YRKESHÖGSKOLAN NOVIA

Optimization of the Induction Process

Action Research for Wärtsilä Finland

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Abstract

The purpose of this action research was to find out how the induction process can be improved within the Maintenance Planning department at Wärtsilä. The Maintenance Planning department supports long-term marine agreements for 4-stroke engines. Together with other teams in Wärtsilä Maintenance Planners support their customers with planning and executing maintenance activities. Due to the increase in agreements, there has also been an increase in the need for personnel. This has made the stakeholders for the training within the department notice that the current induction process lacks structure and is time-consuming for both trainers and new employees going through it.

To be able to find elements of improvement within the process interviews were held with both newly employed people within the department and line managers. After problem areas were located, literature was researched to gain knowledge on best practices and common errors to avoid in the induction process.

The research was conducted by the action research method with an iterative approach, a method appropriate when the researcher themselves is a part of the process they are trying to improve. By conducting action research, the researcher has a close collaboration with different stakeholders of the thesis, to be able to get feedback and adjust the results and outcomes accordingly.

The finished product that is produced by this research is an employee handbook containing organizational and job-specific information, a training checklist, and a training schedule. Along with the handbook recommendations for improvement as further work within the department is also provided to the stakeholders of this thesis.

Language: English
Key Words: induction process, onboarding, learning, training

EXAMENSARBETE

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Utbildning och ort: Produktionsekonomi, Vasa
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Titel: Optimering av Induktionsprocessen – Aktionsforskning för Wärtsilä Finland

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Abstrakt

Syftet med detta examensarbete var att hitta olika sätt på hur man kan förbättra induktionsprocessen för nyanställda vid Maintenance Planning avdelningen vid Wärtsilä. Anställda på avdelningen assisterar kunder som har långtidskontrakt för 4-takts motorer. Tillsammans med andra team stöder de dessa kunder med planering och utförande av underhåll av deras motorer. Under de senaste åren har antalet service kontrakt gått upp och därför har också behovet av mera personal ökat. Detta har fått ansvarspersoner för inskolningen av ny personal att inse att processen i nuläget saknar struktur och är onödigt tids- och energikrävande för både de som skolar in ny personal och den nya personalen.

För att hitta aspekter som kan förbättras med induktionsprocessen har intervjuer med nyanställda och avdelningschefer hållits. Lösningar på problemen som lokaliserats har getts med basen i forskning av litteratur. Litteraturen som forskats i gäller bästa praxis av de olika aspekterna och vanliga problem som bör undvikas i inskolningen.

Metoden som användes i detta examensarbete var aktionsforskning med en iterativ ansats, metoden lämpar sig väl när forskaren själv är en del av den process som forskaren ämnar förbättra. Genom att bedriva aktionsforskning har forskaren ett nära samarbete med olika intressenter av uppsatsen, för att kunna få feedback och anpassa resultat och utfall därefter.

Den slutprodukt som denna forskning genererat är en handbok som innehåller information om organisationen och mera arbetsspecifik information gällande ansvar och arbetsroll. Handboken innehåller även en checklista på olika utbildningar som den nyanställde bör genomgå och en tidslinje för dessa utbildningar. Tillsammans med handboken ges också rekommendationer till intressenterna för denna forskning gällande fortsatt arbete med förbättringar.

Språk: Engelska
Nyckelord: induktionsprocess, introduktion, inlärning, undervisning

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1 Introduction

When a new employee enters a new job role the first few weeks are crucial for how the rest of their employment will be. During the first couple of weeks, the new employees form their opinion of the organization, and it is key to make them feel supported and make sure they settle in well during this period. A well-conducted induction process can increase employee satisfaction and retention as well as strengthen the psychological contract between the employee and the organization.

Even though the induction process plays a huge part in how the new employee thrives and performs in their new role, it is often overlooked by organizations. According to Southern (2024), up to 35% of companies don’t spend any money on the induction process and 1 in 3 HR professionals report that their organization’s onboarding is not up to standard, so a poor induction process is unfortunately a common problem among organizations.

This thesis is conducted for the Maintenance Planning department at Wärtsilä. They have recently had an increase in workload and personnel needs and have therefore been conducting inductions for new employees more frequently. This has made them aware of the fact that improvements could be made within the induction process to ease the workload for the personnel conducting the induction and for the new employee to get the best possible start in their new job.

The subchapters following will further emphasize the background of the researched problem, the purpose and delimitations of the research, a short description of the organization and department the research is conducted for, and an overall explanation of the disposition of this thesis.

1.1 Background

This thesis is made for Maintenance Planning 4S – Performance Services – Wärtsilä Finland. The Maintenance Planning department supports long-term service agreements of marine installations. The main responsibility of a Maintenance Planner is to keep track of the work carried out on agreement-covered equipment and recommend upcoming maintenance accordingly based on upgrades, bulletins, history, schedule, and contractual obligations. Deliverables such as quarterly reports, budgets, and scope of work are also responsibilities of a Maintenance Planner.

For a while now the long-term service agreements which are supported by Maintenance Planning have been and still are steadily increasing. Due to this increase more personnel are required in the department and more inductions and training need to be done. Because of the lack of structure in the induction and training process, this has become more difficult and time-consuming over the years.

The induction and training process currently has no structured plan that it is done according to, and the training material is scattered around various platforms. No follow-up or tracking of the training is done, which can lead to knowledge gaps or time wasted by training the same thing multiple times. This increases the time it takes for an employee to be able to work independently and start handling their installations, which lowers the employee satisfaction and retention rate.

1.2 Purpose and Delimitation

The purpose of this thesis is to find ways to improve the induction and training process in the Maintenance Planning department at Wärtsilä. By examining current practices, analyzing the needs of employees, and working with the company training guidelines, this thesis aims to identify the key components for a successful onboarding process. During the study, various training methods and techniques are explored to be able to determine ways to optimize the induction, accelerate employee integration, and improve employee satisfaction.

The scope of this thesis is limited to the Maintenance Planning 4S department of Wärtsilä, a department located in five different countries. Therefore, the findings in this thesis are intended to be universally applicable and might not take regional or country-specific variations in induction processes into consideration. The theoretical framework explores and analyzes induction processes primarily within corporate organizational structures and does not address induction processes in smaller companies. The theoretical framework addresses induction as a component of the learning and development landscape and does not comprehensively cover other aspects of organizational development or human resource management. While learning styles are a part of the theoretical framework, every learning style is not acknowledged, and the subject is not researched deeply due to the evidence supporting it is lacking.

The method chosen for the research is action research due to the active involvement of the researcher. This involvement might lead to a level of subjectivity that can influence data collection and interpretation. The method limits generalizability since findings are derived from a specific organizational context. The time-intensive nature of the method can constrain the depth and breadth of the study, limiting the exploration across different topics. The method used for data collection was interviews in a semi-structured form. The limitations when using interviews as a method are that there is a potential inaccuracy in the interpretation of the answers given, difficulty in limiting the number of people being interviewed, and discomfort with being interviewed among the participants.

1.3 Wärtsilä

Wärtsilä Oyj Abp is a Finnish company founded in 1843 that produces power solutions for both the energy and the marine sectors and is known for its innovative and sustainable solutions. Wärtsilä currently has about 17500 employees in more than 240 locations in 79 countries. Wärtsilä has for a long time been on the front line of engineering innovation with their purpose being to "enable sustainable societies through innovation in technology and services" (Wärtsilä, n.d.).

The Energy business assists its customers in the decarbonization journey by developing and providing technologies such as future-fuel-enabled power plants, hybrid solutions, energy storage, and optimization technology. The Marine business has a broad portfolio of engines powered by a variety of fuels, digital technologies, propulsion systems, hybrid technology, and integrated powertrain systems. Wärtsilä also offers service solutions for their customers, where they provide maintenance planning, spare parts, and field service teams according to agreements (Wärtsilä, n.d.).

1.3.1 Maintenance Planning, 4S EUAF & MEA

The Maintenance Planning department this thesis is conducted for supports long-term marine service agreements for 4-stroke engines in Europe, Africa, The Middle East, and Asia. Maintenance Planning has around 30 employees that are based in Finland, Greece, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Japan. Together with other teams in Wärtsilä the Maintenance Planners support their customers with planning and executing maintenance activities according to contractual obligations.

1.4 Disposition

The second chapter presents the theoretical framework used as a base for the research that the result will build upon. The third chapter describes the method that was used when conducting the research and the reasons for choosing the method. In the fourth chapter the result of the research is presented and the reasoning behind it. The fifth chapter provides a conclusion of this thesis and a reflection on further work and challenges. In the sixth and final chapter, the researcher reflects on the research and its results in a short discussion.

2 Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the theory that the empirical study was based on. The theory covered in this thesis is based on the training module in the human resource management process (see Figure 1). Each department of the organization this research is conducted for is responsible for its induction and training of new employees. Topics covered are those that are relevant to the module and to the key stakeholders for this thesis who are responsible for the induction and training, the line managers. The chapter will begin by explaining the theory of the induction process, what the key elements of a successful induction are, and why a good induction is so important. It continues by explaining adult learning theories and different training methods within the workplace context. The theory will also present parts of the different elements where organizations often fail and why.

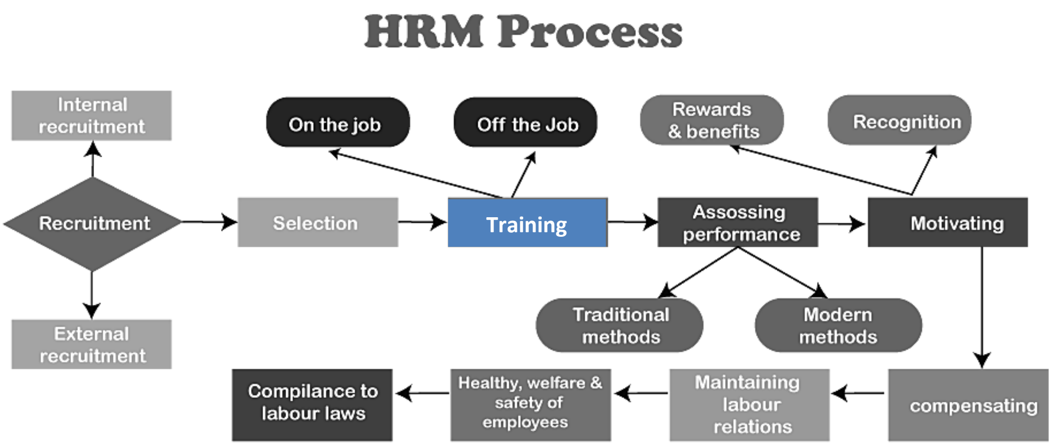


Figure 1. The HRM process (Human resource management, n.d.).

2.1 The Induction Process

An induction is the process through which an employee adjusts to their new job and workplace. An induction process has multiple purposes, the main purpose is to introduce the new employee to the organization’s culture, policies, and procedures and to provide sufficient information on job roles and responsibilities along with training on tools and systems. Another purpose of the induction is to ensure that the new employee integrates well into the organization and the team by introducing them to coworkers, promoting a positive workplace culture, and fostering team dynamics. An effective induction process is important for both the employer’s and the employees’ future success. The induction process can also be called onboarding, depending on which term a company uses.

An employer is obligated to provide sufficient introduction to the work, working conditions, working and production methods, tools used in the work and their correct usage as well as safety training according to the Finnish occupational and safety law section 14 subsection 1 (Occupational Safety and Health Act, 2002).

A good induction process starts before the first day, it starts with giving enough information about the company and the job position in the ad for the open position. This helps the person applying for the job get more knowledge of the organization and the open position. It will also help the organization attract candidates who are more engaged with the company´s culture and goals and who will more likely become productive employees (Bos, 2020).

The process should contain practical information about the organization (such as building orientation, health and safety, well-being, and equality). It should also include information about systems, procedures, company strategies, and services, alongside the job specifics such as department information, requirements, and a training plan.

This will ensure that the new employee will have something in their calendar in the first couple of weeks and will also be able to feel like they are progressing in their new role and help them feel more confident (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2023).

During the induction process, the new employee may experience several areas of discomfort in first few weeks of their employment:

- Organizational disorientation: When the employee feels like an outsider because they don’t yet understand how things are done and what is expected of them. This can cause a sense of anxiety when it comes to getting to know and building relationships with their new colleagues.

- Being useless: This is because new employees feel like they want to re-pay the organization for giving them the job. This causes stress for the person who wants to be able to function within the organization and do a good job as fast as possible.

- Risk aversion: The feeling of not wanting to make mistakes or be perceived in a negative way by supervisors and co-workers.

- Fear of dependency: The new employees fear that they will be overly dependent on more experienced colleagues and want to move beyond this feeling as fast as they can (Hoyle, 2013).

Even though these listed feelings and concerns are uncomfortable for the new employee they are positive for their learning journey. These discomforts lead to a hunger for information and education within the new employee. This is very useful for the organization since the new employee is eager to learn and get up to speed in their new environment, and having a good induction and training plan set in place when this occurs will help the new employee feel more confident. However, if the organization doesn't have a good induction plan when a new hire experiences these feelings the outcome may be a decrease in confidence, frustration and anxiety, isolation, and reduced engagement to the job (Hoyle, 2013).

The first impression a new employee gets of an organization has an impact on how well they integrate with their team and how satisfied they are with their new job. A good induction process is important since studies made by Brandon Hall Group show that it improves new hire retention by 82% and productivity by 70%. Companies with a weak induction and onboarding program are more likely to lose the confidence of a new hire and lose them within the first year (Laurano, 2015).

During the induction process, a psychological contract is also formed between the new employee and the organization. A psychological contract is not a formal contract but unspoken expectations between the employee and the employer. The contract is about the exchange in the relationship between the employee and the organization. Employees sometimes do something for the employer, things as working extra hard, putting in overtime, helping co-workers, or staying with their employer. They do this because they believe that the employer will do things for them, such as providing them with good working conditions, showing respect, treating them fairly, and trusting them.

The concept of the psychological contract explains this behavior, it does this by considering to which extent the employee believes that the employer has kept the perceived promises. If the employee believes that the employer has kept the promises, they will be more satisfied and dedicated to their workplace, but if they on the other hand feel like the promises were broken negative emotions occur and a withdrawal from the organization may happen (Conway & Briner, 2006).

The primary enforcer of this contract in an organization is the managers since they are the way, the organization communicates with each employee. The managers can make the terms of the psychological contract clear through regular, open, and honest discussions with their employees to show trust, engagement, and integrity. This should begin in the recruitment process with realistic job previews, and well-planned induction programs and continue with performance and development meetings, and day-to-day interaction between the managers and employees (Conway & Briner, 2006).

Managers should work to establish strong relationships with new employees early in employment through frequent one-on-one meetings and coaching. Work needs to be put in to eliminate potential contract breaches from the onboarding experience since breaking these implicit promises can destroy the trust of a new employee irreparably. A firm contract will be easily built by simply doing things that have been promised and maintaining a good relationship with the employee (Vergroesen, 2020).

A good induction program is something that the employee expects when they start a new job, it is thus a part of the psychological program. If new employees struggle with disengagement or seem to not get the hang of the job, poor onboarding might be the reason for it. According to a survey done by BambooHR in 2018, 89% of the employees state that effective onboarding helped them feel engaged at work and they are 30x more likely to feel overall job satisfaction if you compare them to employees whose onboarding process was lacking (BambooHR, 2023). So, a bad onboarding process will break the psychological contract from the beginning of employment, and a good process will strengthen the relationship between the employer and the employee.

Even though statistics prove that the onboarding process is of high importance for the organization and employee satisfaction and retention, many organizations make the mistake of not having proper onboarding. In fact, only 12 percent of employees agree that their organization has a good onboarding process, leaving 88 percent of employees unsatisfied with the onboarding process in their organization (Southern, 2024). 35 percent of companies don’t spend any money on onboarding new hires and 1 in 3 HR professionals report that their organization’s onboarding is not up to standard (Southern, 2024). So it seems that it is quite common for organizations to struggle with onboarding. The reason for this is often a lack of knowledge of how onboarding should be done and that enough time isn’t set aside to plan it. 69 percent of managers find the onboarding process to be time-consuming and half of the managers find it to be frustrating, this frustration can be caused by the lack of structure when onboarding leading to a time-consuming process (Typelane, 2019).

Onboarding often takes time away from tasks that hiring managers also must attend to, this leads to the onboarding process being stressed through so the employee can start being useful. Another common mistake made is that the induction and onboarding are not properly evaluated. If the organization does not gather feedback during the onboarding process, they can't possibly know what needs improving and what is working, therefore feedback should be gathered on a monthly basis during the first 6 months of onboarding (Typelane, 2019).

2.1.1 Preparations for the Induction

Enough time should be set aside for preparing the welcoming of the new employee. It will take time to notify the IT department of technology needs, apply for accesses needed, and announce the new member to the rest of the team so they are aware of the addition. A big mistake that many make is to underestimate how time-consuming it is to prepare for the induction, so the time set aside should be more than is expected (Bos, 2020).

As soon as possible, after the applicant has accepted the job, necessary paperwork along with a letter welcoming them to the company should be sent out. It is good to also have a handbook ready with all the necessary information the employee should know before arriving on their first day. This will help the new employee feel connected with the organization and feel less confused during the first day. The welcoming letter should also answer the following questions to avoid confusion on the first day:

- What should the new employee bring? (ID, paperwork, tax card, etc.)
- Where should the new employee park?
- Who should they ask for in the lobby or who will meet them?
- Should they bring food, or will it be served?
- Who should the employee ask if there are further questions? (Bos, 2020)

After the welcome letter has been sent out, in between the acceptance and the start date, it is good to give the new employee a call. During this period when they have not started yet they still might be getting offers from other companies they have applied to and calling them will show that the management cares and looks forward to them starting, any questions that might have come up regarding the job can also be answered during this call. This makes them feel like an important part of the company already before they have even set foot in the office (Eddy, n.d.).

Since starting a new job can be quite scary and challenging, it is good to assign the new employee an onboarding buddy. This will provide the new employee with support and calm their nerves. The onboarding buddy should work in a similar role so they can both serve as an informal source and involve the new person in team activities such as lunch and breaks so the transition into the team is smoother for them (Eddy, n.d.). Once the best fit for a buddy has been found, have them send an email introducing themselves and welcoming the new employee. The buddy does not necessarily have to be a mentor but can be someone who just provides a bit of security during the first couple of weeks.

If the onboarding is fully online, if the job is a remote-only position, prepare other forms of engagement and social gatherings for the first day. This can be shorter meetings on video conferencing tools so that the new person still can get to know their coworkers and know who to ask for help if it is needed. The remote person needs to be trained as much as an in-person employee does, therefore it is crucial to have a training program and induction plan prepared that is suited for only virtual training. A manager should set aside more time for follow-ups with a new remote employee since they are not able to follow up now and then in person when they see them at the office (Eddy, n.d.).

2.1.2 The first day

During the first day, the goal is to not only make the new employee feel welcome but also to engage them with their team and not just with the person who will be training them. Setting objectives and expectations is also a part of the goal. Organizations sometimes forget to make expectations clear for new employees, this can lead to the employee struggling to understand responsibilities and goals. An employee who has a clear understanding of their job duties and knows what to expect from the company´s culture and work environment will make better decisions that are aligned with the practices of the company (Grant, 2017).

Some form of training should also be organized on the first day since the new employee would want to feel productive. When organizing this do not provide too much information too soon, the first day will be very overwhelming as it is, and they will not remember most of the information they get due to this. Dumping too much information on a new employee is one of the biggest mistakes an employer can make during the process, and it is unfortunately quite a common mistake. This is due to the employer being in a haste to bring people up to speed and then winding up trying to get the new employee to learn everything at once. Instead of doing that try to gather material that the employee really needs to know right away, this will help set a positive tone and the employee can leave the first day feeling confident rather than stressed and overwhelmed (Grant, 2017).

The first day of the induction process should contain information about on-site health and safety, workplace compliance, facilities, the organization, cultures and values, benefits, and policies combined with role-specific and learning and development information (see Figure 2). This can all be added to an onboarding handbook that the employee can look through after the induction since it will be a lot of information to take in on the first day. The information can be spread out during the first couple of days if it is too much for just one day, but the sooner the new employee gets the information the better (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2023).

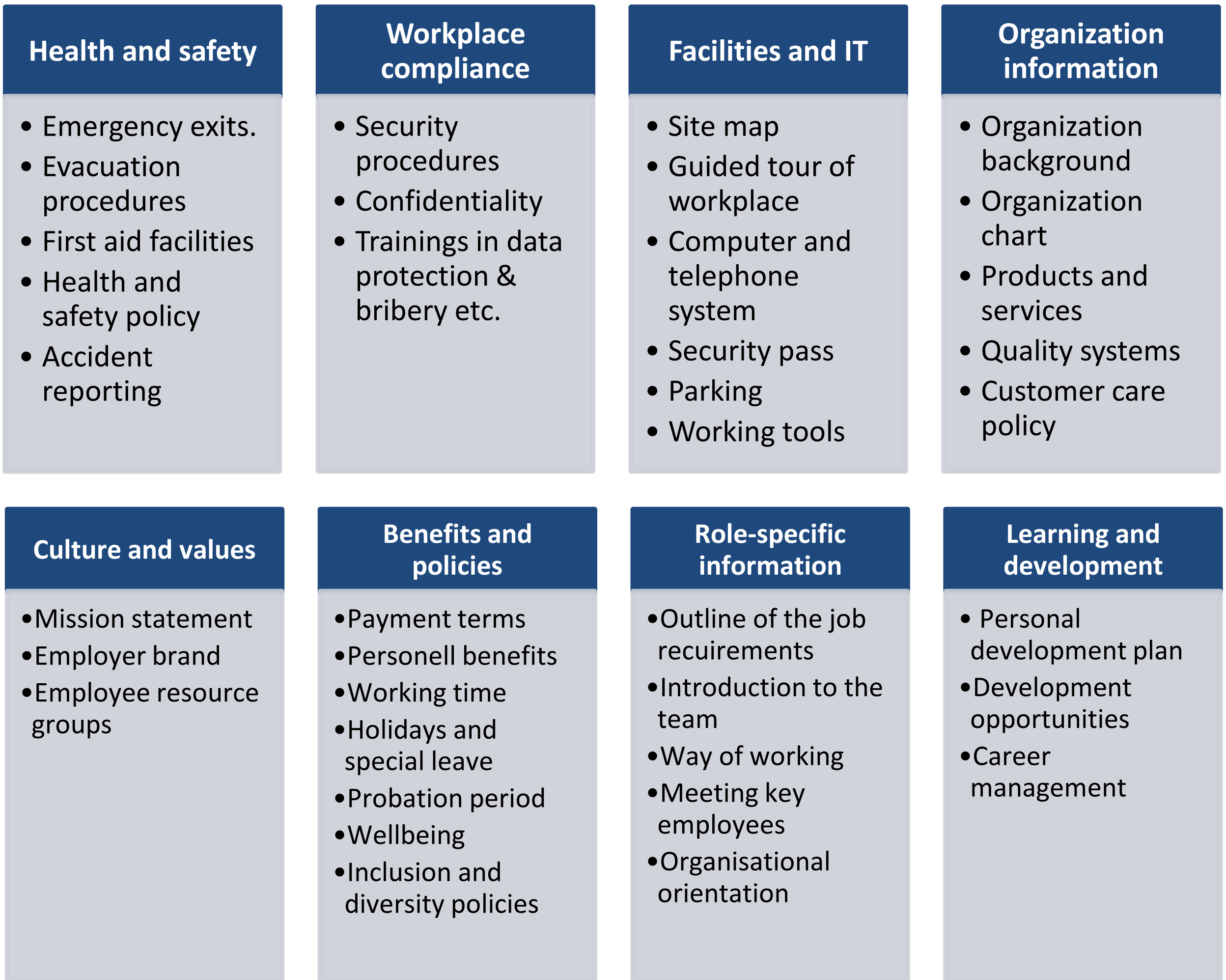


Figure 2. Information to provide on the first day. (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2023)

If a mentor or onboarding buddy is being used in the induction and training, a meeting should be set up for them to introduce themselves during the first day. During this meeting it can be made clear how the mentor or onboarding buddy can help the new employee in the best way possible and establish if there are any initial concerns, they may not have been able to ask anybody about yet. Give the mentor and the new employee some time to themselves so they can get to know each other without pressure.

During the first couple of days or weeks, it can be hard for a new employee to integrate with the team and initiate social interactions. To make this easier make sure that you offer the employee some company during breaks or at lunchtime. Not all employees want this and can appreciate alone time during the hectic first period of employment, but it can anyway be a welcoming gesture for the recruit to be asked to join the team on a break (ACAS, 2015).

2.1.3 The first few weeks

During the first weeks of employment, the employee should get started with doing their job in an easy manner. Put time into their schedule to do some tasks of their new role, it will give them a break from a constant flow of information, and they have a chance to apply what they have learned in training to real-life scenarios. By the end of the first week, the employee should have a picture of their job role, how the training will work, how it fits in within the organization, expected performance, and possible opportunities in the future (ACAS, 2015; Maurer, n.d.).

The employee needs to be introduced to people who were not there on the first day and start to get to know their co-workers. Remind them who does what in the team, so they know who to ask if they run into a problem or have any questions. Have coworkers of the new hire take them to lunch and socialize, to give them a chance to get comfortable in the group. If anyone is missing from the team, make sure the new employee gets to be introduced to them later (ACAS, 2015). Make sure the new employee knows about different rules at work such as different work practices, policies, and expected behaviors. They also need to know what behavior is unacceptable and how problems concerning job performance, discipline and absence, and complaints against staff are handled (ACAS, 2015).

The manager should check in on the employee at the end of every workday during the first week if possible. It does not need to be a formal meeting, but just a few minutes to ask how things are going. The new employee is a valuable source of information that can provide honest feedback about the process, that the organization can use to improve it. The first few weeks are all about establishing a positive and productive working relationship (Maurer, n.d.).

Some common mistakes to avoid during this period are not having a set schedule for the employee and not considering that it takes time to adapt to the work culture. The onboarding should be coordinated with all the key users beforehand to be able to set a schedule that the new hire will follow. A schedule will help the new employees see progress in their development and make them feel like they are moving forward in the process. Managers often expect the new employee to fit into the team and work culture after a couple of weeks, without considering that adapting to a new work culture takes time. Understanding and fitting into a workplace and its culture is a learned behavior that will occur with experience and repetition, and every individual is unique and the time it takes will differ between individuals (Betterworks, 2022).

2.1.4 The first couple of months

During the first month, the employee will gradually be doing more of their new job and the tasks should get more advanced as the training progresses. It will also become clear if the employee needs further training or additional support in any particular area during the first couple of months. Effective support will help the employee progress toward becoming a fully functional employee as soon as possible (ACAS, 2015).

It can be helpful to set 30-, 60-, & 90-day targets for the onboarding process to easily plan the training. The first 30 days should be about knowledge- and learning-based goals, learning about the company and the role the new employee plays in it. After the first month, when the sight is on the 60-day target, goals should be more on contribution. In this phase, the employee should be able to start trying to apply the knowledge they have gained to real tasks of the job and contribute to the organization (Indeed, 2022). At the 90-day mark, the employee should have been involved in or introduced to quite many, or all of their tasks. The onboarding will continue, and the employee will still have things to learn at the 90-day mark, the focus should now be to hand them the practical experience of tackling tasks. At this time the employee and management should work on pinpointing any knowledge gaps so the training or coaching can be targeted to fill those (ACAS, 2015). The manager should also have follow-up meetings with the recruit at each of these milestones, to find out how they are adapting and if there are any concerns (O'Donnell, n.d.).

The three-month mark of employment is a crucial milestone, the employer, manager, and new employee are satisfied with the onboarding and performance, and the recruit will be more likely to stay.

If things are not going so well for the employee, the management will have to address the problem and investigate why this is the cause. If unwanted behavior or other concerns are noticed, they should be addressed at the three-month mark before they become a permanent problem (ACAS, 2015).

2.1.5 The first year

The induction process should be already completed at the one-year mark, but the learning process within the company will continue and the focus should now be on long-term success (O'Donnell, n.d.). The learning and development journey now continues with opportunities that can enhance job performance or are just of interest to the employee. Discussing these opportunities and how they fit into the department is often done on a performance review (UC Santa Cruz, n.d.).

The first performance review will most likely take place after the first full year of employment, and it will show if the employee is fully productive. The review should contain an opportunity to swap feedback, see how the employee is feeling about their role, and agree on a way forward. The performance review will also give the employer an opportunity to discuss how well the employee has achieved their objectives and if they need to improve in any areas. If it has not been done earlier, then is this a good time to ask the new employee for feedback on the induction process, if they have any suggestions for improvement, and if they have opinions on what worked well (ACAS, 2015). During the performance review new goals should also be set and encouragement for continued learning and development given (UC Santa Cruz, n.d.).

2.1.6 Follow-up and Evaluation

During the induction process, it is crucial to follow up and evaluate the onboarding and training to make sure that it is meeting the needs of new recruits and the organization. The new employee should be able to give feedback during and at the end of the induction process to be able to highlight areas that need to be improved (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2023).

It is quite common for organizations to forget about this step in the training since they might be busy with getting the new employee up to speed. Making this mistake would be like walking blindly through the process without any guidance along the way.

Tracking the progress of the employee and seeing where the process fails or works will maximize the effectiveness of the process. Collecting feedback continuously will help the employer make changes to the process in real-time (Betterworks, 2022).

The follow-up should be done on a regular basis to make sure the new employee settles in well into their new role in the organization. A follow-up should identify where the employee excels, struggles, or loses interest. Follow-ups regarding the induction's effectiveness should be done at least once every quarter of the first year but regular check-ins with the employee can be done more frequently than that to make sure they are on the right track. After the new employee has been employed for 12 months a full performance review should be conducted to see if the employee is producing the results expected of them at that stage (ACAS, 2015).

Evaluating the training programs within the induction process is also necessary to make sure the new employee is provided with sufficient information and material to be able to handle their new job. The purpose of an evaluation is to ensure that the training resulted in the new employees' learning and performance in their new role. The purpose is also to gather information about the training to convince stakeholders that the learners used what they learned, to show the value of the program. Every training program needs to be continuously evaluated to be able to maximize and demonstrate its value to the organization. If there is a failure to make a strong business case for training, as something that is required for the organization to be able to enhance performance and contribute to important organizational outcomes, it will be left in a precarious position.

In the 1950s the most used training evaluation model was created by Donald Kirkpatrick. Kirkpatrick was a professor at the University of Wisconsin at which his focus was to teach management and supervision programs. During this time, he wanted to know if the training programs that were conducted were effective and made a difference for the participants. From this, the model that is based on the four evaluation levels: reaction, learning, behavior, and results, was born. It has since been modernized in 2009 by Jim and Wendy Kayser Kirkpatrick (2016), Donald's son and daughter-in-law, and is now called The New World Kirkpatrick Model. An overview of the four levels along with their meaning and how to apply them is presented below.

Evaluating Level 1: Reaction

During this level, it is evaluated to which degree the participants in the training program find it favorable, engaging, and relevant to their jobs. The level contains three components: engagement, relevance, and customer satisfaction.

According to Kirkpatrick (2016), this level is the simplest to evaluate and should not be overthought, a few simple questions that are easy to answer, and will give direct information about how well the program is working and if there are any immediate changes that are needed. Failure in this level will make learning more difficult which will lead to a poor result when evaluating Level 2: Learning.

Timing is important when evaluating this step since some might want answers to the evaluation as soon as possible after the training but that might not be the best way to go. Waiting until the participants have had a chance to apply what they have learned to their job will increase the quality of the answers given to the evaluation. New employees cannot answer questions about how relevant the program is before they have had a chance to try it since they have never done the task before.

An easy way to evaluate this level is to incorporate formative methods into the training/induction program. Formative means that evaluation of the program is done during the program rather than after, but still giving the trainee enough time to apply the information they have obtained.

Evaluating Level 2: Learning

In this level of evaluation, the degree to which the trainees have acquired knowledge, skills, attitudes, commitment, and confidence from participating in the training is reviewed. The evaluation will test if the knowledge and skills are used with commitment, confidence, and the right attitude. To be able to evaluate this, based on a particular activity, it is needed to set a threshold for the minimum acceptable criteria for considering the learning to be successful.

Most of the level 2 evaluations should be formative and done along the training program, with tests or discussions as methods. It can also be done with summative methods such as surveys and interviews after the training has been done. The summative method is mostly used if there are observations that suggest that knowledge, skills, attitudes, commitment, and confidence have decreased since training. If the evaluation is formative, it can be done by ending the training sessions with a test, this will also highlight and repeat the topics that have been covered during the training.

Evaluating Level 3: Behavior

In the level 3 evaluation, the behavior of the participants is evaluated. This is the most important level because it evaluates to which degree the participants apply what they learned during the training when they are back doing their jobs. This level is more than just evaluating, it is a continuous performance monitoring and improvement system. Success at this level is the key to Level 4: Results. To succeed at this level the organization needs to understand the importance of post-training support.

For this level to be evaluated, it needs to be defined. Find a few critical behaviors that result in the desired outcome to evaluate, critical behaviors are those that are observable, measurable, and specific. After finding the critical behaviors to evaluate, an acceptable threshold for performance level should be set.

At this level different types of drivers can be used, these drivers are reinforcing, monitoring, encouraging, and rewarding performance of critical behaviors. The reinforcement driver can be on-the-job training, job aids, or reminders that will remind the trainee of the behaviors. The encouragement driver works through coaching and mentoring the trainee to perform the behaviors. Recognition and pay for performance are given through the rewarding driver. The driver should be used according to what the employee needs, if they lack motivation to change their behavior they might need an encouraging driver, or if they are trying to change their behavior and succeeding a rewarding driver may be appropriate.

The behaviors should be evaluated after the training, to ensure that the information taught during the training is being used. The drivers are important at this level because training alone will not always be enough to get all the participants to change their behaviors. Level 3 is the most important link to be able to move from learning to results and that should be reflected in the time and resources that are put into it.

Evaluating Level 4: Results

At this level the degree to which the targeted learning outcomes occur as a result of the training and support are evaluated. Training is performed because results are expected, and the training should not be considered done until adequate results can be demonstrated. Leading indicators for this are observations or measurements that prove that the critical behaviors are on track to the results that are desired. When evaluating this step a few leading indicators should be identified and monitored to help the process.

The indicators can be qualitative or quantitative and be things such as KPIs, quality, employee engagement, errors, or completed tasks. Evaluating this step is often done after the training is finished, but leading indicators on whether the training is working can be monitored more quickly than that. Evaluation of Level 4 is a process and not a specific event, when beginning to monitor the indicators an interval for how often they should be evaluated is also set.

By evaluating the effectiveness of the training at each of these levels, is an organization able to see the success of their training and can identify problem areas more easily. Each of the levels builds on the previous one and failure in one will affect the following level.

When evaluating training programs, it must be remembered that not all programs are of equal importance to the organization and should therefore be evaluated according to that. Consider what information is important to the stakeholders in this training when evaluating. Every training and onboarding program is individual which is why the evaluation of them will always differ. There are three reasons to evaluate the programs: to improve the training program, to make sure the transfer of learning to behavior is happening, and to demonstrate the value of the training to the organization (Kirkpatrick & Kayser Kirkpatrick, 2016).

2.2 Induction Tools

During the induction process, there are several different tools that can be utilized to make it more efficient and easier to manage. In this chapter some of these tools will be presented, along with what they contain, how they should be used in an induction process, and what is important to consider when developing these tools will also be presented.

2.2.1 Handbooks

A handbook for employees is a collection of different types of information regarding the organization, information as policies, procedures, and guidelines. The purpose of the handbook is to give a new employee an insight into the organization and its values and practices. The handbook will also help reduce the anxiety that a new employee might feel when starting a new job (Lopusushinsky, n.d.). The contents of the handbook may vary depending on what the organization wants included in it. A handbook can be given for legal purposes to employees so they are aware of different regulations, or just as an informative welcome letter that will introduce the employee to the company (Workable, n.d.).

It is important to remember to still train the employee on the different topics in the handbook even though it is included, repetition is the key to learning and the employee must get a chance to ask questions about the content. The content in a department-specific handbook is often there to support the employee rather than to make them aware of company guidelines and legal regulations.

As mentioned, the content does vary depending on organization and job role, but some things that are good to include according to Paul Lopusushinsky, a founder of an employee experience design consultancy, are:

- Dress code: Let the employees know what is expected from them even if they are working remotely.

- Employee benefits: A quick overview of what benefits the employee is entitled to and can expect. This does not need to be explained in full, as further details can be explained later or be found on the company intranet page.

- Organization chart: An overview of the organization will give them an idea of how it works. If the organization is big, a smaller overview of the department can be included instead.

- Glossary of acronyms: Since every organization has a lot of unique lingos and acronyms, it is good to provide a list of the most used ones to make the first days for the employee easier.

- What to expect on their first day/week: This does not need to be broken down to an hour-by-hour basis, but rather some general information on how the first week will look.

- Company values and mission: The mission and values of a company can indicate what the company culture is like. The employee will also know what the company is working towards and find it easier to be a part of that.

- Office information: Information about key cards, parking, contact information, safety, and other aspects of an office should be included in the handbook. The employees will spend 1/3 of their weekdays in the office, and they should know all the necessary information about it (Lopusushinsky, n.d.).

This is what should be included in a handbook according to Lopusushinsky. But when creating a handbook, the organization should put much thought into what is included and why. Useful links, communication guidelines, health and well-being, and job role-specific information can in some cases be necessary to include. Commonly, a handbook can become one of those documents that get buried in a desk or left unread in an inbox even though the information is helpful. This happens if there is way too much information included in it or it is presented in a way that is too heavy to read. To avoid this, make the handbook with a light and visual-based approach and only include the most necessary information and instructions on where they can find more information about a topic (Lopusushinsky, n.d.).

2.2.2 Training Programs

A training program for employees can be focused on everything from onboarding for new employees to addressing general skills for current employees. The program is a strategic plan whose purpose is to enhance employees' skills and knowledge for their current role or potential future advancement. An effective training program should be well structured and tailored to the needs of the employee (Workable, 2023).

It is necessary to consider many different factors when developing a training program to ensure that the organization gets the expected results from it. These factors will help the organization develop an outline that will serve as a foundation for the training program and for designing and developing training materials (Evans, n.d.). Below are 6 steps explaining these factors that should be performed when creating a training program:

1. Establishing training needs.

The first step when creating a training program is to establish what the need for the training is. The purpose of the training program is to fill knowledge or skill gaps of the employee or in the workplace. This can be accomplished by conducting a training needs analysis (TNA) that will show the employees' current knowledge compared to the level of knowledge that would like to be seen after training. By doing this the training program can be tailored to the employees' needs making it more effective (Indeed, 2023).

2. Defining learning objectives.

To be able to develop an effective training program it is important to establish what the employees should be able to achieve after training. Defining these learning objectives enables the organization to create content that will facilitate the employees' progress toward the result. These objectives need to be aligned with the business goals since the fundamental goal of training is to be able to produce results for the business.

When defining the goals of the training different conditions that might affect the training must be taken into consideration. These conditions can be the quality of instructors, training budget, timelines, or base knowledge of a subject (Gupta, How to Develop an Effective Training Program, 2021).

When defining these goals methods like SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based) or OKR (objectives and key results) can be used to make sure the goals are measurable and concrete. The SMART method is more specific and the OKR method has broader goals with some key results that are measurable, both are excellent tools for developing measurable goals (Indeed, 2023).

3. Choose suitable training methods.

When the learning objectives have been set it is time to find the training methods that fit the training and workforce the best. To be able to choose the best method there needs to be an understanding of different learning styles that the workforce might have. Learning styles will affect how easily the employee is able to grasp the subject of the training program, and more information about learning styles and how to understand them is presented in Chapter 2.3.1 Learning Styles.

Before determining what method will be the best suited some research might be needed into how the employees learn. This can be done by a questionnaire, observing them, or just asking them how they prefer to learn. A good training program has variety so that it can be conducted in multiple ways, so it fits multiple learning styles (Gupta, 2021; Workable, 2023).

Different training methods that are often used in the workplace include instructor-led training, on-the-job training, eLearning, mentoring, and job shadowing (Indeed, 2023). Different methods and how they should be used are presented further in Chapter 2.4 Training Methods.

4. Development of training content.

After the methods of training have been chosen it is time to start developing and designing the training material. When developing the material, it is important to remember that the material should focus on the employees' learning, not on what is easiest for the trainer.

Here are some tips on what to think about when creating the training content:

- Have a plan before starting, this will help as a guide through the development process and keep the material useful, relevant, and organized.
- Make the training relatable by connecting it with real-life examples or stories.
- The training material should allow the employees to take charge of their learning to a certain degree.
- Include interactive elements in the training.
- Combine different formats and methods of training to keep it engaging.
- Include time for feedback during the training (Indeed, 2023).

Starting with a detailed outline when creating content will make the writing process easier. There are many ways to create training materials, and one of them is to create a job or task-based process documentation. Jobs or tasks will be broken down and presented step-by-step, making it clear for the learner and the material also works as instructions when they start doing the task on their own. When creating material remember to have a variety in the material to better fit a broad audience with different learning. Tools like Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDF documents, instructional videos, or eLearning are good to use and can function in many different learning settings (Evans, n.d.).

5. Conducting the training.

The key to an effective training session is a motivated and engaged employee. To be able to achieve this, different strategies such as establishing relevance, encouraging active participation, incorporating real-world examples, and setting clear expectations can be used (Evans, n.d.).

Provide the employees with any guidelines that are relevant to the training, these guidelines can be on what to do before, during, and after the training. If there is an evaluation of the training at the end of the session, let the employees know that and how it will be conducted before the actual training starts (Indeed, 2023).

6. Evaluating the program.

Training programs should always be evaluated to see the effect they have had on the employee and their behavior. The evaluation can be done after every training session, now and then during the training period, or at the end of the training period. It is here that the objectives that were defined in step 2 will come to use when monitoring whether the employees are able to achieve them or not (Indeed, 2023). Donald Kirkpatrick (2016) has developed a much-used 4-level evaluation model that is an effective way to evaluate every aspect of a training program, more on this in chapter 2.1.6 Follow up and evaluation. The purpose of conducting an evaluation is to ensure that employees gain knowledge during training, that the objectives are met, and to receive feedback regarding the training (Gupta, 2021).

Going through these 6 steps carefully will make the process of creating a training program much easier. Training programs are an important part of the recruitment and onboarding process since they add value to employees and build employee loyalty, therefore it is crucial to have a well-structured plan on how to perform it (Indeed, 2023). A common error by organizations is that even though they have a training program, they have not put much thought or time into the planning of it. A lack of structure in this program will lead to unorganized training which can leave gaps in the knowledge of the employees. Another reason why the usage of a training program is failing is that it might be unclear whose responsibility it is to keep it up-to-date and running.

2.2.3 Checklists

A checklist is a tool that is used to list tasks and activities needed for a project or situation. It helps the organization to ensure that all the necessary elements of the training have been covered and makes it easier to monitor. The checklist can also be used as a tool when creating training material or planning the induction process to ensure that nothing is forgotten when planning, designing, and implementing the training. When a checklist is used for induction and onboarding purposes it ensures that the new employee receives information, resources, and support to help their journey to become a productive and successful team member.

It will make employee integration smoother by streamlining the process of completing necessary training and other onboarding activities (Guevara, 2023).

The benefits of keeping track of training and induction with a checklist are many. The lists will help provide consistency in the content and delivery methods of the training and ensure that all employees receive a standardized induction. Time and resources will be spent more efficiently since the training process will be more streamlined and organized. The entire training process will be more effective when specific needs and goals are easily addressed and no component of the training will be overlooked (Checklistsformanagers.com, 2023).

Checklists for onboarding should contain both organizational information, such as policies, procedures, and company culture, as well as job-specific training. Before starting the onboarding of a new employee, it should be identified who will be responsible for the different activities on the list and how they should be delivered (Guevara, 2023).

For the checklist to be as efficient as possible, determine a timeline and specify the duration of training sessions and the overall training period. Deadlines and milestones will help the induction process to move forward at an appropriate pace to keep the training on track. When following the checklist make sure to also evaluate the effectiveness of the training, since marking an activity as done won't do any good if the employee hasn't learned anything from it (Guevara, 2023).

Remember to continue to offer support and guidance after the checklist is completed. The employees will need support when applying the training they have gotten to real-world scenarios. Review the content of the checklist periodically to ensure that it is up to date, job responsibilities, company policies, and processes often change and this needs to be reflected in the list (Guevara, 2023).

2.3 Learning

Learning is the process by which individuals acquire new knowledge, understanding, behaviors, values, attitudes, or skills. When the term learning is used by psychologists it often refers to the learning process (how the learning takes place) (Gross, 2012). The process of learning often starts when individuals discover something they don't know or understand. How the process then continues depends on the individual and the experience he or she possesses. For a person to learn they would have to desire to learn, as someone cannot teach someone who doesn't want to learn. Information can be passed to another person, but knowledge is what they must evolve themselves based on circumstances. These circumstances are knowledge one already has, how motivated one is, the current situation, and what one takes away from the lesson (Granberg, 2014).

When teaching, one must start from the trainee's conditions and motives for wanting to learn according to Jerome Bruner (1974), an American psychologist known for his theories about cognitive psychology and cognitive learning theory. According to his theory, every individual possesses a drive and a need to learn that they are born with. This drive is more important than rewards or punishments when learning. Since learning is a process, not a product, the training should be well structured and based on the trainee's conditions. The training should give the trainees an opportunity to experiment and make mistakes without having to worry about being reprimanded for the mistakes. Learning will be more effective if they do not fear making mistakes, therefore, a social environment is beneficial for learning (Bruner, 1974; Granberg, 2014).

David A. Kolb, an American psychologist, developed a way to describe the learning process, with a four-stage learning cycle describing experience-based learning (see Figure 3). According to Kolb (1984) learners must change or transform something for them to learn, this means that memorization or recollection does not equal learning because it does not change or improve our understanding. The learning cycle's four stages, experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting, are equally supportive of the learning process as Kolb believes that learning is a cyclic process (Hoyle, 2013).

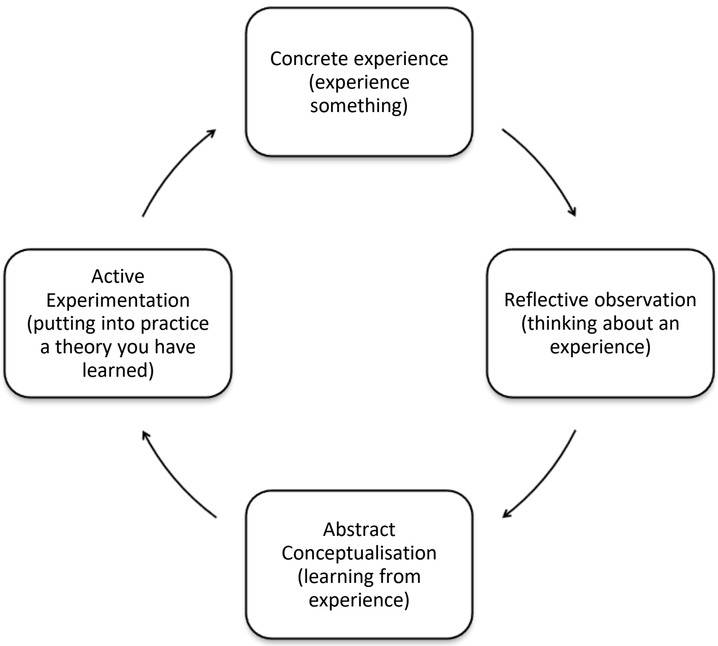


Figure 3. Kolb's learning cycle (Kolb, 1984)

In the cycle, each stage acts as a foundation for the next stage. The stages of concrete experience and abstract conceptualization are ways to grasp knowledge, and the stages of reflective observation and active experimentation transform the learner's experience into knowledge.

At the top of the cycle is **concrete experience**, and it signifies the beginning of the cycle. In this stage a learner encounters an experience, it can be a new experience or an experience that has already happened but is reimagined. According to Kolb (1984), learners need to engage in an experience, such as being exposed to a new task or a new way of doing something they are already familiar with. It is not enough to just read or watch a demonstration to acquire new knowledge.

Next in the cycle is **reflective observation**, which means that after a learner has engaged in an experience, they should take a step back and reflect on it. During this stage, the learner can ask questions and discuss the experience. When discussing the experience with others, can introduce different points of view and help ease the reflection process. The learners will compare the experience alongside previous experiences to look for patterns or differences, this helps them identify differences between their understanding and the experience itself.

At the **abstract conceptualization** stage, the learners' current understanding is altered, and they form new ideas that are based on reflections that took place in the previous stage of learning. According to Kolb (1984), the move from the previous stage to this one happens when learners start to form conclusions on the events that gave the experience. This stage helps learners to assess how their new knowledge can be applied in real scenarios. If information is relevant to the learner's life, it will be much easier to retain.

Active experimentation is the last of the four stages, and at this stage, the learners will apply their new knowledge to new scenarios and the world around them. The learners will also see if there are changes or deviations in the next occurrence of the experience. Continuing to actively experiment will lead to new concrete experiences and trigger the cycle to start over. This is a constant process since life is a series of interlinked experiences (Kolb, 1984; Cloke, 2023b).

The cycle needs to be completed for the learner to be able to ensure that knowledge is gained, every stage is dependent on the other stages. The process does not need to start at the top of the cycle at concrete experience, it can start anywhere on the cycle depending on what situation triggers the learning (Cloke, 2023b).

Even though David A. Kolb (1984) said that memorizing does not equal learning, it still is a big part of the learning process. One needs to remember the information that has been provided to be able to apply it to an experience. The German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus (1885) wanted to understand learning better and his research on the topic produced The Forgetting Curve which can be seen in Figure 4. Even though the research was conducted in the 1880s, the theories and methods are still widely used and proved to still be true by a research team in 2015 (Murre & Dros, 2015). During his research, Ebbinghaus experimented by using his ability to try to remember a list of random syllables that he would attempt to recall after different lengths of time. The results from his research were that memories weaken over time if we do not try to repeat what we learned and that the biggest drop in retention is right after learning if we do not try to review or reinforce it. It also showed that things are easier to remember if they have a meaning and that the way the information is presented affects learning (Mind Tools, n.d.).

The results of the research were recorded on a graph, by doing this Ebbinghaus found that the memory declined over time in a curved line, unless the new information was reviewed periodically. The more times it is reviewed the more of the information will be memorized. As seen in Figure 4, with each repetition more of the information is preserved.

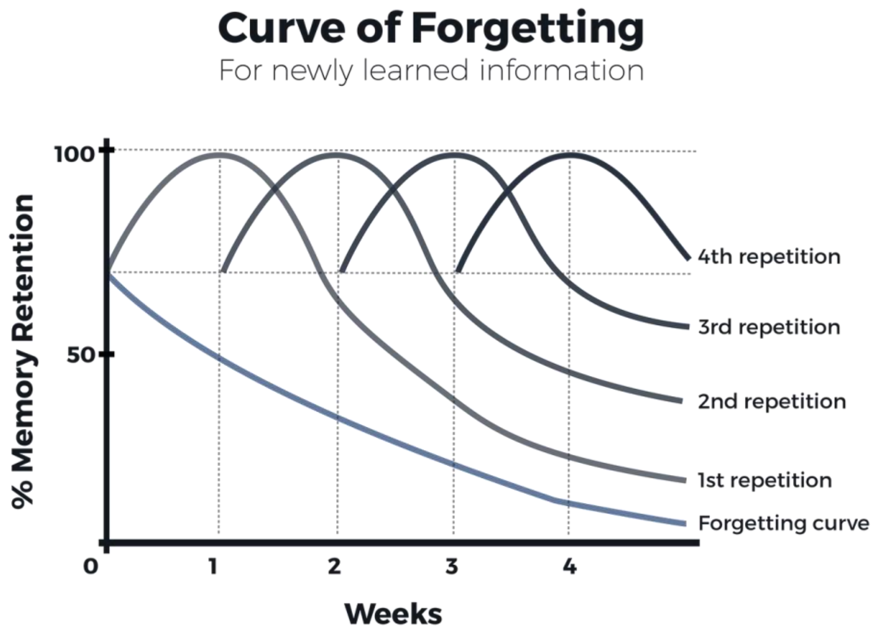


Figure 4. Ebbinghaus' Curve of Forgetting (Medium, 2018)

The concept of these reviews of the information is called “Spaced Learning” or “Distributive practice” and is one of the most important discoveries of Ebbinghaus (1885). A review session after the original learning can prevent the memory from fading quickly. The review should not be done too long after the original learning since the learner then has forgotten too much and needs to start over. Regularly reviewing the information will halt the forgetting curve, and even though forgetting will still happen it will happen at a slower rate after each review. There are also ways to keep forgetting from happening so drastically, like having meaningful information in the learning material. If the information is relevant and purposeful and the learner knows they will benefit from it later, the memory will prioritize it (Mind Tools, n.d.).

The Curve of Forgetting is useful when creating training plans or learning material since it shows that repetition is crucial for the learning process. When applying this to learning, it shows that time needs to be set aside in the training for the learners to review the information they have obtained.

2.3.1 Learning Styles

The idea of learning styles is that it will tell how learners grasp information in the most effective way. The concept of learning styles is if differences in learning can be identified, a learning experience that matches the learner the best can be provided and the learning outcome will improve (Dirksen, 2012). There are many theories regarding learning styles, and the most common ones are:

Gardner’s multiple Intelligences, invented by Howard Gardner, suggests that people have different kinds of intelligence. These types can be spatial, linguistic, logical, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, naturalistic, or existential, and they all represent a different way of learning. Gardner suggests that these intelligences could be used instead of a single type of IQ (Dirksen, 2012).

The VARK model suggests that learners have inclinations towards different types of learning styles like visual, auditory, reading, or kinesthetic. Visual learners prefer to see the information, auditory learners grasp information by hearing it, reading learners prefer written information, and kinesthetic learners thrive with hands-on physical experience (Dirksen, 2012).

Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory by David A. Kolb suggests that there are 4 types of learning styles, converger, diverger, assimilator, and accommodator (Dirksen, 2012). The styles are based on Kolb's learning cycle, which can be seen in Chapter 2.3 Learning in Figure 3. The learning styles show a relation between the different stages of the cycle, abstract vs concrete and reflective vs. active learning. The different styles have dominant learning abilities that define the learning characteristics (see Figure 5) (Noe, 2010).

Learning Style Type	Dominant Learning Abilities	Learning Characteristics
Diverger	• Concrete experience • Reflective observation	• Is good at generating ideas, seeing a situation from multiple perspectives, and being aware of meaning and value • Tends to be interested in people, culture, and the arts
Assimilator	• Abstract conceptualization • Reflective observation	• Is good at inductive reasoning, creating theoretical models, and combining disparate observations into an integrated explanation • Tends to be less concerned with people than with ideas and abstract concepts
Converger	• Abstract conceptualization • Active experimentation	• Is good at decisiveness, practical application of ideas, and hypothetical deductive reasoning • Prefers dealing with technical tasks rather than interpersonal issues
Accommodator	• Concrete experience • Active experimentation	• Is good at implementing decisions, carrying out plans, and getting involved in new experiences • Tends to be at ease with people but may be seen as impatient or pushy

Figure 5. Kolb's learning styles and their characteristics (Noe, 2010).

The problem with learning styles is that the evidence that backs it up is weak or inconclusive, and it has not been proven to affect learning very much. But people all have different preferences on how things are done, and the preferences are often on something that people are already good at. Some might prefer a book with theories and concepts, while others prefer to experiment and draw up their own models. These preferences could assist learning even if the scientific evidence is not heavy on the topic (Hoyle, 2013).

However, there are still ideas that can be used from the concept of learning styles that can be helpful when training someone. Learning styles show that not everyone learns the same way, and even though it is not possible to adapt a situation to someone's learning style should the training be done in a variety of approaches. This will also keep the learning experience interesting and provide multiple memory triggers (Dirksen, 2012). The learning styles also suggest that people have different kinds of intelligence and that we are more alike than different. People will learn from all the different VARK methods even though it is not their preferred way of learning, and different types of intelligence show that some persons learn some things easier than others (Dirksen, 2012).

The conclusion that can be taken from this chapter is that the training needs to have a variety of approaches and can be performed with different methods. The thing that will help the learner the most is interesting training that they can apply in the real world.

2.3.2 Adult Learning

Most educational theories have been developed exclusively to educate children, like pedagogy which is a Greek word for child-leading. This is why educational psychologists, who recognized the limitations of formal education theories, developed andragogy, the theory of adult learning. Malcolm Shepherd Knowles (1913-1997) who was an American educator is one of the persons who is most frequently associated with adult learning theory (Noe, 2010). Knowles (1980) created a model for adult learning based on five assumptions which are:

1. Self-concept

When a person matures their self-concept moves from being a dependent personality to a more self-directed personality. The result of this is that adults carry the needed skills to understand and learn independently and will prefer a more self-directed approach rather than instructor-led training. This is the reason why tools, such as online learning systems, which enable learners to take ownership of their own learning have become more popular. When creating a training program make sure that tools and resources are provided so the learner can learn on their terms.

Learning becomes more effective if the learner has the possibility to explore topics from different viewpoints. For the learner to be able to do so, the learning tools might contain different forms of study like independent study, group discussions, learning games, simulations, or scenarios.

2. Adult learner experience

The adult learner experience assumption suggests that adults have experience from previous learning processes from which they can draw knowledge. Adult learners bring experiences such as their past education, training, job, and life events into their learning. Before creating a training program for a learner, a training needs analysis (TNA) should be conducted to have a clear picture of the learners’ current capabilities, it should never be assumed that learners are beginners without first reviewing and understanding the knowledge and skills that they already have.

Integration of previous knowledge into the learning process is a good way to enhance it and improve knowledge retention. Even if the things being discussed are new to the learner, the skills, and previous experiences an adult learner has can still enrich the learning.

3. Readiness to learn

Adults are prepared to learn and want to do so when they find a good reason to, like when starting a new job or task. Adults, unlike children, are more selective of what information they take in and care about the "why?" behind the learning. The adult learners want to know how the training program is going to help them and how the training is relevant.

Adding real-world examples and scenarios into the training program and communicating the essentials of it will make it clear to the learners what they are taking away from the course and why it matters to them. The more the learners can get out of the training, the more likely they are to engage with it.

4. Orientation of learning

The Orientation of learning assumption suggests that adult learners want their learning to be applicable and useful to their everyday lives. When a person matures their perspective moves from being subject-centered to being more problem-centered. This means that adults want to learn practical skills that can help them solve problems they encounter in life. It should be emphasized throughout the training program how the subject matter helps learners solve real-life problems. An excellent way to implement this into the training program is to have scenario-based learning. This will help adult learners perform better in their roles and is a good way to teach about problem-solving in a safe environment.

5. Motivation to learn

When humans grow older, their motivation to learn becomes more internal. Children typically learn because of external factors, such as teachers and parents. But when humans mature our motivation changes, and adults start to learn for their own reasons, like for career progress or getting pay raises. This suggests that if learners are not motivated to complete their training, they will likely not engage with it. To avoid this, motivators need to be implemented as a part of the communication and training plan. To help cater to different motivators the learners may have, make sure the training initiatives are comprehensive and the training courses have variety.

The Knowles model of five assumptions can be a useful guide on how to create more effective training programs for adults. A training program will be more successful by simply understanding the difference between pedagogical and andragogical approaches since when using a pedagogical approach in a classroom full of professionals it can lead to disengagement and uninterest among the learners (Cloke, 2023a; Knowles, 1980).

Although the Adult Learning Theory is very useful and has many valid points, one must remember that all learners are different. Not all learners are self-directed, and some might prefer to be guided through the learning process rather than take control of it themselves. The theory of andragogy has received criticism for assuming that all adults are self-directed learners. There is no guarantee that these five assumptions will apply to everybody just because they are adults, and it can only be known how someone prefers to learn by asking them and getting to know them (Cloke, 2023a).

2.4 Training Methods

There are many various training methods and choosing the right one can be tricky. Organizations often use a combination of multiple methods in their training program to capitalize on each method’s different strengths and learning transfer. This chapter will provide descriptions of advantages and disadvantages of different methods as well as tips for choosing the right method for the organization’s training.

2.4.1 Classroom Training

Classroom training is a presentation method of training where the trainees are passive recipients of information. The most common way of conducting classroom training is having a lecture that is supported by audiovisual methods like presentations, videos, or audio clips. Lectures are the most time and money-efficient method when it comes to presenting a large amount of information to a large group of trainees. For lectures to be successful the information that is given needs to be repeated by the trainees, this is why lectures are often combined with hands-on activities (Noe, 2010). Lectures often have a non-transactional nature, as they do not allow for much discussion and do not involve the audience.

The advantages of the method often only benefit the lecturer, as they are an efficient way of teaching a lot of information at once to a larger group. Another advantage is that the method allows the lecturer to deliver information directly to the audience, meaning the teacher is the sole source of information to avoid confusion.

Since lectures can be pre-recorded and re-used, they allow for flexibility and the lecturer can even show videos of another person's lecture to their class (Kelly, 2019).

The disadvantages of lectures are many since it is a very non-engaging and monotonous way of presenting information to an audience. The audience needs to take very detailed notes on every topic since they don't know what information to take away from the lectures, leading to them being unsuccessful in learning the material. The method centers around the teacher, and if they do not involve the audience in any way, it can be hard for them to know if anyone is learning. Lectures also fail to accommodate individual needs since they do not allow for a lot of differentiation, which can lead to students feeling confused or frustrated (Kelly, 2019).

Even though there are many disadvantages to the lecturing method, it can be a good method if it is planned and executed correctly. Lecturing is only one method among many others and used in moderation when appropriate and with other methods, it can be effective (Kelly, 2019). Actively engaging the audience, providing support in a safe environment, having clear objectives, and summarizing the most important points at the end are a few simple things that will make the lecture successful. The content of a lecture is also a big factor in whether it will be successful or not, less is more in this case. If a presentation is used, spend an average of 1,5-2 minutes per slide, having too many slides with too much information in a short period of time will not make the audience learn more. The most important information is put at the beginning or the end of the presentation when the attention of the audience is at its highest. Using pictures with a few supportive words is more likely to keep the audience attention than having a presentation with long paragraphs of text (Saeed, Humayun, Nundy, Kakar, & Bhutta, 2021).

Lectures are often held at a length of 60-90 minutes, but the attention span for an audience is only 20 minutes. Breaking the lecture down into shorter pieces with short breaks or opportunities for the audience to ask questions is needed to keep the audience engaged. Including some hands-on exercises in the lectures for the audience to apply their new knowledge will also help them retain the information that has been provided (Saeed, Humayun, Nundy, Kakar, & Bhutta, 2021).

It is all about connecting with the audience and keeping it interactive when delivering a good lecture. Taking time to plan the material and making it relevant and easy to understand will lead to better learning among the audience.

And the key to improving in anything is to take feedback continuously and adjust accordingly to that, this also applies to lecturing (Saeed, Humayun, Nundy, Kakar, & Bhutta, 2021).

2.4.2 eLearning

E-learning, also called web-based learning, is training that is provided in different digital forms, such as online courses or interactive learning materials. The use of this method has steadily increased due to the advanced technology that everyone can access today. The popularity of eLearning also comes from its many advantages since it is a flexible and cost-effective method (Hashemi-Pour & Lutkevich, 2023). People all over the world can have access to the same training materials, and they can access it whenever it fits into their schedule. The same material is used repeatedly for static training like self-paced courses, tutorials, or prerecorded videos, so after the training is made it is a time-saving method for the organization. Interactive methods like discussion forums, chats, and video conferences are a bit more time-consuming but still a very flexible option (Hashemi-Pour & Lutkevich, 2023).

The eLearning often takes place on different platforms, so-called learning management systems (LMS). These platforms make it easy to administrate, document, track, and deliver various types of training. There are many different vendors and platforms with a varying price range, so choosing one that fits the organization best can be tricky. The optimal LMS platform should be scalable, customizable, goal-oriented, and user-friendly. Choosing the right platform and using it correctly can be a make or break when it comes to eLearning within an organization (Hashemi-Pour & Lutkevich, 2023).

Even though the advantages of the method are many and good, there are also disadvantages. The lack of face-to-face interaction in the training can make the training difficult to complete for students who are not independent and self-motivated. And if questions arise in the student during training it might be hard to know who to contact and discuss these issues with. The difficulty of staying motivated and focused during eLearning training is also a common issue. The training is often done individually making it more challenging to navigate and motivation might be lost if the trainee so no clear purpose for it (Hashemi-Pour & Lutkevich, 2023). Like all other training methods, the training material needs to be of good quality and relevant to the learner for them to interact with it.

According to Robin Hoyle (2013), there are three key actions that can be taken to make sure the learners in the organization interact with the material:

1. Acknowledge issues and provide support. It can be hard to motivate employees to start learning on their own, being clear and telling them what is expected from them will give them a clear objective on why it needs to happen. Provide them with reasons why this is important and how they will benefit from it and provide them with support if they have questions or concerns.

2. Design the learning in manageable segments. The learning should be able to be completed in a short sequence of time, so employees can fit it into their schedules better. It needs to be designed in a way that the learners can find the information they want quickly and easily if they want to access it multiple times. Accessing the learning material is the part of training that should not be hard, and if they have to complete many different modules of training that are irrelevant to them to get to the knowledge, they need they might lose interest before reaching there.

3. Talk to the learners and have them give feedback. Employees might have a very busy schedule and not all learning methods might fit into it. Use the feedback to understand and decide what is necessary in the training, it might be that all the modules in the training do not need to be mandatory for everyone (Hoyle, 2013).

To summarize this, eLearning needs to be easy to access and manageable. It needs to give the learners a purpose and to be interesting enough for them to complete it. The mistake that many organizations make when putting together an eLearning is that they try to fit as much information in it as possible in a short time, leading to a very dull and heavy learning experience for the learners. Make the learning interactive and the content light to keep the attention of the learners and use many different methods of presenting the material to keep a variation in it (Hoyle, 2013).

2.4.3 Mentoring

With mentoring, knowledge and life experiences are passed on from one individual to another. According to David Clutterberg, a mentor is “normally a more experienced individual willing to share knowledge and insights with someone less experienced in a relationship of mutual trust” (Steinmann, 2017). Mentors can be role models who have accomplished actions and achievements for some, while for others they can be individuals who are authentic and honest and will hold someone accountable for their actions and decisions. How successful mentoring is depends on the relationship between the mentor and the mentee. A mentor does not only have to be one specifically assigned person but can be anyone who passes on knowledge to another person since one person only cannot have all the answers (Steinmann, 2017).

The benefit of a mentoring program is that it will impact both the mentor's and the mentee's self-confidence positively and increase job satisfaction. The organization will get better employee engagement and loyalty while it also eases the onboarding process. Mentoring can be used in any workplace as a method for learning and development if there are suitable mentors and the program can align with the learning goals (Cronin, 2023).

If the mentoring relationship is forced, like when an employee is forced to mentor someone by their supervisor, the mentoring will most likely not be successful. In that case, the mentee can feel like a burden and unwelcome at the company, finding another mentor fit for the role is the best solution for this problem. Mentoring can also lead to frustration if the mentor feels like the mentee is not following directions or progressing, and the mentee can feel the same emotions if they feel like they don't get the right guidance. In this case, it is also good to find a new mentor to not strain the relationship further, since the mentor and the mentee are coworkers and need to be able to work together (Joseph, 2019).

A good mentor is someone who has a desire to help others grow their potential while they themselves have a desire to learn and grow continuously. The mentor needs to have an open mind so they can always approach the mentee with a positive regard, mentorship can be testing at times and the mentor needs to be able to keep positive and not cause negative or self-conscious feelings in the mentee. Any mentor should have experience of being mentored themselves to be able to easier put themselves in the mentee's position. A mentor who has once been mentored also knows the effect and importance of mentorship. For the mentorship to be able to succeed there needs to be a will to give back to "the next generation". The things listed are all qualities rather than a set of skills, motivation, and attitude rather than strategy and competency (Gravells & Wallace, 2007).

The mentoring process (see Figure 6) can be described in 3 steps according to Gravells & Wallace (2007), exploration, new understanding, and action planning.

The process often starts with exploring the mentee's current knowledge and situation, so the mentor can understand issues and concerns to help the mentee develop a deeper understanding of the topic. During this stage the problem is defined, if this step is ignored the mentor might jump to a conclusion and solve the wrong problem.

The stage of new understanding is when the mentor helps the mentee to seek different perspectives and solutions to the problem they have. The purpose of this is to not only figure out what has happened but also why it has happened. Issues that the mentee is struggling with should be re-framed so they can see them in a different context. This can help them find a solution by themselves instead of directly guiding them to it, as it is the mentor's job to help the mentee learn from different events and be able to think through their solutions (Gravells & Wallace, 2007).

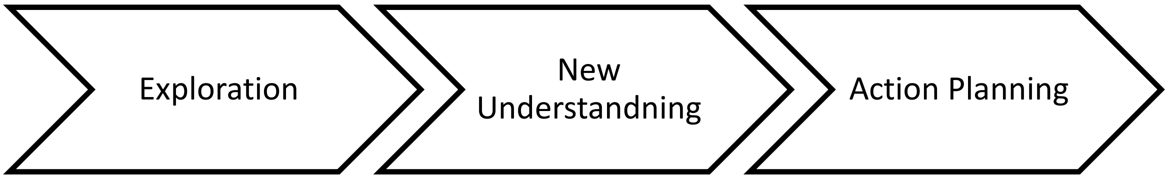


Figure 6. The mentoring process (Gravells & Wallace, 2007).

At the end of the mentoring process is action planning, in which further actions that need to be taken are decided. The actions can be of many forms like further investigation, experiment with a new technique or behavior, or agreement to tackle an activity. Commitment to action is important since the action will generate opportunities to reflect and learn. The necessity of reflection is mentioned earlier in chapter 2.3 Learning, where it can be seen as a part of the learning cycle. Mentoring can also be described as a cycled process, whenever problems need to be solved new problems can resurface.

To summarize this, the attitude and motivation of a mentor towards the role are equally important as the skills they possess. For the relationship to be successful the mentor and mentee should agree on boundaries and expectations at the start of the mentoring.

2.4.4 Blended Learning

Blended learning is a method that combines face-to-face learning with eLearning, two different environments of learning. This type of learning method engages many types of learners since it enables them to access resources both online and offline. The online part of the learning does not replace face-to-face learning and vice versa, the technology is incorporated into the instructor-led training to enhance the learning experience. An example of how this could work is that the learners watch a video on their own time and e-mail a review of it to their teacher which they discuss in class or the learners get exercises to do online about a topic that has been covered in class (Kolinski, 2022).

The method has an interactive learning approach which will deepen the learner's knowledge more than if they just had instructor-led classes. Blended learning provides lots of tools to make learning both fun and flexible (Kolinski, 2022). The knowledge the learners retain will last longer since they get to interact with the information and create their own experience, and experiences are crucial to the learning process according to Kolb (1984).

A difficult thing about blended learning is knowing how to set it up since it is a very flexible method that doesn't have a standard structure. There are many different models to help the ones providing learners to set up the training, and five of the most common ones can be seen in Figure 7 (Gupta, 2022).

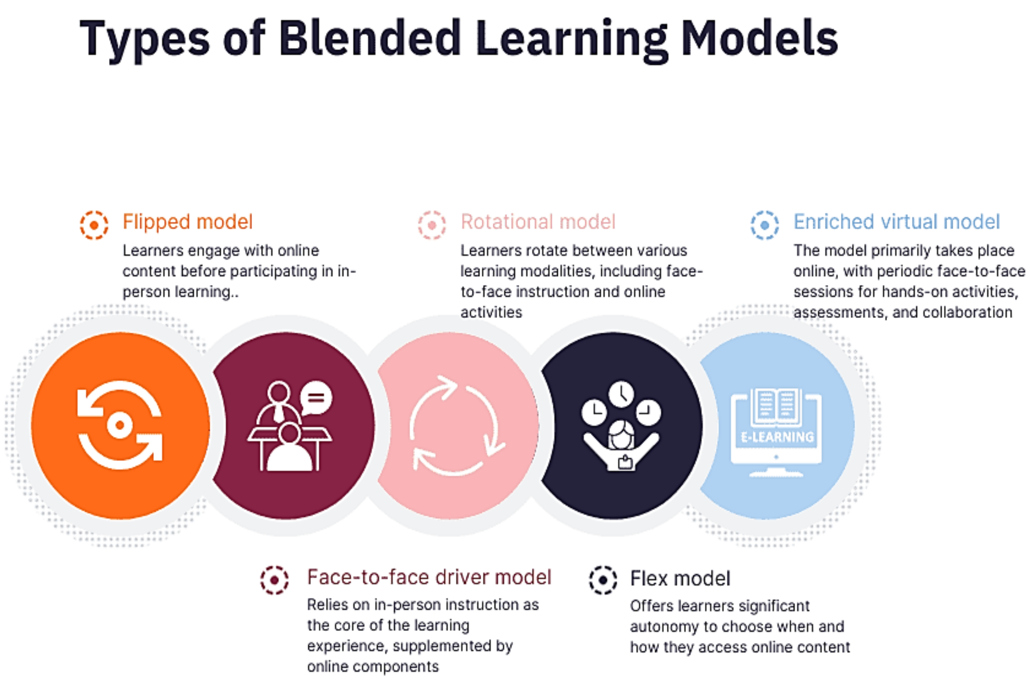


Figure 7. Blended learning models (Gupta, 2022).

There is no right or wrong way to use the blended learning method, each trainer needs to choose a model that they think will benefit the teaching and learning experience for them and their students.

Each model has its advantages, the face-to-face model offers more support to learners and can be used when difficult concepts are taught and the enriched virtual model is when the information is easier to grasp, and support is not needed as much (Gupta, 2022).

The disadvantage of the method is that it takes a certain level of competence in technology from the teachers since they have to create courses, exercises, or materials online. The online tools that are used for these activities can also come with quite a big price tag and might not be cost-effective for the organization. Many trainers also make the mistake of putting too much information into the courses since they no longer must fit it all into a lecture, this can cause unengaged learners who lose their motivation (Kolinski, 2022).

The use of this method does not need to be expensive since the digital material can be video or exercises on different online programs or digital tools. The interactive parts of this method allow the learners to get their own experience and the face-to-face classes allow them to get the needed support, a perfect mix of eLearning and instructor-led training. The method also fits many different learning styles due to the variety of ways that the information is delivered.

2.4.5 On-the-Job Training (OJT)

On-the-job training is an experiential method of learning, where the employee learns a new task by observing and doing hands-on tasks in a close to or real work environment. The training takes place at a workplace with a manager, supervisor, mentor, or another knowledgeable person as a guide. New employees who participate in OJT often get a look at all the work procedures they can expect to encounter. With on-the-job training, the new employees learn equipment operation, workplace expectations, and other skills and knowledge to be able to perform the job. The new employees often start by shadowing a guide and then move on to performing the tasks while being supervised (Andreev, 2023).

OJT is an important part of learning how to do a job, and all learners should partake in it to a degree even if their learning style is more formative. Although learners with extensive experience in a similar job can find it demotivating to have to go through the same tasks again, in these cases the OJT should be tailored to the need.

The method allows new employees to get new knowledge and gain experience working in situations that resemble tasks they will encounter on a daily basis. The employee gets to learn, practice, succeed, and fail in a safe environment, while other methods might only give the new employee basic information about a task (Andreev, 2023).

Some of the benefits of the method are that the employee gets to apply their new knowledge to work tasks immediately, leading to better knowledge retention, and contextual learning provides practical experiences that cannot be replicated in a classroom. The training will build practical skills and an understanding of the work environment that is hard to achieve with any other training method. It has also been proven to enhance the satisfaction and retention of employees since OJT is a commitment to an individual's professional development, sending the new employee a signal of trust and commitment (Bray, 2023).

But like with other training methods, OJT also has its disadvantages, such as the lack of theory behind the way of working or the potential of bad habits being transferred. The training will also disrupt productivity for the department depending on what activity is performed, the guide for the new employee might have to set aside tasks too because of the time the training takes up. The training is very dependent on the quality of the trainer and their skills, even though a trainer might possess superior skills they might not have the communication skills or patience to be able to train a new employee (Bray, 2023).

There are several strategies that can be implemented to make the most out of OJT, and the 5 most important according to Bray (2023) are:

1. Select trainers and prepare them carefully: For the trainers to be effective they need good communication skills and a good understanding of the job they will train someone to do. To make sure that the trainers are well prepared they should receive training in how to be a mentor or trainer and how to transfer knowledge efficiently.

2. Add theoretical training as a supplement: Some parts of the job might require a broader context or a theoretical understanding. For the training to be efficient some formal training should be included, it does not have to be classroom-based training but can be simple eLearning activities.

3. Evaluate regularly: To avoid bad practices, evaluate the training regularly and ask for feedback from the trainer, trainee, and the people around them. This can help catch unhealthy patterns early enough to correct them.

4. Plan ahead: During the training there might be a slight disruption of productivity, to avoid this plan for this decrease in productivity and prepare for it.

5. Have a standardized training plan: By having a training plan that is followed the organization can make sure that the employee receives all necessary training. Outline the key skills and knowledge areas to ensure consistent training, by doing so skill gaps can be avoided.

When using OJT, it is important to understand the advantages and disadvantages to avoid unexpected surprises and better predict the outcome. The method is best used when combining it with other methods to avoid gaps in the knowledge. OJT builds trust and encourages growth and development within an organization, leading to better employee satisfaction and retention and strengthening the psychological contract. Another benefit from the training is that it enhances soft skills like communication, teamwork, positive attitude, and dedication (Andreev, 2023). OJT has similar features as mentoring which is also a social learning process, and these methods can go hand-in-hand when training new employees.

2.4.6 70-20-10

The 70-20-10 training method focuses on work-based practice and on-the-job experience. The concept of the method is that 10 percent of our knowledge comes from formal training (classroom training, workshops, and courses), 20 percent of the knowledge comes from working with others (coaching/mentoring, collaborations, giving and receiving feedback), and 70 percent of our learning comes from learning by working (problem-solving, responsibilities, reflections) (see Figure 8). The concept was developed by Eichinger, Lombardo, and McCall at the Center for Creative Leadership in North Carolina, US. They performed a study on how people think they learn from 200 executives, and the answer was the 70:20:10 model (Hoyle, 2013).

The disadvantage of this method is that there is a lack of data supporting it thus making it merely a concept, not a proven method. Another issue with the method is that there is not one standard way to train an entire organization, which is a common misconception about the method. The 70-20-10 rule should be used more as a guideline when creating training, and a great deal of thought and planning should be done when using the method to make it applicable to the training (Cloke, 2022).

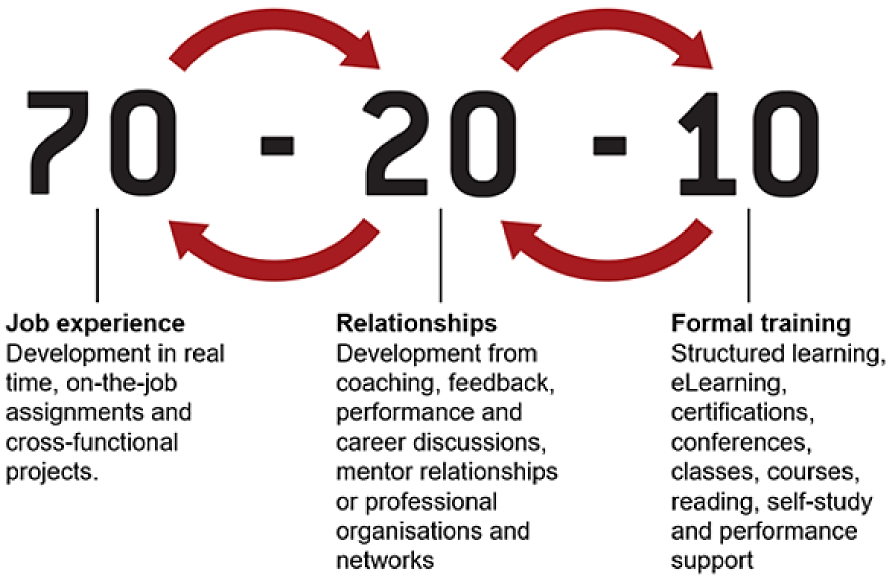


Figure 8. Breakdown of the 70-20-10 model (Leadership pipeline institute, n.d.).

Since failure to understand the concept is a common issue when using it, proper research needs to be done before applying it to the training. The 70 percent of on-the-job training is ineffective without the 10 percent of formal training since the formal training will help the learners reach their full potential. The formal learning will give them theory and facts about the topic to base their experimental and social learning on (Cloke, 2022).

To get a better understanding of how to use this concept, each part should be analyzed and researched to determine how it can benefit and be applied to the training. As seen in Figure 8, there are many different ways to apply the method to the training.

The experimental part of the model, which suggests that 70 percent of the learning comes from hands-on activities, is often conducted by performing on-the-job training. This part of the learning is heavily supported by Kolb's learning cycle, which suggests that for an individual to learn they need to experience things and reflect on them (Cloke, 2022). How to succeed with on-the-job training is covered in the previous chapter 2.4.5 On-the-Job Training.

The social learning part of the model suggests that 20 percent of the learning comes from social interactions. Social learning is about learning together with other individuals, asking questions, mentoring, receiving, and giving feedback, and other professional relationships. This can be done in many ways, like coaching and mentoring, feedback sessions, discussions, online meetings, webinars, or social media.

Social learning also has other benefits when used correctly, such as improved team collaboration and increased engagement (Cloke, 2022).

The last 10 percent is formal learning, and although it is only 10 percent it is a crucial part of learning. This part will “form a backbone of successful learning initiatives” (Cloke, 2022). Formal learning can be done in a variety of ways, like classroom or instructor-led training, eLearning, conferences, or courses. Its value can be demonstrated by a simple example: when learning to drive a car, one must first understand the rules of the road and the theory that supports it before starting to operate the vehicle on the road (Cloke, 2022).

The method should include a plan for follow-up to help the learners undertake different work-based activities. Getting feedback from the learners I crucial to develop a good usage of the method, since only the learners will know what is working and what is not (Hoyle, 2013). Even though the different pieces of the method are of different sizes, all are equally valuable to the learning process and should be used when putting together a training program. Since this method is just a guideline, it should be remembered that it will not fit all learners since some prefer structured learning and thrive in a formal learning environment. It is up to the organization to find the final balance of the elements that work for them and provide the learners with the necessary training opportunities (Cloke, 2022).

2.5 Summary of the Theoretical Framework

The topics presented in the theoretical framework all relate to the induction process and each other in some way. The theoretical framework covers best practices, common mistakes to avoid, advantages and disadvantages, and gives the researcher a general understanding of each topic. The topics are all directly or indirectly related to the psychological contract that is of much importance to both the organization and the new employee. If a strong psychological contract is formed during the induction process, it is likely that the employee will be satisfied with their job and keep working there. If the psychological contract is broken during the induction process, there is a big chance that the new employee will feel distrust towards the organization and start looking for a new job. The knowledge gained by the literature review in this framework is to optimize the induction process, this will lead to a stronger psychological contract and a higher employee satisfaction and retention rate (see Figure 9).

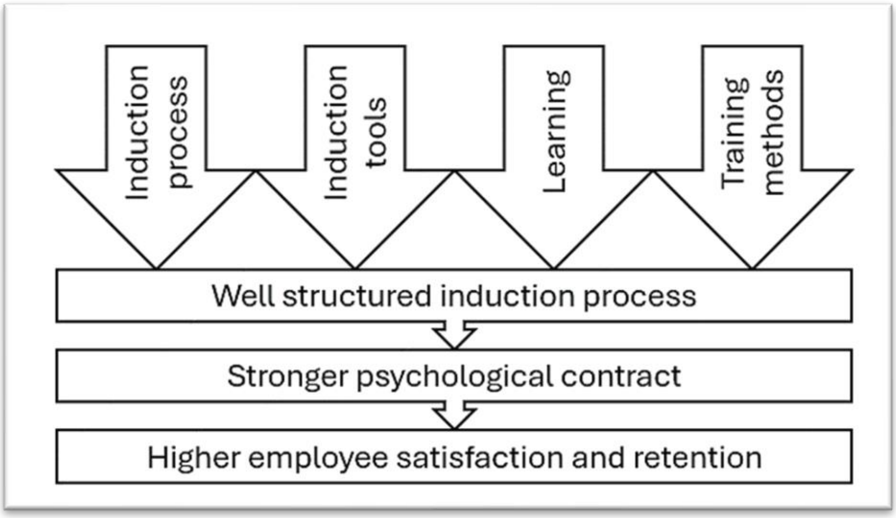


Figure 9. How the theoretical framework supports the psychological contract.

The initial chapter in the theoretical framework presents the induction process and different stages in it. The chapter about the induction process and its sub-chapters describes events and aspects relevant to the process and its impact on the individual and the psychological contract. It explores the emotions the employees feel in the different stages and how to structure the onboarding, so they feel safe and valued. Best practices for a good, structured induction as well as common mistakes to avoid are mentioned to be able to understand how a good induction should work.

The chapter about the induction process ends with a short exploration of the follow-up and evaluation of the induction process. It presents the importance of evaluating the process to make sure the induction is working and that the training is increasing the knowledge of new employees. Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation is explored as a method for evaluating the process, as the model is easily modifiable to different scenarios and training. Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation evaluates four different aspects of the training: reaction, learning, behavior, and results. It measures how the participants react to the induction, how well they learn from training, if they have a change in behavior, and if the results are the ones the organization is aiming for by conducting the induction and training. There is no way to be certain if the induction is working if there is no evaluation, and then its effects cannot be proven to stakeholders. The more casual follow-ups with employees strengthen the psychological contract by showing them that the organization is involved in their learning and development journey. It also gives the employees chances to discuss issues or give feedback to the employer.

To support the induction process, several different tools like handbooks, training programs, and checklists can be used and these tools are explored in the following chapter. The tools' advantages and disadvantages are presented along with how they can help provide structure to and improve the induction. The handbook makes it easier for employees to get a good understanding of common practices and their job roles in the initial stage of their onboarding. It is a good document to use for information that is valuable and needs to be accessed easily by the new employee. The usage of a handbook is supported by Ebbinghaus' curve of forgetting, which is mentioned in the following chapter, since the handbook makes it easier for employees to review important information as many times as needed.

The training program is a structured plan that the training will follow. The difficulty with creating a training program is that the training needs to be of a structured form, and it takes a great deal of planning to achieve. The benefits of a training program are that both the employee and the employer can see how the induction and training move forward and make sure there are no gaps in the knowledge.

A tool that is easier to apply than a training program is a checklist, the third tool that is researched. A checklist can be of many types, it can be a list for the manager of different things to complete before the new employee starts, it can be a list of different social aspects regarding the onboarding, or a list of all the training the new employee needs. These tools have been researched to see how they could provide structure and improve the induction process for the stakeholders of this thesis. Even though a checklist is easier to apply to the induction process and takes less planning, it is a very useful tool and it can be of great help to make sure that there are no knowledge gaps if it is used correctly.

To be able to create a good induction program or tools for the induction one must understand how learning happens. David Kolb's theory about experience-based learning, Hermann Ebbinghaus' curve of forgetting, and Malcolm Knowles's adult learning theory are the main topics reviewed in the learning chapter. Kolb's theory explains that to learn the learner needs to gain experience and reflect on it in a cyclic process. Ebbinghaus' curve of forgetting shows that information needs to be repeated for the brain to be able to retain it. These two theories show that for new employees to learn they need to see and experience the relevance of it and the information should be easy to access so they can review it whenever possible to remember it. Different learning styles are shortly reviewed, and how they impact learning and training. They are not deeply researched since there is not much evidence to support the theory on learning styles.

The knowledge gained by the research on different styles is used in a more general way to show the importance of variety in training methods for learning to become more interesting and relevant.

Adult learning is researched to get a better understanding of how adults learn and what motivates them to learn. Malcolm Knowles's theory of self-directed learning among adults and its five different blocks are presented shortly. The adult learning theory, also known as andragogy, suggests that adults have different motivators when learning than children have and therefore the training needs to be shaped differently. According to Knowles (1980), adults prefer a more self-directed approach to learning and have experience that they can use when learning. They are also prepared to learn when there is a good reason for it, and it is applicable to their lives. These aspects of learning are very important when it comes to training adults. To make learning easier for them the trainings need to be relevant to their day-to-day job, and have a clear importance, and the training material should provide many different viewpoints or have a variation of presentation methods to give the learner a way to choose themselves how they learn. Knowing how individuals, especially adults, learn is crucial when choosing and applying different training methods, which are researched in the next chapter.

In the last chapter six different training methods are researched, to be able to understand how they work and the advantages and disadvantages of each. Some of the methods researched are methods already used by the stakeholders of this thesis and some are new to them. This is to get a good look into whether there are better options for training than the current methods and to see if the current methods are correctly used. Conventional methods like classroom training and mentoring as well as more modern methods like eLearning, blended learning, OJT, and 70-20-10 are researched. The knowledge gained about these training methods will support the recommendations given to the stakeholders of this thesis regarding training.

The general knowledge of the induction process and learning and different aspects of it along with the knowledge of different induction tools and training methods provides a good understanding of how things should be done and what can be done to improve the current process of the stakeholder. The understanding that this theoretical framework has provided to the researcher, along with other data collected in this thesis, will be used to develop tools to use in the induction process and for the researcher to give recommendations regarding training structure.

3 Methodology

This chapter presents the methods that have been used to produce the findings of the thesis, the reason behind choosing them, and the methodological steps involved in carrying out the research. The chapter begins with a formulation of the problem that the research is based on and continues with explaining how the research was designed and conducted. The planning of action and acting follows in the chapter after that. The last chapter will summarize the process and present how evaluation and follow-up were conducted. The research process is conducted through action research with an iterative approach.

3.1 Problem formulation

The first step of any research is to formulate a problem that the research process can be based on. Neglecting this part of the process can lead to problems in the later stages of the research. The problem should be defined in specific terms, so the researcher can narrow their focus to avoid doubts and confusion during the research process (Habib, Pathik, Maryam, & Habib, 2014). When researching social science topics, like in this thesis, it can be hard to define a problem so clear-cut. Therefore, the process should be considered iterative, where a new understanding of a problem improves the perception and clarity of the researcher, leading to the problem being more defined along the process (Kuada, 2012).

Due to the steady increase in service agreements supported by Maintenance Planning the need for more personnel in the department has also increased. When the recruiting of personnel has increased it has become noticeable that the induction process is not as efficient as it could be and that it lacks a clear structure. This has resulted in the process becoming more difficult and time-consuming, leading to a slower integration of employees and a loss of time and resources. The background is described further in Chapter 1.1 Background. To solve this a main issue is researched to be able to find improvements that are needed for a smoother process.

The main issue being researched is how the induction process can be optimized. By understanding current practices and how they differ from practices suggested based on research, the problems can be identified, and the process can be improved. To be able to identify these problems an understanding of learning and adult learning, training methods, tools used in the induction process and the overall process are of key importance.

The focus of earlier studies in the area has explored the impact the onboarding process has on employee retention, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Best practices, advantages, and disadvantages of different aspects of the induction process have also been researched previously along with how technology, training methods, and the socialization process affect it. The induction process is a process that is unique for every organization and department in that organization, and therefore cannot earlier studies be directly applied to this case.

This thesis aims to develop a comprehensive framework for how the onboarding process within the Maintenance Planning department could be optimized. The findings of the research are used to be able to provide the stakeholders of the research with information and guidelines on how the induction process could be improved and the implementation of different tools that could be used.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is a map that identifies the means and methods that are used to collect and analyze data (Habib, Pathik, Maryam, & Habib, 2014). This thesis focuses on how individuals integrate into a new work environment, interact with training, and navigate organizational structures. Since this thesis aims to improve current practices within an organization that the researcher is a part of, it is therefore done with an action research approach supported by a literature review and interviews.

The action research is done with a critical reflective approach, meaning that the process involves continuous reflections on how the actions taken can impact the outcome. Critical reflection in action research helps understand and analyze existing processes, in this case, the induction process. The iterative approach used lets the researcher modify the researched issues as more knowledge and insight are gained, this allows for revisiting each step in the process and re-examining decisions made then according to new information gained (Kuada, 2012). The method is different from both quantitative and qualitative research but has some characteristics from both. To be able to implement actions, an action researcher utilizes appropriate methods to collect and analyze data (Tomal & Hastert, 2010). The pioneer of the action research model was Kurt Lewin, and a general model of the action research process was derived from his work (see Figure 10).

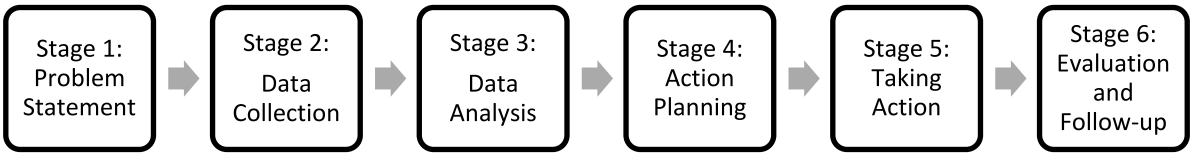


Figure 10. The action research model (Tomal & Hastert, 2010).

During Stage 1 the problem that the research aims to address is identified and clearly defined. The problem researched is an ineffective induction process, the problem is formulated further in the previous chapter 3.1 Problem formulation. The problem is the reason for the research and must be defined in a way that is a suitable basis for the research. With the iterative approach, the problem can start as a statement and become more defined along with the progress of the research.

In Stage 2 data regarding the problem is collected to get more insight into why the problems exist and the current state of the situation. Data needed for solving the problem is also collected during this stage. Data was collected through interviews for this thesis and more on how data was collected for this thesis is further described in the next chapter 3.3 Data collection.

The data collected in Stage 2 is analyzed in Stage 3. If interviews were conducted, the findings of them are summarized and analyzed to see if they can further formulate the problem. The summary of the interviews will also show if there are a variety of opinions on the problem or if there is a clear trend among opinions.

What kind of action that will be taken to solve the problem is planned in Stage 4. During this stage, a course of action needs to be decided upon, based on previously collected and analyzed data. To get the best course of action, should the planning of the action be conducted through collaboration with the team to get many different points of view.

In Stage 5 the action that was planned is implemented, the stage represents the action of action research. Depending on the problem that the research was based on the action that is taken can look different from case to case. The action can be to introduce a new way of working, develop a current practice, or develop a product. In this thesis, the action taken will be presented in Chapter 4 Results.

In the 6th and last stage, the researcher evaluates and follows up if the action that has been taken is enough and how it is working. Since action research can be a cyclic process, if the researcher finds that actions taken have not been enough, they restart the process again to be able to come up with a better-suited course of action. The evaluation and reflection on the results of this thesis will be done in Chapter 5 Conclusion.

Action research is a method where there might be variations in terminology, or the different steps carried out, but the essence remains the same. The cyclic process always involves planning, acting, reflecting, and evaluating. The goal is to bring change and improvements to something through an iterative process or collaboration.

3.3 Data Collection

During action research, data can be collected in different ways, with both a quantitative and qualitative approach. The purpose of the action research method is that the researcher should be able to find the acquired information with whatever means or methods are needed (Tomal & Hastert, 2010). For this thesis, the method that data has been collected through is interviews with employees and managers in the Maintenance Planning department. When interviewing the researcher asks questions from an individual and gets a verbal response that is in some form recorded by the researcher. Although the researchers' primary concern is to get a verbal response, observations can be valuable to see how the interviewed individual behaves when responding (Tomal & Hastert, 2010). The challenge with collecting data through interviews is that the researcher needs to avoid imposing preconceived ideas on the data, and not influence the participants' answers with aimed questions (Kuada, 2012). After conducting interviews, information about the issues is collected through a literature review to get a greater understanding of it.

Interviews were conducted to be able to get an understanding of current practices and to get feedback on said practices. The population of the interviews was in two groups, one group being the line managers and the other a few recently hired employees. The line managers for the department were interviewed to get their perspectives on the current practices and to get their opinions on what change they think is needed. The recently hired employees were interviewed to get knowledge of their overall experience of the induction and to get feedback on the process. The interviews were in a semi-structured form, meaning that the same questions were asked in every interview but with flexibility and follow-up questions if needed.

A semi-structured form allows for a deeper exploration of the participants' experiences, thoughts, and perspectives. The interview questions used by the research can be found in Appendix 1 & 2.

Information was collected through a literature review to acquire knowledge of the best practices, advantages and disadvantages, common errors to avoid, and general information on the different topics. The knowledge gained from reviewing literature supports the researcher to get a better understanding of the process they are aiming to improve. A literature review is an important part of research since it represents the knowledge relating to the topic. A researcher can obtain useful knowledge and ideas by reviewing the literature (Tomal & Hastert, 2010). Due to the time limitations of this thesis, the research has not been conducted on a deeper level. However, the literature review serves as a good foundation and provides general knowledge and insight into the researched topics. Despite the limitation of conducting more in-depth research, the data that is gathered provides a good base point for further exploration and analysis within the timeframe.

3.4 Data Analysis

Before beginning to analyze the data, the researcher needs to have an understanding of the term validity and the threats to it. Validity is the extent to which the data collected is useful and accurate. Factors that can impact the validity of the data negatively are threats to it. The validity can be impacted by the use of instrumentation, the method through which data was collected. When interviewing the researcher can obtain more or less favorable responses depending on how the respondent feels towards the interviewer (Tomal & Hastert, 2010). Questions need to be asked in a way that does not aim for the participant to answer in a specific way and the participant should be allowed to answer clearly without the interviewer imposing their ideas on the scenario.

When conducting the interviews, the data was transcribed throughout the interview, it is a crucial part to have all the information from the interviews written down before starting to analyze it. The data is read through multiple times so the researcher is familiar with it and can identify trends in it at first glance. To get a better view of trends in the interviews an overview is created with answers from all the interviews collected under the questions in one document, the answers were marked to be able to identify from which interview they originated.

After the interviews were summarized into one document it is easier to create a report with a general overview of the data, with comments describing overarching themes, how they relate to each other, and what the significance of them is for the research. The document helps the researcher reflect on patterns and variations in the interviews. When analyzing data from interviews it is important to get an overall understanding of the material and its context.

3.5 Action Planning

When the data is analyzed sufficiently, the main concerns of the research are clear, and a literature review of the planned theoretical framework is conducted, it is time to plan for what action to take in the research. During this stage, the course of action forward is planned, and it can be done with several different methods just depending on how the data was collected and how the research is conducted.

In the research for this thesis, the action planning was done in collaboration with the stakeholders for the research. The researcher summarized the data from the interviews and the key points of the theoretical framework that supports it to be able to find different suggestions for acting. These suggestions were then presented to the stakeholders of the research to get second opinions on a way forward. During the action planning the resources needed for execution of the plan were also discussed to make the proposed actions easier to achieve.

The action decided on needed to be manageable for this thesis to achieve within the limited timeframe but also work as a tool to help both employers and new employees to easier manage the induction process. The researcher and stakeholders agreed that the action should be of two parts, one tool that helps structure the induction process and recommendations of needed improvements in the induction and training process.

3.6 Taking Action

This phase of action research is when the planned actions are implemented. The actions are based on insight gained from previous stages of the research such as problem formulation, data collection and analysis, action planning, and the reviewing of literature. During the action-taking part of the process, the result is produced, for this research which is a tool that structures and improves the induction process and a document with recommendations regarding needed improvements in the induction and training process.

The development of the tool is based on the trends found in the interviews, and employees' and managers' wishes, supported by the theoretical framework to make sure it is aligned with needs and expectations. The document developed should be of such form that it can act as a guide for implementing changes in the induction process.

Before the full-scale implementation of the action, the results will be continuously reviewed by the stakeholders to make sure that the result is optimal for this research. After the results are finished the tool and document with recommendations will be handed over to line managers for use when onboarding new hires. The results provided by this research need to be continuously followed up and updated since changes in the information it is based on can make the information outdated.

3.7 Evaluation and Follow-up

Due to the time limitations of this research, and the fact that there was no currently ongoing recruitment in the department when this research was conducted, the full result of this action research on new employees cannot be evaluated. To get feedback on the result of the action research it was presented to several people who have recently completed the onboarding to get their opinions on it. When presenting the result, the main questions the researcher wanted an answer to were "Would this have helped your onboarding?", "Is there anything you would like to change about this to make it better suited for new employees?", and "Would you like to add anything to it?". The answers to these questions were then taken into consideration and discussed with stakeholders, since the research is done according to an iterative process the result can be amended until all parties involved are satisfied with it.

The result is also supposed to support the line managers when they are onboarding new employees and therefore the feedback from them is of high importance since the tools are to be used by them as well.

4 Results

In this chapter, the findings of interviews conducted among line managers and newly hired employees will be presented, along with solutions to problems discovered during the interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to get a good understanding of the existing induction process and challenges within it to be able to pinpoint problems that can be solved. The findings of the interview were summarized and analyzed to establish common themes within the interviews.

To solve problems discovered within the interviews a handbook was created as a tool to support managers, mentors, coworkers, and new employees in the induction process. This handbook serves as a practical solution aimed at enhancing the onboarding experience and facilitating a smoother transition for new hires. Details about the content and development process of this handbook will be presented within this chapter.

4.1 Interview Findings

In this subchapter, the findings of the interviews will be summarized and presented. The findings are divided into “Line managers” and “New employees” since the purposes of the interviews and the questions asked are different from each other. Because the researcher of this thesis is an employee within the researched department and took part in the induction process in 2021, potential bias when analyzing the interview findings cannot be ruled out. The interviews that were conducted were to be able to develop a tool used in the induction process and recommendations for further work and were therefore not a need for a deeper analysis of the process.

Interviews with line managers

When interviewing the line managers, the main purposes of the interviews were to get an understanding of how they view the induction process, how they think it works, what they feel needs improvement and to hear if they have any ideas for improvement. Two people were interviewed, and the interviews took about 45 minutes each. One interview was in semi-structured format, and one was more unstructured, like an open discussion. The answers in both interviews were very similar and both participants had similar opinions, therefore the analysis of the answers of these interviews was quite simple.

The first question of the interview was "How does the induction process look like at the moment?" to which one of the participants answered, "Maybe too little structure and too much information is provided at once". Before the new employee starts the line managers send a welcome e-mail containing necessary information they should know before their first day. At the beginning of the employment a training needs analysis is conducted to see what knowledge they possess and if there are parts of the training they don't need. The first day starts with getting them set up with devices and a presentation of the department and way of working is given by a manager. No further explanation of the training structure was received from interviews.

When they were asked what they think works and doesn't work within the induction process the best working thing that was mentioned was the welcoming e-mail, the TNA, and the mentorships since. The managers were concerned with the lack of structure that there is currently within the training. They also mentioned that information is often lumped together and presented, which is not optimal for learning. They wish that the information and training should be divided into smaller parts and that exercises would be created for new employees to practice. It was also mentioned that the training material is currently scattered around various platforms and can be hard to find when it is needed, and it would be better to have it all stored in the same place.

The managers have requested that the result of this thesis provide them with some kind of a plan with a structured timeline that the training would follow. This would make it easier to make sure training is progressing and it would be easier to allocate resources for it. The managers also wish for this thesis to provide them with recommendations for how the training should be structured, areas for improvement, and what methods should be used.

To shortly summarize the key findings:

- Welcoming letter and training needs analysis working well.
- No good structure in training currently.
- Training sessions need to be shorter and followed by exercises.
- Information regarding training needs to be collected and stored in one place where it is easy to find.
- The managers wish for a timeline for when training should be held to be able to structure the training better.
- Recommendations for training structure and methods are also wanted by the managers.

Interviews with employees

When interviewing the employees the main purpose of the interviews was to get their opinions on how the induction process works and how it made them feel. There was a total of 4 participants in these interviews, all employed within two years, so they have a relatively fresh memory of the induction. The interviews took about 30-40 minutes each, were of semi-structured form, and the answers the participants gave all were of a common theme and opinions. The likeliness of the answers made the result easy to summarize and analyze.

When the participants were asked how they would describe their overall experience of the onboarding process many answered that it felt messy and unstructured, but they appreciated the support from coworkers during it. One participant said that at moments “It felt like they were thrown into the deep end of a pool and told to swim”, referring to the huge amount of information they got at once. The overall feeling of the initial day was described as confusion, as there was not much structure in the training and there were times when the employees felt that too much information was presented to them at once. Since no exercises were provided after training sessions the days in between these sessions could be confusing because they lacked a clear structure, or no direct tasks were assigned to the new employee.

About 75% of the interview participants felt like they were provided with a good overview of the job role and responsibilities during their first week but quickly forgot this because of the huge flow of information during this week. Since no written job description was provided, they were not able to review this again, which increased the feeling of confusion. Many believed that the training sessions need to be spread out more evenly and exercises should be provided in between sessions. Information and training materials are also hard to access and often outdated, making individual learning more difficult. Since many tools are used within the department some felt like it was hard to keep track of which tool was used for what and believed that a list of these tools with short descriptions would be useful for new employees. In the department, there are some documents with step-by-step instructions on how to use the tools, that are very appreciated, and employees wish for these to be made for all tools.

One of the things that contributes most to the learning of the new job, according to the interview participants, are the mentorships and support from coworkers. One of the participants described mentoring as “the biggest support pillar” during the induction process. The new employees felt like they got good opportunities to connect with their team and felt welcome right away, this made it easier to ask questions if any concerns came up.

The mentor provides good support for a newcomer, and it gives them a person they can ask questions and who teaches them work tasks. The only downside of having a mentor according to the interview participants is that they are “bound” to one person, and if that person is very busy, they might not have a lot of time to teach their mentee.

Although the employees felt supported during their first couple of weeks and they had regular check-ins with their manager (one-on-one meetings), they feel like the check-ins could be more training-related. Since no schedule or program or even a list of the training they are supposed to go through is provided, it is hard to see progress and get a picture of the expectations. During these follow-up sessions, progress would be viewed and discussed, and the employee could give feedback on how the training is working and if they need additional training in something.

When the employees were asked if they had any suggestions for improvement at the end of their interview there were many ideas. A common answer was to have exercises after training, so they get some practice before doing real job tasks, more information on what and how tools are used, and for the training to be more evenly spread out during the induction process. They also wish there was more practical knowledge of the department provided in written form so they could remember the responsibilities of their new role better.

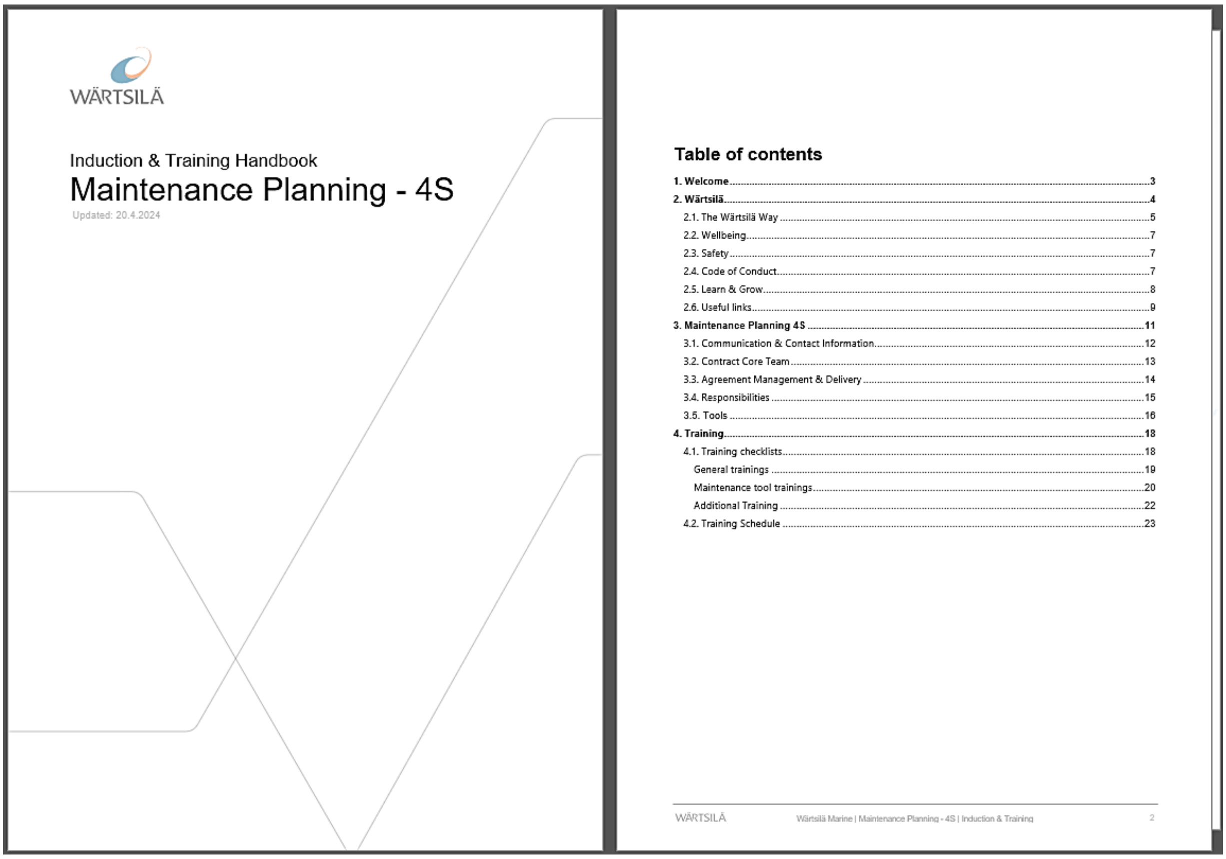
They also wish for a variety of training and for the training to be more suitable for individual learning. The training videos provided were not of much help since “Videos are not good for learning a new tool when you have no idea what to do with it”, meaning that the videos did not provide enough context on the learning. Some of the participants also feel like the mentors could benefit from some kind of mentorship training to be able to provide better instructions and training for their mentees.

To shortly summarize the key findings:

- Too much information in a short time when starting employment.
- Need for practical exercises to be able to try new knowledge.
- Employees appreciate written step-by-step instructions and wish for these to be created for more tasks.
- More information on tools that are used within the department.
- Employees wish for more follow-up on training during their first couple of weeks in their new position.

4.2 Handbook

To solve some of the concerns that the interviews brought up, a department handbook was created. Due to the confidential information in the handbook, only a few snippets of it will be provided in this presentation of the result. The handbook contains important information about the organization, the maintenance planning department, and the training that the new employee will go through (see Figure 11). The organizational information is there to make the employees aware of company culture and values so they can work aligned with these to achieve the organizational goals.


WÄRTSILÄ

Induction & Training Handbook

Maintenance Planning - 4S

Updated: 20.4.2024

Table of contents

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Figure 11. Frontpage and Table of contents of the handbook.

It starts with a small welcoming text to the new employee to introduce them to the department and the handbook. It then continues with information about the organization, such as Wellbeing and Safety, the Code of Conduct, learning within the organization, and a list of useful links the new employee might need with description of the program the link connects to.

The handbook then continues to more department-specific information, such as a short description of the department, how they communicate and contact information to managers, key-users, and designated HR personnel. A short list of responsibilities of the job role follows as well as a list of all the tools used within the department then follows. The last chapter explains the training within the department.

During the interviews, it was made clear that different parts of the job and responsibilities were left unclear or were forgotten due to the huge amount of information presented at once. Since it is of high importance that the new employees have a good understanding of their job roles and responsibilities, these were listed and shortly described in the handbook. By including this in the handbook it enables the new employee to review it as many times as possible, something that is crucial to remember the information according to Ebbinghaus and his theory on The Curve of Forgetting.

Since Wärtsilä is utilizing the 70-20-10 model for their training a chapter in the handbook is dedicated to explaining this method and how it is applied within the organization. In the training chapter of the handbook, the three most common training methods (Instructor-led training, eLearning, and Mentoring) are described so the new employee gets an understanding of how the training will be conducted and what to expect.

Due to the varying structure of the training of new employees, a structured training program might not be the most useful tool for training since it can be hard to follow. Instead, a training checklist containing all the different topics that should be covered has been made and added to the handbook.

The checklist containing different trainings is divided into 3 separate lists, one for General training such as way of working, organizational information, and mandatory courses, another for training regarding tools that are being used within the apartment, and a third list that is empty and can be filled in by employee or line manager depending on need.

As David Kolb's (1984) research suggests, getting concrete experiences and trying out knowledge on real-life problems is crucial for learning. To ensure that employees are getting this experience, a column for "Exercises provided" has been added to the checklist where it is applicable (see Figure 12). The exercises provided can be actual job tasks or exercises created for practice only.

By having this column, it can be easily followed if employees get experience of job tasks, and not only theoretical knowledge. In the checklists, there are also columns for "Training provided" which will be marked when the training has been held, and "Training completed" which will be marked when the employee feels like they have received adequate training on the topic.

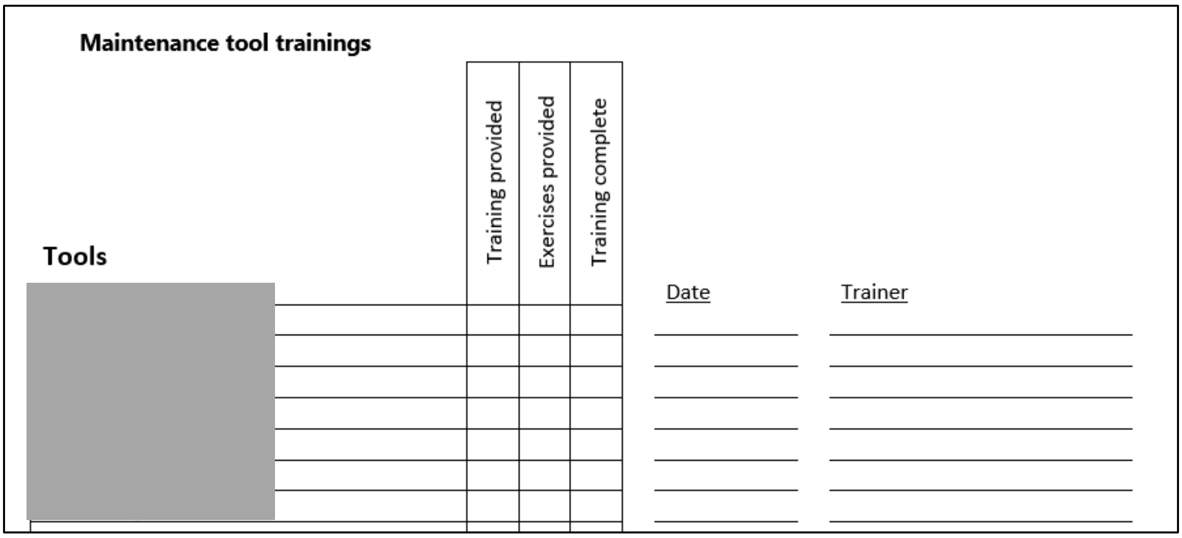

Figure 12. Training checklist (Confidential information hidden).

A training schedule follows the training checklists in the handbook (see Figure 13), and according to Patricia Guevara (2023), a timeline makes a checklist much more efficient because it keeps the training moving forward. This schedule contains all the same training courses as the checklists but shows when the training should be provided to the new employee. It does this by showing an X marked under the designated week for said training and shows when in the first 28 weeks of employment it should be done.

By having a timeline for the training, it is easier for new employees to see the progress they are making and easier for the line managers to plan and allocate resources for the training. The checklist and timeline contribute to the new employee feeling productive, more secure, and comfortable in their role because they get a better understanding of how the training will be organized and know when they will learn important knowledge. These lists and schedules can be edited according to employee needs or if anything changes in them.

The purpose of the timeline is to give managers and employees a better overview of the induction period, but it cannot be ensured that it will be followed 100% because of occasional variations based on factors such as individual learning pace, departmental priorities, or unforeseen circumstances.

General Training

Organizational	1w	2w	3w	4w	5w	6w	7w	8w	9w	10w	11w	12w	13w	14w	15w	16w	17w	18w	19w	20w	21w	22w	23w	24w	25w	26w	27w	28w
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Figure 13. Training schedule (Confidential information hidden).

Another thing that many of the interview participants were asking for was lists of the tools and how to use them. Therefore, two lists of different tools have been included in the handbook, one for organizational tools and websites and one for more department-specific tools used. Every tool has a short description of what it is and how it is used and a link to the said tool. This will make it easier for new employees to find information and to research the tools by themselves.

By providing this handbook to new employees they will be able to review important information at their own pace when they have the time. Even though the handbook contains information that is also included in some training sessions, these training sessions will still be held. The training chapter of the handbook will be useful for both managers and employees to keep track of the training.

For this handbook to be optimal the training structure still needs to be improved within the department. Recommendations for further work that would complement this handbook and make the use of it even better are described in more detail in the following chapter, 5 Conclusion.

5 Conclusion

The preparations for the induction of a new employee are good within the Maintenance Planning department, before starting they receive a welcome letter on the e-mail containing the important information that Peter Vanden Bos (2020) mentions. The new employee is introduced to their coworkers and according to the interviews they all feel welcome and supported by their colleagues quickly. A problem area many employees mentioned was that the information during the first day was very heavy and felt like they could not take it all in and remember it. Although many employees describe their first time in the new employment as confusing, this is not something unusual. Robin Hoyle (2013) mentions many uncomfortable feelings that are very common when starting any new job, the differences in workplaces are how they handle these feelings. By structuring the induction process better and having a training schedule the new employees will feel more productive and as a part of their team, the progress will be viewable, and they will feel like they are moving forward. When providing the new employees with the handbook mentioned in Chapter 4.2, they get a lot of information on the organization, the department, job role, and training. The handbook will show that the employer is invested in the new employees' journey and progress, strengthening the much-important psychological contract (Conway & Briner, 2006).

The handbook provided will give the newcomers an easier way to find information and also give them a short introduction to their new job role. This will reduce some of the anxiety they might have by giving them clear information that they can review at any time (Lopusushinsky, n.d.). The handbook is made very visual, meaning it contains pictures, colors, and clear sections, to not feel too heavy and be easier to read. The training checklist within the handbook is to ensure that training progresses and that all training is covered, streamlining the induction process (Guevara, 2023). Unfortunately, due to the time limitations and limitations within the department this thesis was conducted for, an entire training program was not able to be created. Only the first step of creating a training program, establishing training needs, was done to create the checklist. To further improve the induction process, a training program would be beneficial since it helps build employee loyalty and adds value to the process (Indeed, 2023). The next step to take would then be to define learning objectives, choose suitable training methods, develop content, and conduct the training according to a schedule (Evans, n.d.). But instead of a complete program, a timeline was created that shows when training should be held, even if the timeline cannot be followed all the time, it will still give targets to work towards.

At the end of every year, there is a performance review at Wärtsilä, in which previously set goals are evaluated. A performance review should be held one year after an employee has started to be able to evaluate how well they are performing and the different factors surrounding this. If the employee has started in August, this performance review in December won’t give an accurate picture if it is compared to one being performed a year after the start date. Because of this, a separate session could be held to have an accurate picture of where an employee is at the one-year mark and to compare if it matches expectations (ACAS, 2015).

5.1 Further work

Since the induction process is a long process with many different aspects, it takes a lot of work to change. In this chapter recommendations for further work are given, based on interview findings and researched theory. The recommendations are also presented to the stakeholders of this thesis as a separate document and are summarized in the subchapters below.

5.1.1 Induction process overall

During the first couple of days, information could be more evenly spread out, since many new employees felt like they were not able to take in a lot of information during that time and it made them feel overwhelmed. The training provided on the first day should only be of the most important information the employee needs to know right away (Grant, 2017), a good example of information like this can be seen in Figure 2 on page 11.

Information that is presented to the new employee should also always be sent to them as an e-mail, so they can review it later, which improves the retention of information (Mind Tools, n.d.). The information should be organized in such a way that the most important information that lays the ground for future learning should be presented in the first week and more in-depth information should be provided later in smaller amounts.

By the end of the first week, the new employee should have light knowledge of the bigger picture of their job, they do not need to know every process and aspect of it (Maurer, n.d.). The onboarding of a new employee should be coordinated with key-users beforehand to be able to provide the employee with some kind of schedule. This is to ensure the induction process is efficient and the employee progresses and doesn’t get left without anything to do (Betterworks, 2022).

To ensure that the training is going according to schedule, goals for 30-,60-, and 90-days could be set and followed up. By setting these targets it is easier to plan the training and ensure that the employee is progressing at a good pace (Indeed, 2022). The target for the first 30 days could be knowledge- and learning-based goals so that the employee learns about the organization and their role in it. The 60-day goal could be more about contribution, letting the employee test the knowledge on real-life scenarios or tasks. At the 90-day goal, the employee should have been introduced to most of their tasks, and now the focus should be on finding knowledge gaps and filling those.

5.1.2 Training Structure

When lectures are held in a **classroom training** or instructor-led learning environment, the classes should be quite short since the average attention span is about 20 minutes (Saeed, Humayun, Nundy, Kakar, & Bhutta, 2021). If one wishes to hold longer lectures, one needs to consider this limit for the attention span and have breaks or combine the lecture with exercises. To ensure that employees feel motivated to learn, the material should be engaging and of various forms. For adults to learn it is important that they know the reason behind why they are learning, according to Malcolm Knowles's (1980) adult learning theory. So, when creating training material make sure that the bigger picture of the learning is clear, and that the employee knows why they have a use for this knowledge.

When conducting classroom training it would be good to make it a part of a **blended learning** process. Blended learning is when instructor-led training sessions are combined with eLearning (Gupta, 2022). By researching different blended learning models, such as the Flipped model or the rotational model these could easily be applied to the training within the Maintenance Planning department. The flipped model means that the new employees view material online before going to an instructor-led session, making them more aware of the subject and having an easier time. The rotational model means that the classroom training rotates between instructions and exercises online, something that would also fit great for the department.

The **eLearning** method is already used in a variety of forms within Wärtsilä and the Maintenance Planning department. Wärtsilä has also developed its own LMS (learning management system) through which it offers a broad number of courses. This LSM could be utilized to create a block of all the training and courses a Maintenance Planner should go through.

It would be an excellent way to store and update materials and to track the progress of the training. The eLearning method is very flexible and cost effective once it is up and running, but to get it there it would take a lot of work. Using eLearning can never be seen as a replacement for other types of learning, since it can become dull and boring if it lacks interaction (Hashemi-Pour & Lutkevich, 2023).

The **On-the-Job training** is a commonly used method within the department by the use of mentors and colleagues of the new employee. This was the method that the employees in the interviews referred to when talking about by which method they learned the most. Although it is a very liked method that seems easy, many aspects should be considered when performing **OJT and mentoring**. The trainers or mentors need to be well prepared and preferably trained for the occasion (Bray, 2023). The process must be evaluated more frequently to avoid transferring of unwanted behavior or patterns. Mentors need to be people who want to be mentors since a forced relationship can cause a lot of harm to both the mentor and the new employee (Joseph, 2019).

The **70-20-10 model** is a well-used concept within Wärtsilä, and the department is already training accordingly. To improve knowledge retention from this method the employee in training needs to be able to see the big picture of the training. Even though the model is merely a concept and not a proven theory, its building blogs provide a good variation of OJT, social engagements, and formal training (Cloke, 2022). To further improve the use of it exercises should be provided so that the knowledge they retain from formal learning can be applied to real-world scenarios.

After each training of a new tool or a new way of working, **exercises** should be provided. By applying new knowledge to exercises the retention of it will improve. As David Kolb's (1984) research suggests, when learning something new concrete experience is needed to have something to reflect upon. The exercises will then also give the new employees a chance to repeat their knowledge, which is also a crucial aspect of retaining it according to Ebbinghaus and his theory of the forgetting curve (Mind Tools, n.d.).

Although **learning styles** are not a proven concept, it shows that people have different preferred ways of learning (Dirksen, 2012). This means that the more ways the training material can be viewed the better. Having videos, written instructions and instructor-led lectures on the same topics provides the employee with many different opportunities to review the content. Having pre-recorded and written material also enables the learner to learn on their terms, something that is also important to the adult learner (Knowles, 1980).

5.1.3 Follow-up and Evaluation

Even though the interviewed employees found that they got adequate support from their managers through one-on-one meetings, the meetings may need to be more training-related during the first couple of months. By having these one-on-one meetings where the managers are coaching the employee they are establishing a strong relationship with the employee, something important for the wellbeing at work (Vergroesen, 2020).

Currently, the training is not followed up that thoroughly, which also means that the managers cannot certainly know how efficient the training is and if there are areas of improvement within it. The follow-up should be done to identify areas where the employee excels, struggles, or loses interest to be able to provide the best support for their learning journey (ACAS, 2015). By evaluating the training according to the Kirkpatrick model, it would be easier to find areas where the training is not so successful and by doing that make it more efficient and user friendly. The Kirkpatrick model evaluates 4 aspects of the training, how employees interact with it, if they learn from it, if they change their behavior from it, and if the results are the ones expected (Kirkpatrick & Kayser Kirkpatrick, 2016). This follow-up could be a few standardized questions for each evaluation level to use after training to get a good overview of how well it is going. This could be done as a quick form or as an addition to the one-on-one meetings' agenda. A general example of how a simple yet effective form could look can be seen in Appendix 3.

By engaging in the new employee's success, the manager also strengthens the psychological contract in between the employee and the organization. This will in return lead to higher retention and satisfaction among employees. Employees who feel valued and heard will also produce better work for the organization (Conway & Briner, 2006).

5.2 Challenges

One of the biggest challenges when improving an induction process is that there are a lot of different theories and research on the topics, and to be able to find a good overall result for research of this kind you must possess a lot of knowledge on different aspects. Many of the researched theories are also not proven concepts, as learning can be very individual and hard to understand, making it even more difficult to find appropriate methods for teaching and learning.

Another challenge with improving the induction process within the Maintenance planning department is that the training does not always have the same structure. This means that different topics can be taught by different methods, making it hard to assign responsibility and create a structured schedule that will be accurately followed. Since training can be held by a manager, mentor, instructor, or just a coworker it is hard to coordinate a training program with a good and realistic structure.

6 Discussion

The purpose of this research was to be able to find elements of the induction process to improve and to give the line managers of the department a concrete tool to use and recommendations on how to further improve the process. Although I am very satisfied with the result, the handbook, there is still room for improvement in the process. It is impossible to change a process this big over just the course of a thesis, but I hope my recommendations and insights will inspire the Maintenance Planning department to keep improving it.

It has been a very interesting process and I have gained a lot of valuable experiences and knowledge from it, which I am certain I will have use for in the future. At the beginning of this research, it was quite a broad subject, and the desired outcome was unclear. After a bit of research and deliberation together with my supervisor from Wärtsilä, we could agree on an appropriate path to take to make the workload manageable. Since I am working as a Maintenance Planner when writing this thesis, it is likely that I will continue to improve the induction process according to the recommendations for further work I have given.

Thanks to the good support I have gotten from both Wärtsilä and Novia this has been a very smooth process where there haven’t been any roadblocks or speed bumps keeping me from progressing. The most time-consuming aspect of the research was the literature review where I had to limit my research, even though I would have liked to go more in dept on different themes to get a better understanding of them.

When I started this research it seemed like a pretty clear subject, an opinion that quickly changed as this thesis progressed. The induction and training of a new employee is a very complex and deep subject, and many different areas need to be researched to create a good overall process. This was something that was much more difficult than I anticipated at first, but after a lot of work researching many different topics, I think I found an adequate base.

6.1 Closing words

I want to thank Wärtsilä for giving me the opportunity to do this thesis for them, and my supervisor from Wärtsilä, Niclas Östergårds, for providing me with good support and feedback throughout this process. I would also like to thank my supervisor Roger Nylund from Novia for always guiding me with valuable insights and new perspectives whenever I felt stuck in my research, keeping me motivated and moving forward. I would also like to thank everyone else who participated or was involved in this thesis, coworkers, and interview participants, since this thesis would not be the same without your valuable input and knowledge.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Interview questions for line managers

1. How does the induction process look like now?
2. What do you think works/does not work in the process?
3. What tools do you think would benefit the process? (checklists, timelines, department specific handbooks, onboarding kits etc.)
4. How does the induction process work for new employees overseas?
5. How is the mentoring process working?
6. Do you evaluate the need for training throughout the employment?
7. What feedback have you gotten regarding the induction process from employees?

Appendix 2 – Interview questions for employees

1. Can you provide a short overview of your overall experience during the onboarding process?
2. How would you describe the initial days or weeks when you joined the organization?
3. Did you feel well-informed about your role, responsibilities, and expectations during the onboarding process?
4. Were there any aspects of your job that were unclear or needed further clarification?
5. Did you feel adequately supported by the organization during the onboarding period?
6. Were the resources provided (training materials, technology, etc.) helpful in understanding your role?
7. Did you have opportunities to meet and connect with your colleagues?
8. Were there opportunities for you to provide feedback on the onboarding process?
9. Did you feel that your feedback was valued and taken into consideration?
10. Did you find the duration of the onboarding process appropriate for your role?
11. Were there areas where you felt the onboarding could have been more efficient or comprehensive?
12. How would you rate the effectiveness of the training provided during onboarding?
13. Did you have a mentor or someone designated to guide you during the onboarding process?
14. How did mentorship contribute to your understanding of the organization and your role?
15. Based on your experience, do you have any suggestions for improving the onboarding process?

Appendix 3 – Training evaluation form

Training Program Title:
Date of Training:
Trainer(s):

Level 1: Reaction – Participants' feedback

1. Rate your overall satisfaction with the training program on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being Very Dissatisfied, 5 being Very Satisfied).

1	2	3	4	5

2. Did the training content align with your job responsibilities and learning objectives? Please provide comments or suggestions for improvement.

3. How engaging was the training delivery? Did it keep your attention and interest throughout the session?

Level 2: Learning - Knowledge and Skills Acquisition

1. To what extent do you feel you have gained new knowledge or skills from the training program? (1 being Not at all, 5 being Extremely)

1	2	3	4	5

2. Were the learning objectives clearly communicated and achieved during the training? Please provide examples.

Level 3: Behavior - Application of Learning

1. Have you applied any of the knowledge or skills gained from the training in your day-to-day work? If yes, please describe the specific instances.

2. Are there any barriers preventing you from applying what you've learned in the training? If yes, please specify.

Level 4: Results - Impact

1. Have you noticed any improvements in your performance or productivity as a result of the training? Please describe.

2. Do you have any suggestions for how the training program could be improved to better align with business goals or individual learning needs?