, 2023*)

The engagement related to the onboarding of the SE has been calculated based on the eNPS, an indicator of employee engagement and the effectiveness of people and culture initiatives. It runs from -100 to 100 and it identifies the group of brand ambassadors in the company and how devoted they are. The eNPS is based on the Net Promoter Score (NPS), a crucial indicator for gauging consumer loyalty (*Thomas, ENPS (employee net promoter score) – The Complete Guide, 2023*).

In the survey, the following question to determine the eNPS has been asked "How likely is it that you would recommend the current onboarding training for the Sales Excellence Program? "After gathering all the results, the researcher calculated the score using the website https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/survey-tools/employee-nps-calculator.

After sending the survey to 20 sales managers and inside sales, 18 of them answered and the eNPS at the end of March 2023 was -11.11:

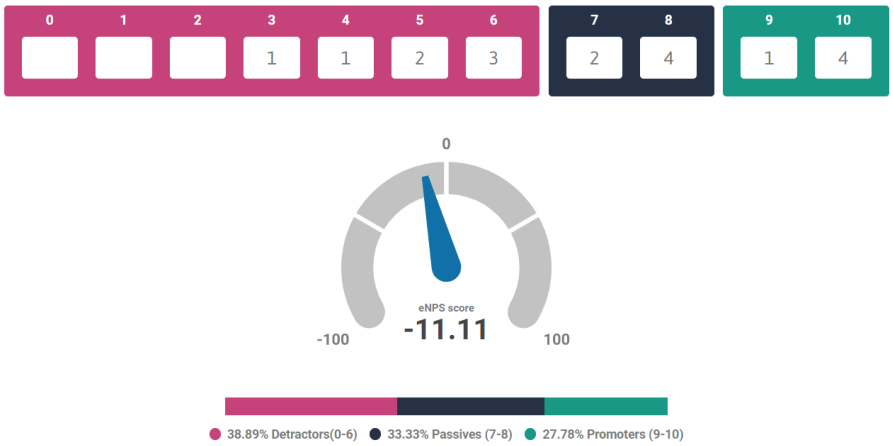

Figure 3: "eNPS score"

During the interview, the concept of engagement came up and there are different conflicting answers regarding it. Eun Young, SM Singapore who received the training fully online, said "Sadly, it is totally not engaging and interacting. … You need people who guide you, step by step, all together" *(E. Young, personal interview, March 2023).* On the other, a SM based in JFK airport (New York) is of another opinion as he mentioned in the survey "In-person training format was interactive and engaging."

The last point regarding engagement that should be mentioned refers to the fact that there is a direct correlation between engagement and productivity. Employee commitment and engagement provide businesses with key competitive benefits, including increased productivity and less employee turnover *(Vance, Employee engagement and commitment - Society for Human Resource Management,2006).*

3.2 Results sub-question 2

In this section findings related to the sub-question "What are successful teaching methods in a workplace?" will be given.

Regarding the method used to onboard new SMs and ISMs, the researcher asked her manager Maaike Schotsman, Transformation Manager, who is responsible for the coordination of the SE. She mentioned that the majority of the SMs and ISMs in the different stations received it online. There is usually a session every two or three months and normally an area director organises it and onboards new SMs and ISMs using a PowerPoint (*Personal communication, February 2023*). A SM in the survey mentioned "Presentations with some text but insufficient time to read during the training." Related to the method used to teach SMs and ISMs Eun Young affirmed "To be honest, it is really hard to understand the SE programs virtually. I do not think this is the right method, because you can easily get distracted." *(E. Young, personal interview, March 2023).* 50% of the SMs and ISMs who replied to the survey think that the most effective method to deliver the onboarding is "e-learning + live sessions" followed by "live sessions", 27.8%.

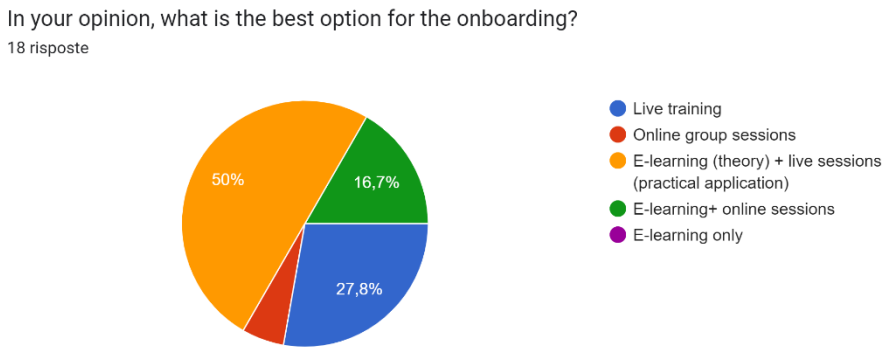

Figure 4: "Best way to deliver the onboarding training" (survey)

According to Cooke (*2023*), there are different advantages of e-learning: it allows companies to save money and time, it is much more scalable and it can be accessed on employees' terms (*G. Cooke, Online learning vs face to face training, 2023*). When talking about onboarding Cooke (*2023*) mentioned that the most effective method is the blended one, which should not be confused with hybrid learning. What is blended learning? Blended learning mixes conventional, instructor-led learning with autonomous, computer-based learning. It is not a new idea in education, but it offers a pleasant and occasionally crucial counterbalance to a recent training strategy that only emphasized technology. Instead, it combines the most effective aspects of the two strategies (*Bleich, 8 benefits of blended learning in the workplace, 2023*). The main difference between hybrid and blended learning is that hybrid learning is designed to maintain an equilibrium between online and offline learning, while blended learning is designed to give in-person online material to complement their in-class experience (*Krantzow, Hybrid vs. blended learning: Is there a difference? 2022*). Blended learning offers several advantages over traditional learning, including <u>improved engagement</u> (the main goal of this research). Overall, blended learning offers a more dynamic and effective learning experience that can be tailored to the needs and preferences of individual learners (*Bleich, 8 benefits of blended learning in the workplace, 2023*).

Correlated to the structure of the onboarding, the researcher tried to investigate how it should be structured and one of the most recurrent terms was "best practices". In AFKLMP, the term means giving efficient ways to complete tasks; these are explained and transmitted by experienced SM, ISM or Key account managers. (*Personal observation, February 2023*). Concerning that, Eun Young and Sanne Bouleij mentioned in the interview "It would be nice to have people who are experienced explaining how the SE Program helps them in their working life and give examples." *(E. Young, personal interview, March 2023)* "It is really important

that all new staff knows AFKLMP's best practices… The important part for me is to have one experienced SM and some colleagues from different departments." (*S.Bouleij, personal interview, March 2023*). Of the same opinion is Nazli Shiralipour, SM Sweden (transcript can be found in Appendix 12 "Interview with Nazli Shiralipour"), who mentioned: "The problem for me was that the peer that I had was working as an ISM and she was super new to the role… the person would not challenge me." Regarding this topic, another comment was made by Juan Burges, SM in Argentina (transcript can be found in Appendix 13 "Interview with Juan Burges"), who affirmed "We have to keep in mind that for the best practices the culture and the market have different roles and it is interesting to share…On the other hand, if you share a best practice that works in Asia, maybe in Latin America and Africa it does not" *(J.Burges, personal interview, April 2023).*

Furthermore, based on the survey, the majority of respondents believe that the maximum number of participants in an onboarding session should be 8.

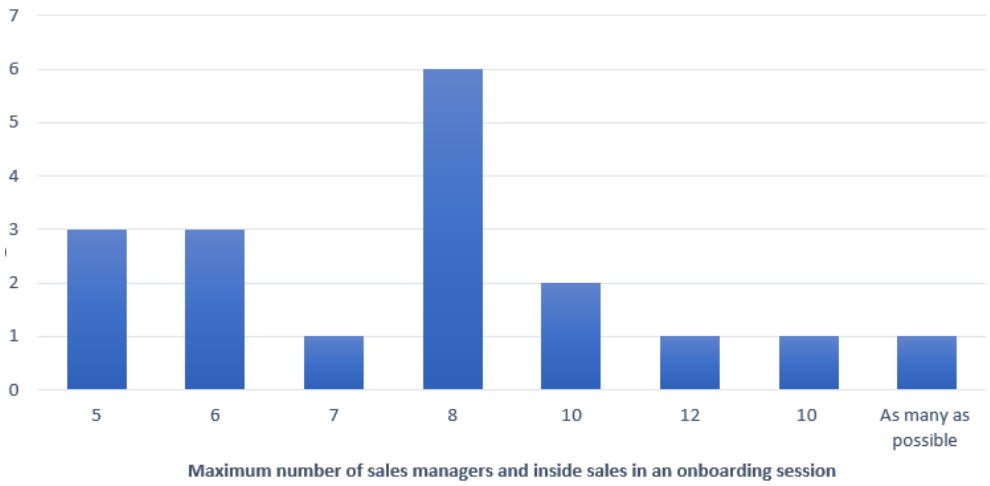

Figure 5: "Maximum n° of SM and ISM in an onboarding session" (survey)

Regarding the length of each session, based on the answers from the survey, most of the respondents answered between 1 and 2 hours.

3.3 Results sub-question 3

Results related to the sub-question "What are successful onboarding key processes in the context of the SE Program?" will be presented in this chapter.

The term "Key Processes" is used in this particular research to refer to all structured activities or tasks that significantly affect the overall success of the onboarding.

BEFORE THE ONBOARDING

One of the first processes is the identification of the SMs and ISMs who still need to receive the training. Currently, AFKLMP has an Excel file with a list of people who still need to be onboarded, but this is not up to date and some SMs and ISMs are waiting for more than a year because of the inefficient organisation (*personal observation, March 2023*).

Another key process that should be underlined is the understanding that SMs and ISMs have of the reason why they need this onboarding and the purpose of it. Based on the survey that has been sent, these are the results to the question "Before the onboarding, was it clear to you why you needed to receive the onboarding and the importance of the SE for you?"

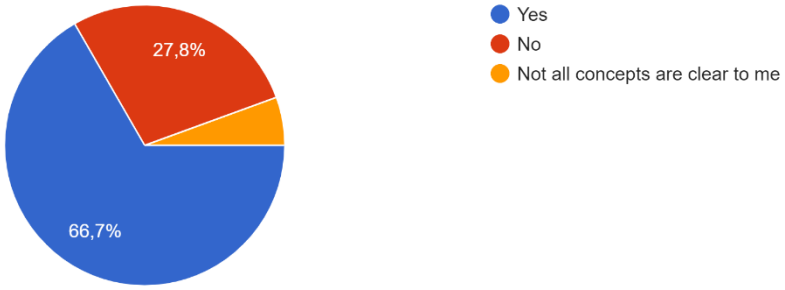

Figure 6: "Why SMs and ISMs need to be onboarded" (survey)

Based on the results, more than half of SMs and ISMs, 66,7%, had a clear idea of why they needed to be onboarded. According to an article in Forbes (*2022*), "Onboarding is not an action; it is an integrated process that needs to embrace technical, organizational and social aspects. One essential part is immersing the new person in the organizational "why" (*Panel®, Council post: 14 essential steps for effective and efficient onboarding, 2022*).

<u>DURING THE ONBOARDING</u>

To create engaging training, you need the right tools (*Pavlou, 7 tools you need to build an employee training program, 2022*).

These days, a training platform is essential. Online course development, delivery, and tracking are made simple with the help of learning management system (LMS) software. A solid structure makes it simpler for both the training designer and the employees to achieve the training objectives and track progress (*Pavlou, 7 tools you need to build an employee training program, 2022*).

Another tool is instructor-led training (ILT), which combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online instructor-led training exercises. (VILT). (*Mansaray, 9 training activities to engage your employees, 2022*).

According to Mansaray (*2022*), 4 effective ideas for (V)ILT training activities that can help boost employee engagement are:

- Role-play
- Discussion activities
- Games
- Polling

As mentioned in the previous article, discussion activities are training activities that increase engagement. Several SMs and ISMs mentioned in the survey and interviews the importance of interaction. Regarding this topic, Nazli Shiralipour affirmed "I think it is important that we communicate and interact with each other… everyone should do their part and come with insights and input" (*N. Shiralipour, personal interview, March 2023).* In addition to that, she also underlined that it is also essential to be challenged during these conversations, by having someone who can make you think one step further. To do that, there should be dynamics between new people and experienced sales managers/key account managers to be able to share insights, new ideas and most important, best practices." (*N. Shiralipour, personal interview, March 2023).*

AFTER THE ONBOARDING

Feedback is a crucial step in the onboarding process. This will assist the business in learning how to improve and streamline onboarding. They might also show what employees liked and disliked about the onboarding and make changes in response (*Azmi, 16 steps to a perfect employee onboarding process in 2023, 2023*). According to the findings, all the SMs and ISMs agree that it is important to ask for feedback.

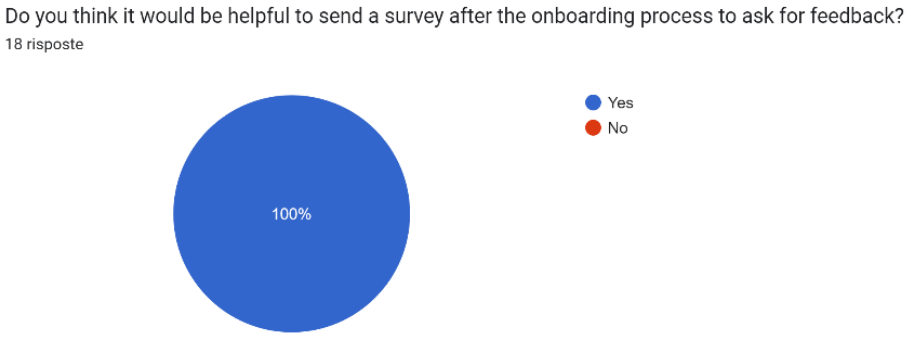

Figure 7: "SMs and ISMs who think that a survey should be sent to ask for feedback" (survey)

Another aspect that should be considered after the training is follow-up sessions. Retraining a subject that employees have already received training in helps them to remember it better and ensures that their knowledge is current (*Colman, Refresher training: Exploring the what, why, and how, 2022*). It is estimated that employees forget:

- 50% of what they learn within one hour
- 80% of what they learn after two days
- 90% of what they learn after 31 days

Currently, no surveys are conducted and no follow-up sessions are scheduled for the SE onboarding (*personal observation, February 2023*).

4. CONCLUSION

After presenting the results, a conclusion for each sub-question and one for the MRQ is provided. Important to underline is that, as previously stated, there are some limitations to this research that should be considered, most important the time and space constraints.

1. Conclusion sub-question 1

Based on the findings, the SE program is created to give SMs and ISMs the knowledge and skills they need to decide on their sales strategies and effectively interact with customers. The survey and interview data collected for this study shed light on the impact, content, and other elements of the SE program's onboarding.

In terms of content, the interviews and survey responses showed that some participants felt that the SE onboarding was theoretical and difficult, and some said they would prefer a more practical approach. Some participants also noted that the poorly organised onboarding process's structure made it challenging to find and comprehend the necessary information.

Regarding the delivery, interviewees emphasized the significance of taking into account the company's culture during the onboarding process. Some participants also mentioned that the program's dense and theoretical nature, which included a lot of text and slides, could be difficult. Some participants felt that the 'why' of Sales Excellence was not fully addressed, so this may be an area for improvement.

It has been observed that the onboarding has both strengths and weaknesses. While some participants described it as theoretical and difficult, others thought it was crucial and extremely useful.

Overall, the results indicate that there is room for improvement in the SE program's onboarding procedure, particularly in terms of its practicality and structure. The SE onboarding could become even more effective and significant if these problems are solved.

Regarding engagement, this is a critical factor in the success of any onboarding program, including the SE one. Employee engagement in their work is critical to ensuring that they are committed, interested, and involved in the program. The SE Program's eNPS score was found to be -11.11 which is considered low. According to the survey results, only a small number of SMs and ISMs would recommend the onboarding to other people. Low levels of engagement can decrease productivity and may result in higher employee turnover rates (*Tenney, How employee engagement affects turnover - business leadership today, 2023*). To increase employee commitment and productivity, it is critical to address engagement issues and create a more engaging onboarding experience for the SE Program. The eNPS score is a really good parameter to measure its improvement.

2. Conclusion sub-question 2

According to the results on successful workplace teaching methods, the majority of SMs and ISMs in different stations receive online onboarding sessions, which are usually organised and presented by an area director via PowerPoint. However, according to the survey, 50% of SM and ISM believe that e-learning combined with live sessions is the most effective method of delivering onboarding training. To reply to the sub-question, according to the results provided, blended learning is the most effective method for onboarding because it offers several advantages over traditional learning, including improved engagement. For this specific topic, it is remarkable that the desired teaching method of the majority of the SMs and ISMs who replied to the survey is the most engaging one according to research. The interviewees also emphasised the importance of sharing best practices during the onboarding process, with experienced staff explaining and providing examples of how the SE Program can help them in their work life and how each of them uses the different tools. Based on the results of the survey and the interviews, the maximum number of participants should be 8, and each session should last between 1 and 2 hours.

3. Conclusion sub-question 3

Regarding the key processes for a successful SE onboarding, they can be divided into three stages: before, during, and after the training. Before the training, it is critical to have an up-to-date list of employees who need to be trained and for them to understand the purpose and importance of the training. Employee engagement is critical during training, and the use of a learning management system (LMS), instructor-led training (ILT), and interactive activities such as role-playing, discussion, games, and polling can help boost it. After the training, it is crucial to conduct regular feedback surveys and follow-up sessions to reinforce the knowledge and ensure the effectiveness of the training. These findings emphasise the importance of a thought and structured approach to onboarding to maximise its success.

4. Conclusion main research question

An answer to the MRQ can be given based on the conclusions of the three sub-questions.

To summarise, AFKLMP can take several steps to make the SE onboarding more engaging. First, they should consider improving the program's content and structure, taking employee feedback into account and making it more practical and easier to follow. Second, they should prioritise employee engagement (eNPS), as it is critical to the program's success, and track what can be improved. Furthermore, the research revealed that the most engaging teaching method is a combination of e-learning and live sessions. As a result, pursuing a blended learning approach that includes e-learning modules with live sessions delivered by experienced staff is the best method. By providing a more engaging learning experience, this strategy has been demonstrated to boost participant engagement. Finally, the onboarding should be approached thoroughly and methodically, with pre-training communication, interactive training methods, and regular follow-up sessions to reinforce learning.

Concrete recommendations for putting what has been discussed into practice will be provided in the following chapter and in a handbook created by the researcher.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conducted research, the following are the three main recommendations that the researcher can give to increase the engagement of SMs and ISMs during the SE onboarding.

5.1. Create a blended learning

Currently, most of the SMs and ISMs are onboarded online, through Microsoft Teams. As mentioned previously, the blended approach would be the perfect one to engage as it combines two different teaching tools. E-learning modules would be used to teach the theory using several pieces of training activities such as games, quizzes and peer-to-peer feedback (example: "After learning the SPIN method, make a video on how you would use it in this specific situation; after your video will be sent to one of your colleagues who will give you feedback on it). In addition, new SMs and ISMs would be able to follow at their own pace and this is extremely useful. The live sessions will be used to discuss different topics covered in the modules with the help of different experienced SMs, market managers, key account managers… Live sessions should be also continued after the onboarding as this will allow them to exchange ideas face-to-face and learn from each other.

The reasons why this recommendation is SAFE has been included in Appendix 14 "SAFE method recommendation 1".

5.2 Ask for feedback from sales managers & inside sales

Right now, AFKLMP does not have any way to retrieve what SMs and ISMs think about the onboarding and what are improvements the company can make coming from people who were onboarded. This is an efficient way to understand how to optimise the onboarding, always finding new ways and tools to engage SMs and ISMs and increase satisfaction. To obtain feedback, a form should be created and sent to all SMs and ISMs who were onboarded. In addition, the eNPS is something that AFKLMP should retrieve, monitor and always try to increase.

100% of the SMs and ISMs who filled in the form think that a survey should be sent after the onboarding. The researcher created it (Appendix 15 "Feedback form").

The reasons why this recommendation is SAFE has been included in Appendix 16 "SAFE method recommendation 2".

5.3. Share more best practices during the onboarding

Last, for each session of the onboarding there should be at least one SM, ISM, market manager or key account manager who is experienced with the SE program and who can give best practices. Sharing experiences, ways of using the program, ways of filling in the information on Salesforces and examples of real meetings with customers… is a valuable addition to new SMs and ISMs. While theory is crucial, practical application is even more fundamental, especially in this case.

The presence of several experienced roles in the onboarding should be included in the e-modules through podcasts, videos and real examples of filled sections on Salesforce as well as during the live sessions by asking them to give practical examples of how the SE program is helping them, giving suggestions, sharing their experiences. By doing that the interaction will increase and consequentially, the engagement. In this way, the participants will understand the benefits of the SE program easily and they will get the chance to discuss several topics between them and the "subject expert(s)".

The reasons why this recommendation is SAFE has been included in Appendix 17 "SAFE method recommendation 3".

Given the context, the available people in charge of implementation, and the available time and budget, it can be affirmed that all options are feasible.

These are just the three main recommendations, but they do not fully cover all the ways that AFKLMP can create a more engaging SE onboarding. For this reason, a "Handbook for an engaging SE onboarding" has been created to give several actions and suggestions to make the SE onboarding as engaging as possible.

In summary, if a one-sentence conclusion has to be given, it would be:

"To have an engaging Sales Excellence Onboarding, this should not remain static, but it must constantly evolve based on feedback from sales and inside sales managers, as well as the contribution from several experienced professionals."

6. APPENDIX

6.1. Appendix 1 - Current eNPS

After sending the survey to 20 sales managers and inside sales, 18 of them replied and the eNPS at the end of March 2023 was **-11.11**.

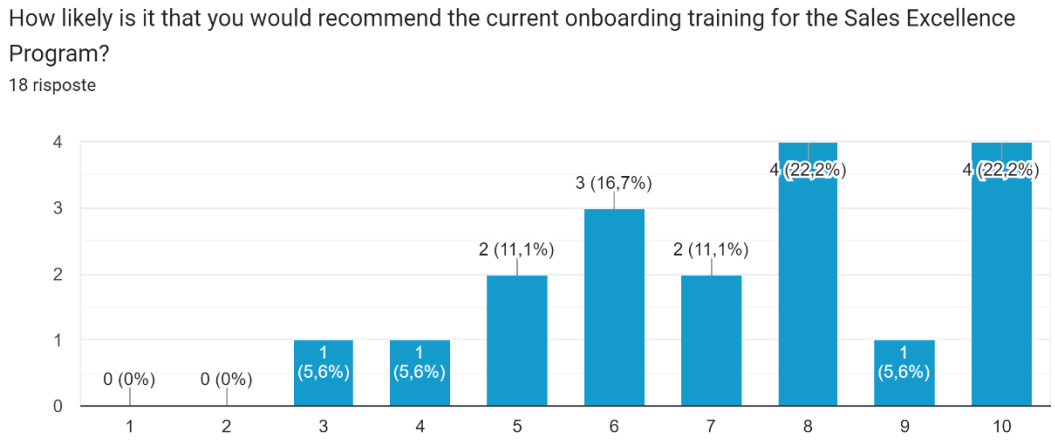

Figure 1: "Results regarding eNPS related to the onboarding of the SE program

This is how it has been calculated:

7 out of 18 are detractors (answers from 0 to 6)

6 out of 18 are neutral (answers 7&8)

5 out of 18 are promoters (answers 9&10)

eNPS (= Promoters (%) – Detractors (%)) -> 27.77%-38.88%= **-11.11**

6.2. Appendix 2 - Operationalised table sub-question 1

Concept	Dimensions	Subdimensions	Indicators	Possible Questions
SE Program Onboarding	Content	Breadth	• Extent to which the objectives of the program were understood	• How well did you understand the reason why you needed the SE program?
		Depth	• Extent of theory • Extent of practice • Percentage ratio between theory and practice	• In percentage, to which extent do you consider the onboarding theoretical? • In percentage, to which extent do you consider the onboarding practical? • Do you consider the onboarding too theoretical?
	Delivery	Methods	• Way that it was delivered • Best method to deliver the program • Extent to which best practices are necessary during the onboarding • Extent to which the onboarding methods promote collaboration and communication	• How did you receive the training? (online/offline) • Looking back at the onboarding, what would it be the best method to onboard sales managers and inside sales to the SE program? • To what extent are best practices essential during the onboarding? • How well do the onboarding methods support collaboration and communication among participants?
		Participants	• Extent to which the number of participants is important • Extent to which program is tailored to individual roles and responsibilities	• To what extend the number of sales managers/inside sales doing the onboarding with you is relevant? • Did you feel that there was the possibility to exchange ideas with other sales managers/inside sales during the onboarding?
		Evaluation	• Extent to which you received feedback	• Did you receive feedback on your performance?
		Follow-up	• Extent to which the program is followed up after completion	• Did you receive any follow-up after completing the onboarding? • Was there any additional support or resources provided?
	Impact	Knowledge transfer	• Extent to which program knowledge is transferred to work	• How much of the knowledge learned in the Sales Excellence Program was transferable to your job? • Were you able to apply what you learned during the onboarding?
		Behavioural change	• Extent to which the program drives behavioural change	• To what extent, did the Sales Excellence Program influence your behaviour as a sales manager/inside sale?

Concept	Dimensions	Subdimensions	Indicators	Possible Interview Questions
Engagement	Behavioural	Program participation	• Extent to which sales managers/inside sales attend onboarding session	• How many onboarding sessions have you attended?
		Active engagement	• Extent to which sales managers/inside sales participate in onboarding tasks • eNPS	• How often did you actively engage in onboarding tasks such as participating in group discussions? • **How likely is it that you would recommend the current onboarding training for the Sales Excellence Program?**
	Affective	Satisfaction	• How satisfied are sales managers/inside sales with the onboarding program • Most satisfying aspects • Less satisfying aspects	• From 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with the onboarding program? • Which aspects of the onboarding did you find most satisfying? • Which aspects of the onboarding did you find less satisfying?
		Commitment	• Level of commitment to the company	• Did your commitment increase/decrease after the onboarding? • From 1 to 10, how commitment are you to Air France KLM Martinair Cargo after the onboarding?
	Cognitive	Confidence	• Extent to which sales managers/ inside sales feel confident after the onboarding	• How confident did you feel as a sales manager/inside sales after the onboarding?
		Knowledge acquisition	• Extent to which sales managers/inside sales gain knowledge during the onboarding	• How much information did you learn during the onboarding?

Own work

Figure 2: "Operationalised table sub-question 1"

6.3. Appendix 3 - Example email to sales managers/inside sales

Can I get your feedback, Nina?

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM
To: Smiljanic, Nina (SPLQS) - KLM

Mon 3/13/2023 9:27 AM

Dear Nina,

I hope you are doing well and that you had a nice weekend!
I am writing you because I would need 10 minutes of your time to fill in a survey that will be extremely useful for my thesis and for the improvement of the Sales Excellence Program. The survey is focusing on the onboarding of the Sales Excellence Program and my goal is to make it more engaging for inside sales/sales managers.

The survey is completely anonymous, so please be honest!
You can find it here: https://forms.gle/rAxxhPqGGp1bYkWHA
You can complete it any time you want, but it would be super helpful if you could do it by the 31st of March 2023.

Thank you in advance!

Have a wonderful day!

Best regards,

Julia Dragone
Project Manager intern Sales Excellence Program
Air France – KLM Royal Dutch Airlines Cargo
+ 39 334 77 30321 | julia.dragone@klm.com

Figure 3: "Example of email sent to sales managers/inside sales"

6.4. Appendix 4 - Survey onboarding Sales Excellence Program

Sales Excellence Program - Onboarding training

The goal of this survey is to have an overview of the onboarding of the Sales Excellence program, how it is perceived and how it can be improved.
Please, be honest while answering the questions. All the answers will be anonymous.

By answering these questions, you will contribute to the improvement of the onboarding program for new sales managers and inside sales. The goal is to make it more engaging for new sales managers.

In case you have some questions, feel free to contact Julia Dragone:
julia.dragone@klm.com

Thank you for your time, your feedback is highly appreciated!

Log in bij Google om je voortgang op te slaan. Meer informatie

*Vereist

When was your onboarding? (year) *

Jouw antwoord

Where is your station? *

Jouw antwoord

How did you feel engaged/interested during the onboarding training? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at all	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely

How likely is it that you would recommend the current onboarding training for the Sales Excellence Program? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Very unlikely	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very likely

Why did you rate it like that? Be as descriptive as possible *

Jouw antwoord

How long was each session and what did you think about the length? *

Jouw antwoord

Before the onboarding, was it clear to you why you needed to receive the onboarding and the importance of the SE for you? *

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Anders: _____

Why did you reply "Yes" or "No"? *

Jouw antwoord

Was the available material effective? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at all	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely effective

Why did you rate it like that? *

Jouw antwoord

What did you miss from the onboarding process? *

Jouw antwoord

How would you rate the way the training is organized and delivered? *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Very unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

How does your ideal onboarding training look like, in terms of **group size**? *

Jouw antwoord

How does your ideal onboarding training look like, in terms of **content** ? *

Jouw antwoord

In your opinion, what is the best option for the onboarding? *

- ◯ Live training
- ◯ Online group sessions
- ◯ E-learning (theory) + live sessions (practical application)
- ◯ E-learning+ online sessions
- ◯ E-learning only

Which of these words would you use to describe the onboarding session for the Sales Excellence program? (choose 3 options) *

- ☐ Theoretical
- ☐ Fun
- ☐ Collaborative
- ☐ Motivating
- ☐ Professional
- ☐ Challenging
- ☐ Fast-paced
- ☐ Difficult
- ☐ Anders:

Do you think it would be helpful to send a survey after the onboarding process to ask for feedback? *

- Yes
- No

Is there anything else that you would like to share regarding the onboarding of the Sales Excellence program?

Jouw antwoord

Do you want to help me with my research? Leave your email here and I will contact you

Jouw antwoord

Own work

Figure 4: "Survey sent to sales managers and inside sales managers"

6.5. Appendix 5 - Operationalised table sub-question 2

Concept	Dimensions	Subdimensions	Indicators	Possible questions
Teaching methods at work	Delivery	Offline vs online	• Extent to which online onboarding is better than offline • Best method to teach	• Would you agree that doing the onboarding online has more benefits than doing it offline? • What is the best way to teach?
		Group	• Extent to which the number of people is relevant • Maximum number of people in a session • Extent to which having people from different stations has a benefit	• How relevant is the number of sales managers and inside sales present during each session? • What is the maximum number of people during a session? • To which extent having the onboarding with sales managers and inside sales from different stations is beneficial?
		Time	• Extent to which the teaching time has an impact when teaching • Best time of the day to learn	• How much of an impact does the time of the day for teaching someone has? • When is the best time to learn and you are more concentrated?
	Structure	Theory vs Practice	• Extent to which the onboarding should be theoretical vs practical • Extent to which examples have a positive impact while learning	• In percentage, would you say that the onboarding is more theoretical or practical? Would you change something here? • Would you say that best practices are beneficial during the onboarding?
		Length	• Extent to which the time of each session is important • Maximum length of a session	• Would you say that the length of each session has impact? • What is the maximum length of an onboarding session?

Own work

Figure 5: "Operationalised table sub-question 2"

6.6. Appendix 6 - Operationalised table sub-question 3

Concept	Dimensions	Sub-dimensions	Indicators	Possible Interview Questions
Onboarding key processes	Before onboarding	Track people who should be on boarded	• Current situation of checking who needed to be onboard • Ways to track who should receive the training	• How are the current people who should be trained identified? • How is it possible to track who should receive the onboarding?
		Familiarity with the topic	• Extent to which they were already familiar with an onboarding	• Before starting the onboarding, did you know why you needed to receive the onboarding?
	During the onboarding	Tools	• Tools that should be used during the onboarding to make it engaging	• Which tools should be used during the onboarding to make it more engaging?
		Interaction	• Extent to which interaction with other sales managers and inside sales is essential during the onboarding	• In percentage, how important is the interaction with other sales managers and inside sales during the onboarding?
	After	Follow-up	• Extent to which follow-up sessions are important	• In percentage, how important is to have follow-up sessions after the onboarding?
		Feedback	• Extent to which feedback after the modules is useful	• Do you think it would be helpful to send a survey after the onboarding process to ask for feedback?

Own work

Figure 6: "Operationalised table sub-question 3"

6.7. Appendix 7 - Answers survey

As the results of the survey have been added to an Excel file, the researcher could not copy-paste the sheet because of space constraints. For this reason, the file can be found on Google Sheets through this link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1K3CwOjB-AEHsN5Rh1RrDRomU0yEH0h_GwrpluUOyRY4/edit?usp=sharing

6.8. Appendix 8 - Colour coding legenda

General comment from the interviewee related to the SE program/ onboarding
A positive comment from the interviewee related to the SE program/ onboarding
A negative comment from the interviewee related to the SE program/ onboarding
Suggestion/ recommendation from the interviewee related to the SE program/onboarding

6.9. Appendix 9 - Interview Patricia Petean -Sales Manager Brazil

The interview has been carried out on Microsoft Teams on the 15th of February 2023.

Disclaimer: the researcher at that moment of the interview did not have a clear idea of what she wanted to research so the questions are both referred to the Sales Excellence Program and the onboarding.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Hi, Patricia, can you?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

Hello, how are you?

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Now I see you. Good and you?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

I am good as well. I am back home.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Oh, nice, is it warm in Brazil?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

It is, it is! We are in the summertime, yeah.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Amazing. I am jealous. Thank you so much for your time. It is nice that you accepted to talk with me about the sales excellence program and the onboarding and most important, share your opinion about it. Just to give you a bit of context, as I have already mentioned when we saw each other, I am a project manager intern for the Sales Excellence program. My focus is to improve the program itself and more specifically the onboarding because I understand the importance of it. Furthermore, this interview is also useful for my thesis. More specifically, I would like to improve the onboarding to make the Sales Excellence Program simpler and more engaging. For this reason, I would like to ask you some questions.

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

Of course, you can ask me whatever you want.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

So, the first one is more general like how did you end up being a sales manager in Brazil for Air France KLM Martinair Cargo? What did you study before?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

Here in Brazil, I studied business administration, but at the same, we applied all the knowledge in foreign trade. Then, I have a master's degree in logistics management. So yeah, this is my background, but I always worked on the customer's side, on the freight forwarders.

When I talk about "freight forwarder" is pretty much customer service so import-export and this helped me to travel and work for DB Schenker in Miami. So over there I was an intern and I was able to work on the import-export in the warehouse, it was amazing. I came back and stayed there for 10 years at DB Schenker but I also worked for other companies that are more local heroes.

There are also other international heroes that we can identify as "global accounts". I was in a local hero. The lady that I was working for had a friend at KLM and she said that the sales were moving on at that time.

She was living in the United States with her husband. So, then I gave my intentions to work for an airline company and she was like "Ok, I can check. I will talk to my manager." So, by that time, I was a manager. She is not working for Air France KLM anymore, but then I made it through interviews and, yeah, then I became a sales manager. I have never been in sales before, so that is why I think the Sales Program is so important. You know I have all the theory behind it.

Of course, you are not going to apply the same guidelines for each country because you have your own culture and everyone is different of course. For me, it was super important to have the theory behind it. So, then I can move on, you know, and grow as a manager, so that is why.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

It is really interesting that you had this path and that in the end, you ended up in sales, something that you really like right now. Moving on to the sales excellent program, what is your opinion about the program? What do you think about it in general?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

So, I like it. I think it is professional and, in my mind, if I became a sales manager, for example in Amsterdam, I am going to be the same professional as here.

It is going to be standard as I am going to have the same theory behind it. It is like starting all over but with the same concept. For example, you know the "buying centre", they help to understand the business and they are adding value to the customer. So that is what I like the most, it is professional and a standard for all sales managers at Air France KLM. So, when the customer thinks of Air France KLM, they are going to think the same, does not matter which country you are talking about.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Nice! Before the introduction of this program, how were the preparation, the meeting and the follow-up? How was the process structured?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

Well, I cannot say that much because the year that I started they implemented the program and I am working for Air France KLM for four years now. Not that much, right? So, the year that I started was the year that the sales excellence program was created, so that for me was fantastic! You know, I really started with a sales

mindset. But I remember that at the beginning it was more learning through notes, you know like you have your paper and your notes and then you have to figure out something else about your customer

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

I completely understand!

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

Any history behind, especially because later I substitute the sales manager who left and then I started to work so there was no time for me and her to understand better the customers. I was the only one sitting with the customer service fee and the director, but they were just underlying some points and not a good overview saying which issues we had with the company like some overviews for example showing me: "With this customer we have this issue, he does not like that…". You know, just asking "Why, why..."

What I like the most is that because I was working on a freight forwarder, I saw those forwarders that the customers had as my competitors before because I was working for DB Schenker and Kühne+Nagel (*one of the most important customers of AFKLMP*) was my competitor. For that reason, I knew pretty much what kind of products they are working for because they were my competitor. Because of that, I had a little bit of history behind me.

But as a sales manager, now I needed to change my mindset and see it as my customer and not my competitor. You know, I needed to change my mind and start over and I introduced myself as a person who could help them and not just someone who stores cargo.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM
And do you maybe have an example of how effective was the sales excellence program for you in your daily life, an example that you can give me where you can say "The Sales Excellence program helped me a lot".

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

I do and this is what I like the most. When I started to work for AFKLMP, we had a local here and we still have it, called "Fermac". I am going to say the name because then it is easy. The customer's name is Fermac and they are the first in Brazil and they are specialised in fresh/perishable. And when I started, we had 0 kilograms with this customer. So, then I asked my director "What happened? What is going on?", also financially speaking Then in my mind, I was like "I have to change that". You know, how a company like Air France KLM does not have even one kilogram with the first top company in Brazil, it does not make any sense. You know, I do not need to have 100%, but zero is not possible for me. So then with my actual director in ICA, we changed the structure.
Because of the COVID situation, now everybody in Brazil is part of the South American team, which is OK. So, then she realised that as well and she was like "OK, I agree with you, let's change that".

So, what I liked the most about the Sales Excellence program is the buying centre because in this case, my director was with me, we went to the Fermac and we talked to the owner of the company. The nice part is that we introduced ourselves like "Ok, we are changing, we are a new company. Brazil is not only Brazil; the ex-director is not the ex-director anymore. Let's start over."

Taking into consideration that this was an ICA director talking to the owner; as sales, I knew it by the time that I had to start over with the operation. Start with the girls and guys that are quoting the cargo that the cargo is on hand and for this reason, I built a new buying centre.

And that I started like every 15 days calling and asking "How are you? Do you know that Air France KLM is flying back to Fortaleza" and then 15 days later "Do you know that our rates from Monday to Thursday are a high spot rate? We can negotiate" You know Julia, I started calling Fermac over and over and more often to

introduce myself, to show Fermac that they can trust me again and that they can trust Air France KLM. That is exactly what happened. If you check my health status, you can notice that it was 000, they said that they do not trust AKLMP.
Right now, they are in the top three and you see that in the healthy status (*one of the tools of the sales excellence program*). So yeah, indeed, it helped me to build a new relationship and of course, you have to add your flavour (*It can be deduced that she meant that everyone should put her personality*). You know, I knew by the time that I cannot just knock on the door and ask for cargo because this was not going to happen as the customer did not trust me at the time. So, I have to build up trust and I needed to add value. I mean, the goal was to give the right solutions to the customers and show that my new directory was open to hearing and help with whatever was needed. So that was adding value as the value proposition was right there. I was giving the right solutions at the right time and started to build trust. It was amazing!

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

It is nice that you are talking about that because the concept of the "trusted advisor" comes up a lot in the program and the question is always "Who is a trusted advisor? How can you become one?" From your answer, I can feel that you became a trusted advisor and that is great. This is a company achievement, but also a personal one.

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

Yes, yes, I feel that I am proud of that.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Do you think that the sales excellence program onboarding excludes some parts of the information?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

I do not know. What I like the most is the sales mindset. An example is the "World Cafes" because we are now part of a huge team. You know I can see that I can call sales in Italy and talk about leveraging knowing that is something in the concept of the sales mindset because before for me it was really easy to talk about business from Brazil to abroad but I was not thinking on the opposite side, in this case from another country to Brazil.

As a global account, they talk about something that you know and as a local, you can tackle it. You know that thanks to the program you can go to the customer and talk about this specific situation or product and really develop and this was missing before. I guess that right now we can see more and more of the positive effects of the program and this is fantastic. The goal is to have these conversations all over the world and the "World Café" was a good way to do that as everyone has a sales mindset.

I think that we need to keep doing that, once in a while. Maybe one hour every three months, just to talk and introduce ourselves as a sale, because when you see the person is completely different. Right now, I know that I have somebody in Italy talking the same business as me. So, then I can call them right away and say "Hey, let's leverage the business."

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

What do you think about the onboarding of the sales excellence program?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

I think it helps a lot. I know that the onboarding training is overwhelming at the beginning and this is something that everybody says. It is a lot of information to start with, but once it is done, you have everything in your mind

That is why the first time that you do it there is no productivity as you spend so many hours working on it, after that it is 100% because you just need 5 minutes to update and not more, regarding the action list you always need to update it based on what you are going to do next. So, for our next meeting, you are super prepared because you already put everything into the system when you needed and you do not need any notebooks anymore.

Thanks to this program, what I did last time with this customer, now is still on the system. I think that what my sales colleagues sometimes forget is that the meaning of the program is not only checking capacity and rates because there are so many things. You can talk about everything during the meeting for example sustainability and you are really prepared. You have to be prepared to talk about everything, you need to be able to convince the customer and talk for example about service and check if for some reason they are not happy or they are super happy with something.

You need to show what you can offer and this is the meaning. Now the ICS2, I do not know if you heard about it, but it is an European new import control and this is a situation that we have to be prepared for and go to the customer and have a good meeting about it. So those are the meetings that are sometimes a bit tricky and the sales say "Every month we need to talk about rate, my rate is going to not change". Yes, but it is not that every month you are going to talk about rate because there is so much behind. Those are important meetings and you are going to put them on your action list, and then your key account is going to read it, he knows what you are talking about it and OK, Brazil or in China or any place else, they are tackling this subject.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Wow, Patricia, there are so many benefits and I hope that by optimising the onboarding, people will understand how important it is. Regarding the feedback, did you receive some feedback from other sales managers? Are there happy or what do they think?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

I know, for instance, the sales in Brazil, sorry, in South Central America because we are split, we have only one sale per country and it is a lot. Our countries are huge, you know Brazil is huge and I have 4 stations to take care of. So, I agree with my sales colleagues that sometimes it is too much. They feel that it is not important and that you can have everything in your mind. They usually say "I am not going to do it because I have to take care of the whole country. "So that is the feeling that they have and that is the feedback that I got.

I think it needs to be done because we saw the benefits behind it. So, take your time, do it correctly and the next month is going to take you 5 minutes of your time. At the same time, I heard so much good feedback, for example, people from Africa and Asia really liked the program and they receive those compliments from the customers. But for example, in Brazil, if I go to the customer with the health status questionnaire, they are not going to answer. We hate those surveys; it is part of our culture.

Knowing that I am not going to the customer knocking on the door and say "Hey, let's answer this. "I am not going to do that and sometimes I am trying to send this message to my colleagues saying "Look, you have to change the way you do the customer roadmap". You have to do it, but it does not mean that you are going to go with the survey and ask question by question. No, you are not going to do that you have this is something that you have to build up every month.

Bi-weekly you can figure it out, but it is not something that you are going to sit and finish on the same day. No, it is something that you have to build up. My goal is to try to change their mindset, but it works for another country, that is the point. That is the beauty of the sales excellence, because the theory is there, but you are not going to take the whole theory and apply it to your customer because you have to add your

flavour *(it can be deduced that she means personality-wise and be adaptable based on the country and customer you are dealing with*). You know that it is going to be different.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Well, I mean, it is really important to show them how they need to work and how they detect that at the beginning it is a lot of work, but that it would be helpful for the future. So that is important for our team to talk also about the training. You mentioned that you started to work at AFKLMP and they already integrated the Sales Excellent Program. So, what do you remember about the training?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

It was super nice, I was able to go to Atlanta at that time (so face-to-face training). So, it was the first time that I met my South American sales colleagues and it was really nice, especially the integration. I remember that we spent two or three days there. So, it was really focused on the program and understanding it.

We had a company doing the auditions so it was not just AFKLMP doing the program, but there was a concept behind it.

Uh, but it was super interesting, but I remember the time that we had to fill in Excel files and when I was back in Brazil and I was sitting and I looked back into Excel files, I was like "Oh my God, I do not know how to start". I understand that it is too much, I understand that. For the sale people who were working as sales managers for 40 years, it was easier, but for me not at all.

I was asking myself "Why do I need to know the buying centre and what is the purpose of the health status?" The suggestion is to go deeper and understand the concept before learning all the theory and why this is useful.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Were the training effective and what improvements on the training would you suggest?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

What was effective for me was to be with my colleagues, 100%. I know that the company does not have the budget, also because of the COVID situation, to travel that much, but it makes so much difference. You know, when you are dealing with sales…we feel alone, we are the owner of a country and that is me. You know that the revenue depends on me and I have to work it out. So, we feel alone and we feel how effective it is when we are together, that we have a family that is not only you.

The company does not need the report just to follow what you are doing. They know that I am working because they can see that in the revenue and the numbers, so this is not the key concept. This is what affected me and what I should suggest changing, but maybe…

Culture has a big impact during the onboarding of the program and it is essential to take that into consideration.

My big tip for all the sales while doing the onboarding: "Try to get as much as you can and do all the processes, but do them thinking that you are the customer". How would you react if a sales manager goes and knocks on your door and asks you questions? You know that by doing that you put yourself on the customer seat, this is the tip and maybe for me, it is easier because I was the customer before and I know that I cannot go with the survey.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

What is the suggestion that you would give to sales leaders to teach the sales excellence program? Do you think it is better to do it in a big group, practice and theory together or separately, what is the best training for you especially to arrive at the point that you are right now, as you are so knowledgeable, you know everything and you know how to use it. So how do you think a person can arrive at the point where you are right now?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

It is practising and it is about the group. I was asked by a colleague from Curacao and we both like the program. We understand the concept, so we were asked to teach our sales colleagues. So, what we did was we asked our ICA director, that for example every Monday of the month we have our market meeting in central South America. We asked the ICA director to give one Monday of the month only for the saleswomen and for the sales guys. So, every first Monday of the month, only sales are in the meeting and we only talk about the customer engagement roadmap or sales mindset. So now we are feeling that we are together, we are becoming more professional on that because we are not alone because they can feel that we struggle on the same points. So, we can hear the complaints and look, you are not alone. I would see these moments as something that we can share and exchange examples. This is working very well and we are becoming better and better. Some people complain and we say "Look guys, you need to be more professional" This is working and we are already doing it for the 4th or 5th month.

This shows that we are improving. You see that people are liking and enjoying and they are not feeling alone. So, my suggestion to the leaders is: "When you onboard someone, do it in a group, do not do it alone" Give the possibility to share, take time, make the person ask questions, give examples and be passionate about it. I also think that the sales at AFKLMP are professional and I also told that to the ICA manager, but sometimes we feel that the other departments are not on the same page as us. When I told her that, she was like "Did you realize that another department has also a program specifically for them?" and I was like "No, I was not aware of that". So maybe that is why I told my sales colleagues that we are frustrated with something with an operation or with the HUBs, but we do not know what they are working on. For instance, they have a problem behind them as well, so maybe what we miss now is seeing the other departments' programs. How can we integrate the best practice from operations in my sales concept? How can I integrate the best practices from CSO, which is super important for me as I can consider them sales managers as well, in my program? How can I integrate the tracking department, the pharma?

How can we integrate each other into one sales excellence program? Maybe this is a good tip, maybe it is a good thing for you to think about and try to develop the integration and have the possibility to have colleagues from other countries having the onboarding with you.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

What do you think is the tool to onboard new sales managers? Do you think it is better to put PowerPoints on SharePoint or face-to-face teaching or add books/ articles?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

Well, recently I had the chance to be with Audrey, I do not know if you know her, who was trying to teach the program to the new inside sales and sales managers.

So, she blocked four days, 2 hours per day to teach. It was on Microsoft Teams and I can tell "It was a lot of information." During these 2 hours sessions, you cannot even leave the sessions and you are always seated. You know, it is a lot of information. She decided to dedicate Tuesdays and Fridays to that. She asked the guys to practice and try on the system and then in the next session, she was asking "How do you feel?" What is

the feedback?" I could see that the all-onboarding process was a lot, so maybe we need to find a way to be more practical. I do not know how to do that, but it is just a suggestion. I participated in all 4 sessions, with my knowledge and giving some examples to my colleagues, but I could feel in their eyes, getting tired after 2 hours on Microsoft Teams. We all have Internet and you can hear the slides on PowerPoint, she taught what she had to teach, but I do not think it was 100% productive. This is my view.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

From what you said, I can deduce that you would suggest doing it face-to-face and sharing best practices because that helps.

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

Yeah, if it is possible because I know that we are all in different parts of the world. You do not have the budget to travel from Africa to Brazil to teach you how to do something.

However, if it is possible yes! Maybe manage it somehow and ask somebody close to your country. I know that in Europe you can travel easily, as the countries are really close to each other. So maybe somebody from Germany can travel to the Netherlands. That would be great!

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

I have other two questions. The first one is "I am starting to check the old training and one of the aspects that I am missing is the why, like, why the people need it?" I know that you had the session, I do not remember how long ago, and it was so useful. We watched it and we realised the importance of the why, but in the training is not there.

So, do you think if another training will be created in the future, do you think that the reason should be underlined at the beginning of the training?

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

Yes, definitely! People really need to understand why they need it, so maybe start with this question. "What would we miss if it would not exist?

During the session that we had, someone asked this question and everyone was "Do not take it from me!" So, we need it and start with the opposite question. If they take it out, every sale would do whatever and we need to ask ourselves "What are we going to feel?" "How will be the conversions?" For example, if we have a guy in Argentina and another one in Africa, if you do not have the concept, how will the conversation be? What are you going to lose? You won't have a structure behind the theory. So maybe asking that question because when the lady asked us, I was like "Wow, yeah, absolutely, it is really important." The reason why it is hard to define it is that we are talking about quality and quality is so hard to measure. You know you can measure the quantity, 1 + 1 is 2, but the quality is really hard. So, when you ask "Why?" on a concept that is quality excellence is hard to say why. But then when you ask the opposite "Why not?" everyone is scared to lose it and you think "Oh, they care"

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Yeah, we do not want to lose it

Petean, Patricia (SAO CA QS) – AF

I do not want to lose it!

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Yeah, definitely. It is so inspiring what you said and right now, I got a better idea of how everything works. You are so enthusiastic about it and that is really the goal of the program, to have people like you who use it and are happy to use it. Thank you so much for your answers, Patricia, you are really kind!

6.10. Appendix 10 - Interview Sanne Bouleij- Inside Sales Manager Benelux

The interview has been carried out in Amsterdam (Schiphol) on the 1st of March 2023.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

How did you end up being an (inside) Sales Manager at Air France KLM and what did you study before?

Sanne Bouleij (SPLQS) – KLM

I am in the airline business now for 17 years started my internship in April 2006 with Martinair Holland N.V. – Traffic Passage and during this period I worked at several departments within Martinair Holland till March 2011, from that moment for Martinair Cargo till March 2014. Since March 2014 for KLM Cargo till now as my current role as Inside Sales Manager Benelux.
I have studied Aviation Services and Logistics at NLC (Dutch Airline College) now called ROC of Amsterdam Airport.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Moving on to the Sales Excellence program, what is your opinion about the program?

Sanne Bouleij (SPLQS) – KLM

It is definitely a good program to learn all the sales skills needed in this business especially when you have never done sales.
It is focused on the customer to get as much wanted response from them and avoiding ending up in senseless discussions or even conversations who are not focussed on your goal.
I understand this program is developed to support sales managers and try to get the best out of them although sometimes in the airline industry, a more informal way of having a conversation is much more appreciated and effective with freight forwarders.
This program is not always showing what happens on the job.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

What impact has the Sales Excellence Program had on sales managers' productivity and success so far?

Sanne Bouleij (SPLQS) – KLM

I believe that especially for new colleagues who have never been in the sales industry or airline industry this program is very helpful and supports them a lot, but I cannot tell if this has a direct effect on my sales colleagues who already work in this business for years and know their customers really well.

It is also your character and drive in this business that can bring success and a program is not really making a lot of difference.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

What is your opinion on the current onboarding training that was used whilst you were onboarded to Sales Excellence?

Sanne Bouleij (SPLQS) – KLM

I think it is mainly very useful for new sales colleagues who have never worked in sales before.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

Do you think the current onboarding process is engaging and interactive enough? If not, which strategies would you use to make the onboarding process more engaging?

Sanne Bouleij (SPLQS) – KLM

Not so much, but I do not know what I would like to change

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

How well do you feel the onboarding process prepares new sales managers to work with clients around the world?

Sanne Bouleij (SPLQS) – KLM

As I already said it is definitely a good program for new sales managers to get a good idea and base on how the company wants us to work and develop skills they might not have before or improve them.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

Was the training material/content effective for you?

Sanne Bouleij (SPLQS) – KLM

To be honest, it helped me with some cases, but since I know the customers already for years I know their needs, irritations and way of communicating effectively with them.
If you are an open person and show that to them in my case, they are very open as well.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

In your opinion, what is the most effective way to teach people?

Sanne Bouleij (SPLQS) – KLM

The program helps, but bring new sales colleagues to your customer visits, you really learn it on the job!

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Do you prefer to be trained alone (through a training platform like Moodle) or in a group?

Sanne Bouleij (SPLQS) – KLM

I do not mind, both are fine

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Did you receive sufficient guidance and feedback from your trainers/sales leaders during the onboarding process?

Sanne Bouleij (SPLQS) – KLM

Yes, there was always time for questions.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

If you need to sum up all the remarks mentioned above, what does a perfect onboarding process look like for you? (ex. small groups, just theory and then practice, number of sessions, online/offline, PowerPoint, best practices…)

Sanne Bouleij (SPLQS) – KLM

- Sessions no longer than two hour per session
- PowerPoint
- Practice per market on the job
- Mix of e-learning and live training

6.11. Appendix 11 - Interview Eun Young- Sales Manager Singapore

The interview has been carried out on Microsoft Teams on the 27th of February 2023.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

So first of all, thank you so much for joining this session. The first question that I would like to ask you is: "How did you end up becoming a sales manager at Air France KLM and what did you study before?"

Kim, Eun Young (SIN CA QS) – AF

I am in this company already for more than 15 years, so I started in Korea in customer service. I was in customer service organizations for 13 years. Later on, I had an opportunity to change my position.

I wanted to go out of my comfort zone and move to sales. For this reason, two years ago I took a new opportunity as a business development manager based in Singapore doing pharmaceuticals for Southeast Asia and then also airmail in Asia, the Middle East, and China.

Regarding my major, I studied Korean literature, so it is not connected to the airline logistics industry. After that, I ended up working as a sales manager.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

It is nice what you did. You are a very good example that it does not matter what you study, you can end up wherever you want and do whatever you want. Really nice Eun Young!

Kim, Eun Young (SIN CA QS) – AF

True!

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Moving on to the sales excellence program, which is the main focus of this interview, what is your opinion about the program? Do you like it, do you use it often?

Kim, Eun Young (SIN CA QS) – AF

Actually, I am maybe not the perfect example, but it is also good to share my opinion. I joined this role during the COVID period, which means that I could not meet people, especially in Singapore. The restrictions were really strict. For this reason, you could not meet people, you could not go to the office and you could only go

out by yourself. So, everything was through phone or e-mail. It was quite difficult to connect with people. Regarding, the sales excellence program…. I have done the sales excellence program through Microsoft Teams, so virtually.

Everything was virtual, also the training. To be honest, it is really hard to understand the sales excellence programs virtually. I do not think this is the right method, because you can easily get distracted. In addition to that, the sales excellence program is very heavy and theoretical. I do not know if you noticed, but in the presentation, the whole slides have a lot of text and there are too many slides. It is very difficult to focus virtually.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Moving on to the training, what's your opinion on the onboarding process that was used when you were trained about the sales excellence program? Did you find it hard to follow the training on teams? How was it?

Kim, Eun Young (SIN CA QS) – AF

Yes, it was very difficult to follow, but in my case, I was already in this industry for 13 years. So, a lot of things I could catch up on by myself without someone teaching me and then guiding me by only reading the presentations, I can already pick it up. For a newcomer, it is extremely hard.

First of all, it is very heavy. Second of all, doing the training virtually is so hard. Doing the training online is extremely hard and it is impossible to handle the heavy material. You cannot focus, also because of the content.

I think is very nice to have this kind of program for sales managers because these are important soft skills for sales persons. In addition to that, you learn different techniques that help you to talk to the customers, for example, how you categorize the decider and losers, that kind of thing. It gives you a very good idea of what you should do, but also structure.

However, it was very, very difficult to follow on Microsoft Teams. You need to allocate your time in a good way and have some time by yourself. The training should be more step-by-step and not hours and hours of theory. This is not engaging for sales managers.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

I am sorry to hear that. That is the reason why we want to optimise it and make it more interactive. The next question is: "Do you think that the training is interactive and engaging?"

Kim, Eun Young (SIN CA QS) – AF

Sadly, it is not engaging and interactive. I really disagree with virtual training for the Sales Excellence program. What is the best way to teach? Maybe I am old, but the best way to teach people is still the face to face, in a small group.

You need people who guide you, step by step, all together. **Examples are essential**, you need to insert the information for each section of the Sales Excellence Program and go through each of them. Asking questions is a really good way to learn concepts and there should be the right time to do that. During the training online, I can easily get distracted because customers keep calling me, I see my emails popping up and then I need to reply. I want to be concentrated, but it is impossible.

It would be nice to do the training in pairs. You really need someone next to you.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Do you think it is better like to be trained in a group or alone?

Kim, Eun Young (SIN CA QS) – AF

A small group, like two people or three people, not more than three because the content is heavy. You need to do it together, cooperation is essential.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Regarding the feedback, during the onboarding of the program, did you receive some feedback after? Could you ask for some clarifications or was it a bit hard?

Kim, Eun Young (SIN CA QS) – AF

To be honest, when I finished all my training, yes. I had four sessions, each of them 3 hours. All this in one month.

Yeah, it was already 3 hours with a virtual video call. You cannot follow, I am pretty sure nobody can follow. Furthermore, it was every week, like 3 hours in 4 weeks. Honestly, I could not really follow everything during the sessions.

I could not ask for feedback right after because honestly, I could not follow everything. So, after some time when I had time, I opened the presentation, went through it, and then I asked questions to my colleagues and other people around the world. In addition to that, I could not give directly to the trainer feedback as the trainer was in Paris, so I felt a little bit disconnected. So I tried to find someone in Asia that I know, like in Korea, Japan, or in Singapore.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

The last question is: "If you need to sum up all the aspects that you mentioned, what does a perfect onboarding process look like for you? Regarding the group size, the theory and the practice and the number of sessions…?

Kim, Eun Young (SIN CA QS) – AF

The group should be small, not more than three people. In my opinion, it should be face-to-face and do it together, by practising.
I like the PowerPoint concept. It would be nice to have people who are experienced explaining how the Sales Excellence Program help them in their working life and give examples.

Having experienced sales managers who can explain concepts is essential as they already know the sales excellence program, like the Customer Engaging Roadmap and the one-pager.

Moreover, it should not be long. If it is face-to-face, it will not take too long, maybe two days. My recommendation is to not do it virtually and in person.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

I agree, thank you so much for replying to the questions!

6.12. Appendix 12 - Interview Nazli Shiralipour– Sales Manager Sweden

The interview has been carried out on Microsoft Teams on the 30th of March 2023.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

Hi Nazli, thank you for joining this meeting! It is an honor to have you here. The first question that I would like to ask you is "Can you please introduce yourself and what is your role at Air France KLM?"

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

I started in August 2022 and I work as a sales manager for the Swedish market. In Sweden, the team is based on me being responsible for the Swedish customer and then we have a colleague that works as an inside sales helping a little bit, of course, with Swedish customers. The platinum and the gold customers are my responsibility mainly.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

From what I can understand, you have a lot of responsibility, I guess. Moving on to the sales excellence program, from a range from 1 to 10, how satisfied do you feel about the program?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

The program, I think it is a good program. I would say 6 or 7, but I felt like the content of it was too heavy. I have worked as a key account manager for years before, so I felt it was too much. A lot of content, which is good but me not coming from the cargo and the air flight industry at all, I had zero experience. I wish that the sales excellence program or the onboarding training would be more focused on the business "What is Air France KLM good at?" "Why should we sell cargo through Air France KLM?" I mean, have more concrete examples and not, you have this case, how would you solve it?

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

No, I understand. Can you like define it as engaging and interactive?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

I would, but partially

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

Did you have the possibility during the onboarding to interact with other sales managers in Sweden?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

During the onboarding, I interacted with some inside sales, which was good. I think there were one or two sales managers. The problem is that the peer that I had was working as an inside sales and she was super new to the role.
I felt as we were discussing things together and I could come up with some input and say, "Okay, I would solve it like this."
The issue is that the person would not challenge me. She was like "I believe you; I believe you." So, I felt like, okay she is new to her role as an inside sales. When I was talking with her, I was telling her "I have this case

at Air France KLM; I handled it like this at my previous job. I had this in this situation and I did it like this" and she did not challenge me. She was like "Yeah, it sounds good." Honestly, I would wish to have somebody who would challenge me. She could have said, "I would have maybe done it this way or you handled it like that… I was really feeling that my way was the correct way. I would have wanted to receive some input from other people or maybe say "Okay, why did you do it like this or how did you think when you did it like this?" and not "That sounds good".

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

I understand, so you are telling me that you would like to have more experience people, right?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

Exactly, have someone who can explain to me how he/she did it previously and discuss different methods. I would love to have a dynamic between new people and experienced sales managers/key account managers so we can share insights, new ideas and most important, best practices. A couple of years ago, in my previous job, I had this situation and I did it like that.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Yeah, I understand. How well do you think the onboarding methods support the collaboration and communication with the participants?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

I think it is important that we communicate and interact with each other. I think everybody that is onboarded to the sales excellence program should do their part to not sit quiet and be passive. There are no wrong answers.
You should not feel like you cannot speak up, because you should speak up, there are no stupid questions. Everybody should do their part and come up with insights and input. There is no right or wrong answer and you can always learn from each other. There is always a moment when you say "Ok if I said it like this, maybe I have to do it like that, but maybe there is also another way to do that." By doing that, you can get challenged. Oh, this is the right way or not? Maybe you should think like this and this because if you think like that. The goal is to find someone who challenges you and makes you also think one step further.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

I totally agree! How do you feel that the onboarding prepares new sales managers to work with clients around the world like?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

I think the onboarding program prepares really well.
For instance, if you have worked within KLM before and now you have a higher position as an inside sales, that is a perfect way! Online it is harder to interact with compared to offline.
It is important to remember that everyone communicates differently. An example can be that someone is communicating in a certain way and her way of communicating does not mean anything bad. You have to be open-minded when you are sitting in front of your manager, purchasing manager or the director of some

company. You have to be very open-minded. A tiny flinch from your eyebrow or a bad expression can destroy an entire collaboration with your customer.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

What is for you the most satisfying part of the program and the one that is less?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

It was nice to go through the program and know all the things that I have with me in my backpack and that I can use at Air France KLM as the values that I have fit in with the values we have here. I do not have to adjust my belief systems, my values or my way of working or communicating with customers. I just need to sharpen them and get even better.
Regarding the training, you can never have too much training. You constantly need to be trained. You have to be open to developing and getting new skills because the business changes every day. You cannot sit and say, "Ok, that person here taught me this 20 years ago." Well, that is 20 years ago. Now we are in 2023 and we need to prepare for 2024 and 2025. We always need to think about what we can do to sharpen our business, our way of working and our way of communicating.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

You see, it is something that should evolve and not be static.

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

Exactly, it should be alive and it should evolve. We should not stop after the training is done and this should not be the end of the sales excellence. For me for instance, I should have something maybe in a year or two years as this will challenge me even more. Now we have done this and you have to do this training now, whether you like it or not as it is important for your development and the company's development.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

Moving on to the material and the content. Did you find it effective (the PowerPoints)? I am asking this because the feedback that I have got is that in the slides there was so much text, but I do not know what you think about it.

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

The PowerPoint was good, but I felt something was missing. We did some training where you had to read and answer some questions and look at some video clips and do some questionnaires and it was a good setup. On the other hand, it would be nice to have some files where I can search some terms based on different situations and based on them, I can solve different situations.
You know, there is so much information that you would get in a couple of weeks and at the same time, new things happen. It is good to have something to go back to and to refresh your memory.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

That is a good idea! If you think about the onboarding training, how would you imagine it? What is the best way for you to onboard someone?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

The best way for me is to inform beforehand what the new sales managers and inside sales should expect from the onboarding. When someone starts, he/she does not know what to expect. It is important to mention which points will be touched and let them know how they need to prepare.
It is important to prepare some topics and goals that the new sales managers/inside sales should cover. In this way, the person can also check them and tick them off. "I have gone through this, I have gone through that, I received this document documentation, I have done this e-learning…" Right now, every day was like a surprise.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

I think that is a good thing to know. When you come to Air France KLM or when you work as a sales manager for Air France KLM, you need to do this training.

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

You need to know this and this and this within the first two months, if somebody hasn't shown you this or if you do not know this, it is very crucial that you learn it as soon as possible. You have some boxes to tick off, so you know. Here I am today, this is where I am supposed to be in two months and you can tick those boxes off. You know what the expectation is.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

That is true because right now if you make me think like that, there are no goals that you need to achieve regarding the Sales Excellence.
You already told me that for you the best practices have a big impact. Regarding the training, do you think it is better to do it alone or in Group? Which is the best option for you?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

I would say a combination of the two. You should have some solo training, so you can think for yourself, maybe prepare for like a group seminar or session and in the meanwhile, you think of some questions. You prepare for that by yourself, you can just discuss it in a group, and you maybe can have some group sessions in MS teams. You divide the participants into groups, you focus on a certain topic, you chat about it and you discuss it in a group.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

Regarding the group, do you think the maximum of people should be 10 people or how many?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

Maximum 10, 12, it should not be too big, because if it gets too big, everybody does not have enough space to speak up. On the other hand, if it is too small, maybe then you get shy as well and you do not want just one person speaking.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

I know and which tools do you think should be used during the onboarding to make it more engaging? I mean tools, like e-learning or PowerPoint in this case like.

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

I think e-learnings is a superb way. You know, watching some videos and replying to some questionnaires. On the other hand, there should be also PDF documents like a book or a guide that should be compared to Wikipedia or Google for Air France KLM.
We should develop a "my guide" page. For instance, you know there are so many new terms popping up and there are so many new things you need to learn that should be accurate. I should be able to go to my guide and type a certain word and know exactly the meaning of it.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

I think it is so important that, especially for a person like you who came from another sector and not from cargo.

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

I came from the automotive business, then I went to the IT business and then I worked for Carglass in Sweden where I used to work in customer service. I was promoted to team leader and I was in charge of educating and onboarding new staff. In that case, I set a dummy book (with this word she meant the guide) That book, I think still lives today. You need to have something that is the fundamental and this is the basics.
Some things within Air France KLM will not change. You will not change the subject of general cargo as you will not switch it to military goods.
There are some things that you can set up and they are the foundation of everything. You can say "This is your book or this is your PDF document. If you have any questions, you search in this book and then you can ask colleagues"
I remember that I was asking many questions, for each topic I guess at least 2 times before. You get so much information during the day and you do not mean to be disrespectful. You do not mean to forget, but sometimes you forget some of the information or you forget that I have already asked this question.
For this reason, it should be nice to have a book that you can use if you have some doubts. You can type in what? How can I do this? What is the routine for this? This will avoid you to ask thousands of times to your colleagues the same question.
If for example, you use the train when you go home, you can just read it there or in general when you have some spare time in the afternoon or in the morning, read some pages, refresh your memory and know what is going on.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

The last questions are more about the feedback. After the onboarding, did you receive enough guidance and feedback from your trainer or sales leaders during the onboarding?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

I still have last block to do on sales excellence, so I haven't finished it yet, but I feel like the inputs that I have come from my market manager. He is listening to me, so that is positive.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

The last two questions are, did you receive any follow-up after completing the onboarding?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

No follow-ups yet, but I would love to receive some. It is a good thing to have, a follow-up after a couple of weeks/months. Asking, "How was it? Do you remember what you did? Which aspects would you like to refresh?"

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

That is a good one! Do you think it would be helpful to send a survey after the onboarding process to ask for feedback?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

Yes, definitely!

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) - KLM

To summarize all this, if you need to describe how the perfect onboarding looks like for you, how would you describe it?

Shiralipour, Nazli Soraia (ARN CA QS) - KLM

The perfect onboarding would be a welcome e-mail on the first day at the office explaining what the new sales manager/inside sale needs to learn during the onboarding of the sales excellence program. It can be to your company e-mail or it can be to your personal one. It should be a nice email explaining what are the all processes and the people who can be reached out in case of some questions/issues. You also need to mention the person who will onboard you. It is important to consider that when you start a new position, it is not easy.
You need to mention, "This is what you have to expect from your first month, this is what will happen. This is what we have planned for you for the onboarding of the sales excellence program.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

My goal is to onboard new sales managers and inside sales and your feedback is very useful. I appreciate it a lot, thank you so much for your time Nazli!

6.13. Appendix 13 - Interview Juan Burges- Sales Manager Argentina

The interview has been carried out on Microsoft Teams on the 4th of April 2023.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Hi Juan, the first question that I would like to ask you is, could you please introduce briefly yourself and what is your role in the company?

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

My name is Juan BURGES and I am the sales manager for Argentina and Uruguay, also Paraguay, but sure, Uruguay and Paraguay are offline. I am working for Air France KLM since the year 1998, a long time ago so. I have always been a sales manager in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This is my experience, before Air France KLM I worked for a regional airline for six years, always in cargo.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

You were consistent all the time!

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

Yes, yes, always cargo, always cargo.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Nice! So, moving on to the sales excellence, more specifically to the onboarding. How satisfied were you from 1 to 10 regarding the onboarding?

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

I would say an eight. It was a very difficult process, especially during the pandemic. So, we had an unexpected break during those years. Now we are resuming the training and I think it is a very positive thing.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Great! What aspect of the onboarding did you find most satisfying, and the one the less satisfying?

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

The best part of the onboarding is to share with the other colleagues our experiences and it should be done more. This is the most important aspect because the fact that you are learning together is always a positive thing and you can share experiences with your colleagues, feelings and best practices. I think this is a very positive point.

As I said before, I have a low a long experience in the company. What I would change is to maybe make a different approach for the new stuff than for the experience stuff because for sure all the points are important, but maybe we could skip some of them. Just skip the basic points for the experience stuff. This is my message.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

That is a good one. To which extent do you consider the onboarding too theoretical? Do you think there was a lot of theory or not so much?

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

As I already mentioned some aspects could have been skipped. Training during the whole year is interesting because if we receive training in a week, there is too much information and at the same time we have no time enough because we have our daily tasks. So, I think it is interesting to split the training into different periods.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

How did you receive the training? Did you receive it offline or online?

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

Physical, in presence, which is better, but we can understand that we cannot travel everywhere because of the cost and because we have no time as it is time-consuming. I think a combination of offline and online would be interesting.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

It is a nice answer because the next question that I wanted to ask you was like "What's the best method for you to onboard people? What is the best method to teach them?

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

As I said, we have to find the right balance, we need something between the virtual and the presence. Virtually onboarding worked as the company survived working like this, so it is effective and it is cost-saving at the same time. It is sustainable as well because we avoid travelling too much. I think that the right combination is to combine both methods.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Do you think the number of people during the session is important and what is the maximum of people that you think should be doing an onboarding with you?

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

A big group is not effective because if you have a question or something like this, you have to wait a lot and the participation will not be the same. I would say that 15-20 people per session is OK because you have the time to ask your questions and make your comments.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

What is the maximum length for a session, one hour or 2 hours? Because we also need to take into consideration the concentration.

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

Yeah, not only concentration, but the language as well because when you are talking a language that is not your native one, it is hard. In that case, you need more concentration, so I think that one hour is okay, more than an hour can be much more difficult to keep the consideration and to be focused.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Do you feel like that, there was the possibility to exchange ideas with other sales managers while you were onboarded?

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

Yes, but once again it depends on the amount of the group. It is interesting when you talk with other sales managers from other regions, it is always interesting because the cultures are different and the markets are different.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Do you think that best practices are an important part of the onboarding?

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

They are, for sure, but we have to keep in mind that for the best practices, the culture and the market have different roles and it is interesting to share. On the other hand, it is hard to keep it between your regions because more or less is the same culture. For sure if you share a best practice that works in Asia, maybe in Latin America and Africa.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Did you receive feedback on your performance, when you started to use the tools?

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

Yes, I regularly receive feedback. I have a one-to-one meeting every month. We talk about the tools and how I can improve.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Great! Did you receive any follow-up after the onboarding? After you completed the onboarding, did you receive other training or refresh of the material?

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

Yes, I do it with Enrica (his *manager*) during the one-to-one meetings.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

Yeah! Another question that I can ask you is: "Do you think that your commitment to the company as a sales manager increased or decreased after the onboarding? Did you become more confident in your working life thanks to the onboarding?

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

It increased, as it is important. You can do things consciously because for sure for experienced people we do it automatically in our mind most of the points. But when you can see the detail, you can be more conscious about what technique are you using. So, this is important. It is important to be conscious because you can improve or you can be more organised with say your mind during the meetings. Before the meeting, during the meetings and after, the commitment does not change.

Dragone, Julia (CASD PC) – KLM

The last question that would last would like to ask you is, how would you describe the perfect onboarding for you in terms of people in terms of everything?

Burges, Juan Carlos (EZE CA CM) – AF

Wow, it is a difficult one! The fact of having the onboarding and then the follow-up and going little by little is essential. Giving the whole information in one shot is too much, so I think it is important to keep it step-by-step.

6.14. Appendix 14 - SAFE method recommendation 1

S	SUITABLE	• It addresses the problem of onboarding new SMs and ISMs in a way that is engaging and effective. • The recommendation aligns with the needs and preferences of new SMs and ISMs who may benefit from the flexibility and self-paced learning opportunities offered by e-learning modules, as well as the interaction and discussion opportunities provided by live sessions.
A	ACCEPTABLE	• It is a practical and viable solution to the problem of engaging new SMs and ISMs during the onboarding. • The e-learning modules can be developed and delivered through existing online platforms such as Moodle, while live sessions can be facilitated by experienced employees and managers within the organisation.
F	FEASIBLE	• It can be implemented using existing resources and infrastructure within AFKLMP + hiring a "learning & development specialist" who focuses just on the creation of the e-modules & trains coaches (annual gross salary: €39,754*) • E-learning modules can be developed and delivered with minimal investment in hardware or software, while live sessions can be facilitated using existing meeting rooms.
E	EFFECTIVE	• It optimises the use of resources and time to achieve the desired outcomes. • E-learning modules can be accessed by new SMs and ISMs at any time and from anywhere. • Live sessions can be scheduled and organised to minimize disruptions to daily operations, while still providing opportunities for interaction and discussion.

*(Payscale, Average learning and development specialist salary in Netherlands, 2023)

Own Work

Figure 7: "SAFE method recommendation 1"

6.15. Appendix 15 - Feedback form

Feedback- Sales Excellence Program Onboarding-

Dear Sales Manager/ Inside Sales Manager,

Thank you for participating in the Sales Excellence Program onboarding. We really value your feedback as it helps us improve and provide a better learning experience.

Kindly take a few moments to complete this feedback form. Your responses will remain anonymous.

Thank you in advance for filling in the form!

Sezione 1 ...

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely are you to recommend this onboarding of the Sales Excellence Program to a colleague or friend? *

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Not at all likely — Extremely likely

2. Did you consider the onboarding engaging? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ Not fully
- ◯ No

3. Overall, how satisfied were you with the Sales Excellence Program onboarding? *

- ◯ Very satisfied
- ◯ Satisfied
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Dissatisfied
- ◯ Very dissatisfied

4. How would you rate the content and materials provided during the onboarding? *

- ◯ Excellent
- ◯ Good
- ◯ Average

5. Were the objectives of the Sales Excellence Program clearly communicated? *

- ◯ Yes, they were clearly communicated.
- ◯ Somewhat, there was room for improvement.
- ◯ No, they were not clearly communicated.

6. How would you rate the trainers' knowledge and expertise? *

- ◯ Excellent
- ◯ Good
- ◯ Average
- ◯ Poor
- ◯ Very poor

7. Did the Sales Excellence Program onboarding meet your expectations? *

- ◯ Yes, it exceeded my expectations.
- ◯ Yes, it met my expectations.
- ◯ No, it fell short of my expectations.

8. Were the modules well-structured and organized? *

- ◯ Yes, they were well-structured and organized.
- ◯ Somewhat, there were some areas for improvement.
- ◯ No, they were poorly structured and organized.

9. Did the Sales Excellence Program onboarding provide you with valuable insights and knowledge? *

- ◯ Yes, it provided valuable insights and knowledge.
- ◯ Somewhat, there were some gaps in the information.
- ◯ No, it did not provide valuable insights and knowledge.

10. What specific aspects of the Sales Excellence Program onboarding did you find most beneficial? *

Inserisci la risposta

11. Were there any areas where you felt the Sales Excellence Program onboarding could be improved? *

Inserisci la risposta

12. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions about the Sales Excellence Program onboarding?

Inserisci la risposta

Sezione 2

Thank you for filling in the form!

Thank you for your valuable feedback. Your input is essential in helping us enhance the Sales Excellence Program and create a more impactful learning experience. If you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to us.

Own work

Figure 8: "Feedback form"

6.16. Appendix 16 - SAFE method recommendation 2

S	SUITABLE	• The form is an appropriate technique to discover how to optimise the onboarding process and increase satisfaction. • Through the form, AFKLMP can learn from SMs and ISMs who have been onboarded what can be improved. This can result in a more positive overall onboarding experience, boosting employee retention and productivity.
A	ACCEPTABLE	• As long as the survey is performed professionally and respectfully, there should be no issues with asking for input. • The eNPS is a widely established way of measuring employee satisfaction.
F	FEASIBLE	• No additional costs to create the form and monitor the results. • It is relatively simple to create and distribute a survey to SMs and ISMs using modern survey software. • The eNPS is a straightforward metric that can be calculated and monitored over time.
E	EFFECTIVE	• By using this form, AFKLMP can pinpoint any areas where the onboarding process may be ambiguous or could be enhanced. This will ensure that the onboarding process is always evolving and not stagnant.

Own work

Figure 9: "SAFE method recommendation 2"

6.17. Appendix 17 - SAFE method recommendation 3

S	SUITABLE	• It enables the sharing of real-world examples and practical advice rather than just academic concepts. It also contributes to the development of a sense of community and support inside AFKLMP Cargo.
A	ACCEPTABLE	• This approach is acceptable since it allows experienced professionals working in the company to convey knowledge to others who are new to the role. It also acknowledges the importance of learning from people who have already achieved success in the same or similar roles.
F	FEASIBLE	• This strategy is feasible since it is simple to implement and requires few resources. • Experienced employees can be asked to participate to live sessions or record podcasts/send files by texting them on Teams or talking directly to them.
E	EFFECTIVE	• It provides practical knowledge that can be applied right away. • It helps the development of internal ties and networks, which can lead to increased collaboration and teamwork. • It can boost job performance and happiness among new sales managers and inside sales teams.

Own work

Figure 10: "SAFE method recommendation 3"

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