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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	3
1. Case Keski-suomalainen	4
2. Case Klaus-Elgex	12
3. Case Sanofi: How to improve vaccination coverage rates in France?	17
4. Case Latvijas Pasts – How to Bring Company Values to Life?	19



1. Case Keskisuomalainen

Introduction of the company

Mediatulo Keskisuomalainen is a Finnish communications and media corporation originally located in Central Finland in Jyväskylä. The company has a long history. It started with one newspaper over 150 years ago. At the moment, the company has more than 90 different media brands nationwide. The total revenue for the latest accounting period was 206.8 million euros and the profits were 4.9 million euros. The company employs approximately 6,000 employees.

Mediatulo Keskisuomalainen has a strategy canvas that is called #renewingtogether 2022. The strategy demonstrates the company's state of mind and includes a roadmap how to achieve the target state of mind. The strategy canvas acknowledges the challenges the company faces and offers solutions for how the challenges will be addressed. It also consists of value-based criteria that are locally national, customer-centric operations, and functions that support locality and are boldly renewable. The company's core value is responsibility in all its operations. Keskisuomalainen's target is to sell more and in a bigger picture, it's linked with sales teams' competencies and the strategy.

As organization, Mediatulo Keskisuomalainen has strong B2B sales units. The company's B2B customers consists of diverse advertisers. Amongst them, there are small companies with only few employees but also large chain customers with big advertising budgets. Overall, the needs of advertisers' look very different. The combining factor is the need of media space in order to gain more reach and awareness among their customers. The company has five regional companies which are Kaakon Viestintä Oy, Savon Media Oy, Keski-Suomen Media Oy, Etelä-Suomen Media Oy and Mediatulo Esa. All regional companies are profit centers, and they have their own sales departments. In addition, the company has a national service portal called Meks. Meks also has its own sales department, and its purpose is to offer all Mediatulo Keskisuomalainen's business services in one place.

The strategy of Keskisuomalainen has emphasized growth by acquisitions, which has led the company to possess a very versatile product, brand, and service range. Due to the company's growth, it is nowadays a major provider of printed and digital newspapers, digital advertising, research services, marketing and communications services, and graphic production together with printing and distribution services. The company has also real estate business and it organizes some well-known events.

Environment of the company

Mediatulo Keskisuomalainen has major competitors such as Sanoma Media, Alma Media, Clear Channel and JCDecaux Finland. However, the company's product and service categories create a steady demand, and the company gives customers the opportunity to get everything with one contact only.



Nowadays, the Mediatulo Keskisuomalainen is a market leader in publishing regional and local newspapers. It is also Finland's largest news and free paper publisher by the number of titles. The company's business area is widely spread, and it covers a large part of Finland's most populated areas (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Mediatulo Keskisuomalainen's business area

Although the company has grown through acquisitions the regional companies have preserved their own practices and management styles. Some of the regional companies are very traditional and hierarchical, and typically, the sales managers in regional companies have a high social status. The company may have a “lower” status in the group hierarchy but yet, it is a listed company and led by group management team. Joint working is organized into activities that are managed from the management level. The goal has been to find all the synergies between practices, systems and manners to make the whole organization as effective as possible.

At the moment, the company's greatest challenges are related to overall change in consumer buying behavior and media usage, the impact of the future generations on consumer behavior, and different regulations and policies regarding privacy and targeting. As a sales-focused organization operating in a very competitive field, the company is also challenged by the following question: how to maintain the efficiency of salespersons and the competitiveness of products?

Target of the company

In recent years, many organizations have emphasized competencies and the development of competencies. Competent staff is a major resource for companies and a significant way to keep the business successful and profitable. (Kovalainen, Leppänen & Toivanen, 2012.) Responding to competence needs in a changing environment is, indeed, a critical factor for competitiveness and economic success (Sitra, 2019).



For employed people, the workplace is the most significant learning environment (Sitra, 2019) where competencies can be developed. Keskisuomalainen's goal is to strengthen its B2B sales training by renewing and unifying its training methods. This is realized as a project. In the first phase of the project, new training possibilities are piloted in B2B sales. Later, the purpose is to broaden the utilization of new training models in other departments as well.

The enabler in developing sales competencies and creating new training methods for B2B sales is a brand-new digital platform offering a learning management system and learning tools. The digital platform is a major financial investment. Technically, the platform was ready for use in May 2021. However, offering training is not the only idea since the company wants to support continuous learning, workplace training, and self-oriented learning and, eventually, to create a whole new learning culture for the company. In the learning and competence framework the key factors (white) and stakeholders (black) are presented below (Figure 2).

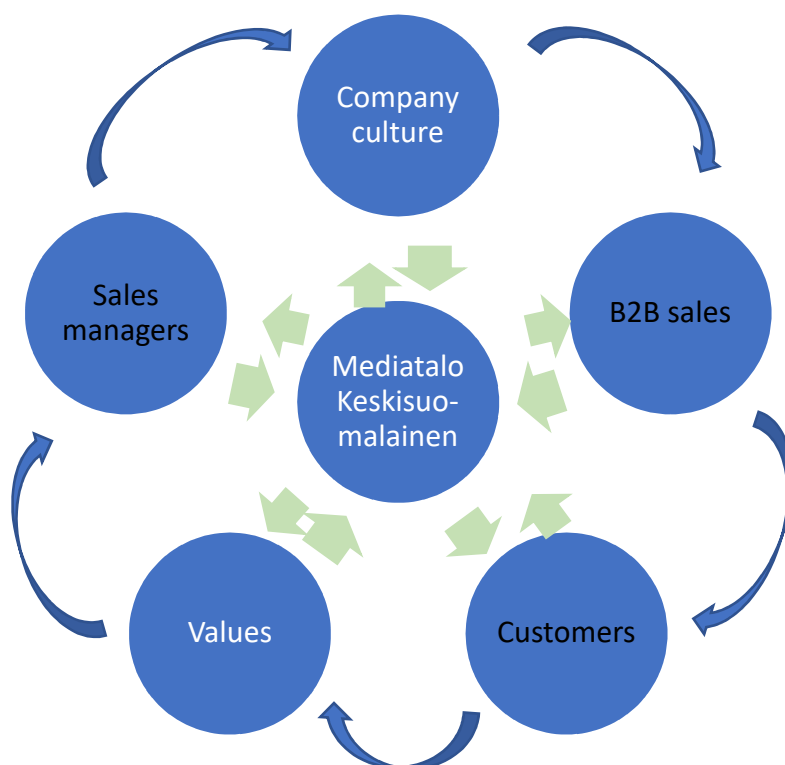


Figure 2. Different influencing factors and stakeholders in the learning and competence framework

Mediatlo Keskisuomalainen aims at selling more and make the sales processes more streamlined. The purpose is also to improve the quality of the sales work and to make the sales work easier by offering tools and training to support sales work. B2B sales department is responsible for sales work and this department needs the training and the tools. However, B2B department is constantly busy with their job and daily routines, so it is important to be able to carry out the training and the adoption of digital platform without stealing too much time from the actual sales work at the same time. The sales organizations' structures are presented below (Figure 3). Note that there might be slight differences between the regional companies, but they are not relevant for the case, since all the sales departments have similar operations and processes.

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Figure 3. The company's sales organizations

Sales directors lead their own sales units, and they have a key role in change management and in communicating the need for change to salespeople. It is also a sales directors' task to support the creation of learning culture and each individual's self-oriented learning path while, at the same time, make sure that sales meet the budgeted sales targets. Sales director reports to regional sales director.

Salespeople include account managers and sales specialists. Their titles differ based on the size of their customer base, but their job description doesn't differ: they sell Mediatalo Keski-suomalainen's products and services, and help B2B customers with the media solutions.

One major stakeholder is the customer. The learning and new competencies developed through learning should have a positive impact to the value that customers are experiencing. The outcome of learning should lead to the scenario where customers get added value, and the company gets better results.

Organizational climate includes shared beliefs and values that an organization has (Janz, Wehterbe, Colquitt, & Noe, 1997; Schneider, 1990). Organizational climate plays a key role in forming the behavior of employees and it affects employees' perception of knowledge management. (Chen & Lin, 2004; Long 2000; Sveiby & Simons, 2002.) Indeed, every organization has a culture, and it cannot be separated from other factors (Kuusela, 2015.).

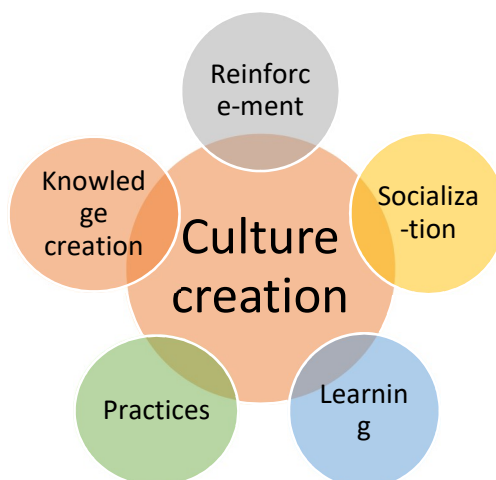


Figure 4. Culture creation (modified from Kuusela, 2015)



The factors in culture creation (Figure 4) are socialization, learning, practices, knowledge creation and reinforcement. The experience of a culture is created by acting together. Every employee grows to become a community member through socialization. Supervisors in workplaces are role models who align how it is desirable to act. (Kuusela, 2015.)

In the best-case scenario, learning is a daily part of the culture because an organization develops only through learning. Organizations need learning to develop and maintain resilience and the readiness for change. An organization and its employees need to react to the changes in customers and in its environment. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), an organization creates new information to make profit and to maintain its competitive advantage. (Kuusela, 2015.)

The role of information imbalance in the case

Information is a fundamental concept in knowledge management and organizational learning. Information and knowledge are difficult to explain and there is lack of understanding relationships between them. Information has many relevant descriptions: 1) information is relevant for someone to analyze, 2) information can be seen as processed data, 3) information has a context and it forms the basis for knowledge and 4) information consists of different message. In addition, information is a message which has a meaning, implication, or action. It consists of current and historical sources. Information's purpose is to help decision making or problem solving. (Liew, 2007.)

Big organizational size in the case company brings about some challenges with communications and people because everyone might not know everyone. There is a lot of information to process and to distribute. However, despite the challenges, it is relatively easy for the staff to have a conversation with management. Critical feedback can be given at a low threshold and it is even considered desirable.

The company has an intranet which contains basic information regarding HR, IT and the media group itself. The intranet provides information about the company's current topics from all regional areas. It is the most important place for internal communications. It also provides shortcuts and links for internal systems. The intranet gives an overview on the basic tools and information for all employees.

The company has many tools to providing information and to storage it. Microsoft Teams is in daily use and there are a lot of channels, documents and information for different purposes and teams. Some of the specific information can only be found via employees. This type of information could be expert knowledge, passwords or some specific information that has not been documented anywhere. There is a lot of tacit information and knowledge in the company.

The new training platform is meant to be the first place to store information on the development of the competencies of salespersons. Its role is to be a unique tool to help the salespersons to grow, evolve and learn. It contains important materials such as digital product files, videos, learning modules and all material related to training. The course materials are always available, and employees can easily return to all material stored in the digital platform.



Main challenges brought about by the case

Organizations must learn how to solve or cope with challenges from different perspectives that represent different stakeholders. In practice, it is about the organizational ability to handle different paradoxical situations in daily life in a productive way. (Cameron & Quinn, 1988; Lewis, 2000; Czarniawska, 2005; Andriopoulos, 2009).

There are four key paradoxes in this case:

1. The market raises new training needs that must be met for the company to remain competitive, but there is no structured plan on how to ensure this in every organizational level and on the group level.
2. The company invests in new digital learning platform to make the learning easier and more efficient, but the change management and learning culture are missing.
3. The sales management desires that budgets are met in the short run but forget how competence can help in building long run profitability.
4. Salespeople want to learn, and they are aware that they need to learn, but the learning culture is missing. In addition, they are busy with their daily work.

At the moment, the company culture is not actively developed, and the company does not use the company culture as a management tool. The company's management style is traditional and hierarchical. It is unpredictable how the culture of the company supports the change because the culture differs in different areas and the values do not necessarily lead the behavior.

Also, the company's learning culture is missing, and management should be involved in its creation and lead the change of culture. It is evident that investing in a digital learning environment is not enough in its own right and will not bring the desired results if the learning culture is missing.

The company's employer brand is not actively and systematically developed for internal or external target groups. The company does not have modern, transparent communications, ways of working or employee benefits. Internal communications stress "from the company to the staff" ideology. The company does not have a marketing and communications director, which is manifested by the fact that communication is not planned for a long term. However, the employees who work for their own regional company also need to co-operate across regional and departmental boundaries in daily life or in projects.

B2B sales goal is to acquire new customers and to grow the volume of sales for the existing ones. Regional companies have their own sales organizations, values, beliefs and practices, at least partially. They easily fall into their own silos. Sales strive for continuous customer relationships and they appreciate all customers.

Sales managers lead the sales and ensure that budgets are met. Management styles can vary remarkably even though the supervisor training is the same for every manager in the company. Sales managers are very important, and they have powerful influence possibilities. They create and support healthy competition between regions. They have very strong opinions, but their role in creating and preserving

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the learning culture and supporting self-oriented learning is missing. Most sales managers do not belong to the “new generations” (generations Y or Z), so their conception of modern marketing, sales and competitive advantage factors are traditional. It is unpredictable how sales managers will adopt the new processes, but it is obvious that the change can only be implemented through managers.

Sales skills and knowledge levels vary. Salespeople may recognize the need for training, but they do not necessarily see the bigger picture when it comes to the benefits of training and learning. Moreover, they do not have time to think the links between learning, culture and results, because they are expected to sell more and acquire new customers, that is, concentrating on the outputs. There is occasional resistance to change in this group of employees. Engaging sales in a new way of training supposedly takes time because the change is big. Without strong change management it is unclear whether the salespeople embrace self-oriented learning. Actions regarding the change should be continuous.

Digital unit and product managers need to strengthen sales teams’ know-how and support them in succeeding in sales. Digital unit and product managers are responsible for the digital product development and sharing the knowledge on digital products with sales unit. They expect that salespeople adopt all new features and benefits concerning digital products and help with the changes, which are usually quite comprehensive.

Customers appreciate clever solutions and desire better results, but customer types vary a lot. They range from small advertisers who use only one media to advertisers with broad advertising needs and major budgets. Customers value target group knowledge and analytical skills. They expect that expert salespeople can suggest solutions, use creativity, and make quality conclusions with the help of data. Especially small customers want to do business with the same contact person every time they need to contact the company.

There are many cause-and-effect relationships related to this case. Some of them are unclear, but it is fair to expect that if the company invests in quality training it will have some effect in competencies. It is predictable that the adoption of the platform improves training frequency, quality and continuity. The learning platform should make learning easier because it helps finding all information needed in one place where the salespeople can easily retrieve the material on company’s products. The platform also offers flexibility for schedule in learning.

However, before the platform can be fully adopted, inhouse training is needed. One major missing cause-and-effect relationships is the connection between the training investment and revenue measured in euros. It is also unpredictable how information is adopted and how effectively it turns to knowledge in the learning process. Investing in employee training has an impact on well-being, learning, motivation, and commitment but the questions is: on what level? Involvement is probably the best way to engage. The training provided must be long-term and goal oriented. The company needs to consider how the competence is monitored, what kind of feedback is given, and how the results are utilized in improving sales results.



Summary

The problem within this case is large. Keeping in mind 1) all the information presented above 2) the paradoxes related to the case and 3) the challenges with the main stakeholders, how can the company create a whole new learning culture and develop competencies to support the target of increasing sales and eventually revenue?

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2. Case Klaus-Elgex

De KLAUSEN is a business growth consulting company that uses intensive consulting, training, and coaching techniques for this purpose. The company's clients are both multinational and Romanian entrepreneurial companies, especially of medium size.

KLAUS-ELGEX is one of the national leaders in electrical solutions and equipment, industrial automation systems, electric drives, and lighting systems. Present the market since 2004, KLAUS-ELGEX has been offering solutions for energy efficiency and productivity improvement, proposing customized solutions tailored to the business.

The company has now 125 employees and it is considering a possible increase of personnel in the team, both technical and sales. For employee development, KLAUS-ELGEX planned a continuous training program, which will include employees from all departments, regardless of the level of training, offering courses for skills development (engineering training, sales, logistics, etc.).

A challenging project is to increase by 25% per year the turnover of the business of the Romanian company KLAUS-ELGEX, located in Cluj-Napoca. The company has 125 employees and a turnover of over €23 million. It should be noted that in the last four years (2017-2020), turnover, profit and productivity of labour have stagnated.

The company wants to increase its competitiveness and improve performance. This will ensure continuous business development in the medium and long term, with an annual turnover growth of more than 25%. Since the beginning, the company's management has had a continuous focus on performance, the main motivating values being quality delivering of products and services, as well as respect for long-term partnerships. The company has focused on the diversification, accreditation of its services according to international standards and on the expansion of the distribution and development activity of the sales team.

Although the financial results successfully confirm the development strategies, the diversification of activities and the regional expansion of the company have led to an exponential increase in problems related to efficiency, communication, and coordination, especially in the management and sales area.

Context analysis

At national and international level there is currently a multisectoral crisis, the most affected economic sectors being the basic ones – automotive industry, car construction, industrial installations, and real estate. Any crisis is, at the same time, an opportunity. The winners of the crisis will be the ones who will find smart solutions based on technologies.

During 2020-2021 (in the emergency and alert state established at a national level in Romania), the company reorganized the activity of the production and delivery departments by implementing a system of shift work, with the aim of reducing sanitary risks, promptly meeting customer requirements and meeting delivery deadlines. The slowdown in customer activity has also led to the temporary suspension of certain projects for KLAUS-ELGEX, but for a short period of time.

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At the moment, digital interactions are much more important to customers compared to traditional sales interactions. The company aims to optimize or even change the sales process to adapt to new customer habits and the current economic period. In addition, almost 70% of sales meetings are now carried out by videoconferencing, and more than half of sales managers believe that this approach is more effective than the work models used before COVID-19.

Sales managers will go through the three phases of managing the business effects of the pandemic:

- 1) navigating the current crisis through immediate solutions and focus on resistance,
- 2) planning for the recovery, even partial, of the negative impact
- 3) reformatting and adapting to the changed business environment that we call the "new normal".

Accelerating digital transformation

The importance of digital channels has also increased significantly for B2B (Business-to-Business) in recent years, and it has accelerated since the start of the COVID-19 crisis. This change in the importance of digital interactions is mainly reflected in customer behaviours. Three things that customers focus on during this period are: price, the transparency of information and the consultancy approach supported by online information materials. These priorities are manifested on all sales channels, and they are increasingly emphasized.

To deliver exceptional digital experiences and to encourage loyalty, B2B companies need, at the very least, a relevant online approach to the most pressing points of customer dissatisfaction and frustration. The most common points of dissatisfaction are the duration of the order process, followed by the difficulty in finding products and technical problems related to the order.

Era of B2B (Business-to-Business) sales remotely

The switch to distance selling came out of necessity because the quarantine forced people to stay at home. B2B sellers reacted with astonishing speed and started to work via videoconferencing or telephone. In addition to this adjustment to distance selling, large companies have set up multidisciplinary virtual teams to manage the sales operations effectively.

The sharp increase in the use of digital channels leads companies to evaluate not only how to generate a good digital experience, but also how to conduct sales interactions to get the best result. Increasing customer experience satisfaction and sales process efficiency are a priority for sales managers. Therefore, they need to focus on how to implement digital sales. In an environment where customer requirements and operational practices have changed overnight, sales managers need a clear vision of what customers want. Only then will their company be able to make the necessary changes and ensure the necessary training for the team members. The transition from traditional face-to-face to remote selling via videoconferencing, webinar, phone, chatbot and other means requires better or different skills from sales agents. In this new world where we do business remotely, it is important to know how to convey human emotions, empathy. and warmth.

The company's objectives are to offer innovative solutions to increase sales, especially by digitizing sales and adjacent processes and to remain adaptable and competitive in a world where technology is so profoundly affecting all aspects of life. That means that the industry must be the driving force of new trends. The targeted results the company wants to achieve are the following:

- increasing the competitiveness of the company by increasing the quality of services to clients and added value and by streamlining internal activities
- increasing productivity and efficiency of the management process

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- increasing the level of performance of the sales force and management team
- developing a culture of teamwork and leadership, fostering the spirit of initiative and responsibility throughout the company
- creating an atmosphere of constructive competition and
- developing the responsibility and mastering the company's objectives by the team.

Organizational bottlenecks

In a first analysis carried out by De KLAUSEN consultants, seven organizational bottlenecks were identified: management team, employee inertia, resistance to change and fear of change (normal, in such a situation), integration with existing technology, data security, communication and business.

Managers have strong personalities (experienced managers, with confidence in themselves and with strong opinions that are sometimes expressed in a way that negatively affects others). There were identified several difficulties in employee control and management and deficiencies in interdepartmental communication. Some managers act from their comfort zones, that limit their efficiency and managerial performance. As a result of organisational analysis, it was concluded that the management and sales process are uneven, non-standard, within the company. Used to think and act according to patterns, they show resistance to new processes/workflows based on technology. Although their training is essential many of them are not available or open for further efforts. The operation of new platforms and technologies with existing channels is considered too difficult and could lead to short-term damage in operational activity (slowdown /longer time/disruption of customer experience). While the deployment of newer technologies would be manageable, compliance with security standards and regulations makes the company vulnerable to cyber-attacks and makes it difficult to digitize.

The main challenges in communication area are: internal communication (horizontal and vertical directions – with colleagues, managers, subordinates), normal vs. digital (understanding the specificity of digital communication internally but also with third parties - suppliers, customers, market), understanding the basic principles (follow-up, feedback or dissemination). Another conclusion of organisational analysis was non-unitary sales vision or lack of vision's communication.

From a business perspective, it was found that the main issues are on 3 areas: offering need to implement working in virtual teams, on solid principles), self-commission (self-service is a critical area where digitization needs to be implemented) and sales process (the process must be defined and adapted for mixed communication (direct and virtual).

Success factors and areas of improvement

The success factors for reaching the objectives were established to be the following: clarity of vision (to be understood both by middle-management and by front-line employees) and the human factor (for increasing a company's productivity, people and technology are in a relationship of mutual dependence). The key is the right mix of human expertise and technology that works in a coherent and flexible operating model with the customer at the heart of the initiatives.

The main strengths identified within the company are: the company and the teams are functional performant, an ongoing process of clarifying teams and roles and the fact that there is a definite system and evolution/progress. The main areas of improvement are as following: sales in stagnation and even decreasing in some business areas, inconsistent managerial team, sellers unruly and self-sufficient and a general attitude against change (resistance).



There are four main challenges identified at organisational level: digitalisation, market positioning, team structure and paradoxes or vicious circles. The company has already taken important and decisive steps to position itself as system integrators capable of running large turnkey projects. Customer service online and growth of brand awareness on the market have to be considered for implementation in the near future, as the pandemic context shaped new clients' behaviours (distance communication, for example).

The company functional team structure includes: regional sales manager, area sales manager and Product Manager. The team is structured by regions, as following: Cluj, Bucharest, Brasov, and Export. Some paradoxes are: "I don't have time" attitude, CRM – "we don't write, so we don't have data, so we don't write" and "We don't know the products" but we haven't learned the products, so we don't have solutions, so we're wasting time; therefore, we cannot learn so we lose sales, and we are demotivated to learn products.

A vicious circle is: "We have weak sellers with no potential that we keep in place, so they do not sell and pull the team down; we're afraid we will not find others, so we keep them, and this determines the lowering of the standards of the sales team".

Management practices

Generally, managerial practices are okay, and some management tools are used. The aspects that could be improved are: (1) job descriptions and working procedures should be updated and fully implemented, (2) interference of staff in departments or activities not belonging to them, (3) management methods and techniques used are mostly reactive due to impulses coming from clients/market/competition and would be indicated to become more proactive, (4) some tasks are communicated verbally, generating frequent discussions on the responsibility of those who ordered or acted and (6) information flows are sometimes ineffective.

Of the five basic management functions (planning, organisation, coordination, leadership and control) the functions of planning, organization and control can substantially improve. Also, the managerial meetings are sometimes one-way, with little involvement of participating managers, analysis sessions can become ineffective by diverting discussions or lack of intervention and initiative on the part of the participants or not following with consistency the implementation of decisions taken during the session, problems in the delegation of tasks. Some managers sometimes use a language that is authoritarian or even offensive.

Considering the responsibility area, it was concluded that the main form of transmission of authorities and duties is of an informal, verbal type; this increases the reaction rate, but can lead to a reduced possibility of control (because a message deteriorates by at least 30% at the time it is retransmitted and there is no traceability). Also, at the top-management level, operational meetings and periodic (quarterly) formal activities are carried out to analyse the activity and results; it is necessary to stimulate the follow-up of the implementation of the decisions taken.

The decisions bottlenecks found during the organisational analysis were, as following: the sometimes hasty manner in which certain management decisions important to the company are made, poor information of the managers/supervisors on management decisions, lack of responsibility for the decisions taken, failure to complete the implementation of decisions taken, and the fact that decisions are made but they end up not being respected after a while, people forget about them; this phenomenon can reduce credibility in management decisions.

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From the communication perspective, the issues identified were: management sometimes takes impulsive decisions, there are some interdepartmental tensions (disagreements between departments, lack of communication of problems and solutions, poor collaboration), lack of regular meetings with middle management employees (sales managers), where the opinions of each manager could be expressed and the fact that there is not enough information about the deficiencies of the management employees.

Some deficiencies identified in the activity of the organization were: increasing the number of emergencies in a limited time, agitation and feeling of lack of time, there are no backup for each employee (when someone is on vacation, certain tasks remain undone or unfinished), managers do not evenly distribute the tasks of subordinate employees, which is why activities are difficult and information is lost along the way.

Staff/Colleagues deficiencies found within the company were the following: individualistic attitude of some colleagues, lack of cohesion between departments, lack of team spirit, the way of working of colleagues that very often leads to strained relations with the client and his dissatisfaction, tendency to hide mistakes, non-use of clear criteria in employment (based on expertise, behaviours and performance), missing to promote employees with potential and the fact that skilled persons in the top management are not sufficiently involved in the professional integration of new employees.

The above aspects were noted by De KLAUSEN through the organizational diagnosis carried out in the period 2020-2021. In the next stage specific recommendations and solutions will be generated for KLAUS-ELGEX. The assignment for students is to suggest ways to increase sales, especially by digitizing sales processes.

Note: For privacy reasons, the client's name has been changed. The data mentioned in the case study are real.

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3. Case Sanofi: How to improve vaccination coverage rates in France?

Company

Sanofi is one of the leaders in the global pharmaceutical market. With a presence in 90 countries and nearly 100,000 employees, the company had sales of €36 billion by 2020, of which €5.5 billion were invested in R&D. More than half a billion people around the world are protected by one of Sanofi's vaccines every year. Sanofi's vaccines division is based in Lyon (France), with 15,000 employees. 60% of them are dedicated to production and quality. Sanofi is the world leader for flu vaccines and has a portfolio of 16 different vaccines to prevent serious diseases at all ages of life.

Maintaining high levels of vaccine coverage rates (VCR) is a major challenge for Sanofi, as it guarantees both high vaccines use which is essential for its business and a major public health impact as it secures the protection of the population.

Context

According to the WHO², more than two million lives are saved each year through vaccination.

Vaccination is both an individual protection against a disease (e.g., tetanus) and a collective protection when the vaccination coverage is sufficient. This collective protection, called herd immunity, allows people who cannot be vaccinated (immunocompromised) or who do not have access to the vaccine, to be protected by those who are vaccinated. This collective dimension, associated with the necessary control of epidemics, explains why vaccination is a competence of health authorities who publish the vaccination calendar and pays for the reimbursement of vaccines.

In our modern western societies, where behavior is increasingly individualistic, the notion of altruism is swept away by the fear of undesirable effects. We have therefore seen a general decline in vaccination coverage for many years, with a rise in beliefs and a loss of critical thinking, a hypothetical individual risk that exceeds the expected collective benefit.

The current health crisis, with its high vaccination rates, should not mislead us, the knowledge of the risk by the population is maximum, the COVID topic being treated every day in the media for 1 year and a half.

At the European level, numerous initiatives have been set up by the European Commission, such as the Joint Action on Vaccination, to optimize vaccine coverage, harmonize National Immunization Programs, facilitate R&D and develop industrial independence — a subject that has become key in the discussions on COVID vaccines.

If the COVID pandemic reminded us that vaccination is a major public health tool, it is nevertheless underused, particularly in France. VCRs for common infections such as influenza, HPV, measles and pertussis are all at levels insufficient to provide optimal protection for the population³, and the COVID pandemic has further increased these low levels, limiting patient access to doctors' offices due to lockdowns⁴.

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Of course, there are many factors influencing the decision to vaccinate or not. The act of vaccination implies the consent of the person. Patient information is an important aspect of any care and a source of responsibility for the caregivers and the transmission of this information is crucial⁵. If a few years ago, the doctor was the reference for medical information and decision for patient's immunization, this is no longer the case: information is everywhere on social media. The medical hierarchy is no longer respected by patients, who consider doctor, care giver, and social media influencer expertise in vaccination at the same level. It is an important point, especially since most of the adult vaccines in France are not mandatory but only recommended⁶.

Considering the levels of flu vaccination coverage of the different types of health professionals⁷ (doctors, pharmacists, nurses, care assistants, etc.) as a reliable marker of their personal position about immunization, there is a real gradient of knowledge and conviction. This gradient can generate discordant or even opposing discourses and positions... and we know that conflicting information is the main cause of refusal of vaccination.

Case

The improvement of flu VCR, the main challenge for Sanofi, requires the multiplication of places and opportunities for vaccination according to the habits, wishes and profile of the patients. Doctors, midwives, nurses, and pharmacists, under certain conditions, may each be required to vaccinate. It is difficult for a patient to understand his vaccine's journey, especially when each professional has his own level of scientific knowledge, education, language, habits, personal beliefs... and speech to the patient.

A 2019 health law introduced the concept of CPTS (Communauté professionnelles et territoriales de santé) in France to compensate medical deserts, those areas where the population no longer has access to a doctor or a pharmacist because of strongly decreasing medical demography.

These CPTSs are local and regional networks of health professionals of all types, motivated to work together for the benefit of the population of the territory. These networks can benefit from state subsidies to set up ambitious health projects, including influenza vaccination prevention. But because of the characteristics of each category of health professionals mentioned above, at date, no CPTS has been able to set up an effective influenza vaccination program. This observation shows that those organizations are not sufficient to effectively learn how to work together.

Main challenges for different stakeholders

Seasonal influenza can cause substantial mortality. A 2017 study found that worldwide up to 650,000 people died of influenza-associated respiratory disease each year, and up to 72,000 of these deaths occur in the European Region⁸.

For the population, to ensure an adequate level of collective protection that limits the circulation of influenza viruses is important. For an individual, it is important to get sufficient protection to avoid getting sick. For the Health Authorities, the control of the winter epidemic is a major issue, as influenza causes approximately 10,000 deaths each year in France and greatly disrupts hospitals and health system due to an influx of patients to emergencies rooms. For Sanofi, finally, guaranteeing the core of its business and ensuring the demonstration of the medical usefulness of its vaccines that can justify their funding by the community is of importance.



So, how can French health care professionals work better together, for public health benefit? How can we make health care Professionals (HCP) work together for the patient benefit? What information to share, when, and how to convince the population? What innovative communication tools, or way of working could be created and used between professionals and between patients and caregivers?

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4. Case Latvijas Pasts – How to Bring Company Values to Life?

Introduction

Latvijas Pasts is the largest postal service provider in Latvia. Its main activities are traditional postal services as well as express mail, delivery of subscribed publications and unaddressed advertising, retail of goods and press, financial services, freight forwarding, philatelic services, etc. The total revenue for the latest accounting period was 93.1 million euros and the profits were 2.3 million euros. Although currently Latvijas Pasts is the provider of the universal postal service in Latvia, the company has competitors such as DPD Latvija, Omniva, Venipak Latvia and DHL Latvia (see Appendix).

Issuing postage stamps is an important activity for every independent state and its post. Latvijas Pasts origins can be traced back to 1918 along with the proclamation of the Latvian state. After the World War II and occupation years, renewal of post after the restoration of independence of Latvia can be marked with 1992. Since 2004, Latvijas Pasts is a state joint public limited company. Today there are more than 600 places of provision of postal services in Latvia including post offices, parcel terminals and delivery points at the gas stations, accessible to every inhabitant of Latvia.



Places for provision of postal services

618

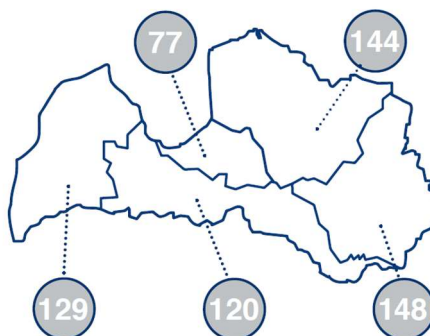


Figure 1. Latvijas Pasts postal service (geographical coverage)

The company's organizational structure consists of 20 structural units. Latvijas Pasts employs more than 3,000 employees. Regarding the management style in the last five years, there has been a purposeful transition from bureaucratic management (processes, orders, traditions, etc.) to a result-oriented management style (where, for example, KPIs are defined, customer satisfaction is measured, values are defined, etc.).

Previously, during a long period of its history, the company was dominated by the functional management, which created gaps between departments. Currently, Latvijas Pasts is shifting on team-oriented management to reduce the gaps and improve collaboration so that when solving problems, not only the responsible department but also experts from various teams are involved.

The legacy of previous functional management style is still felt in the company. Internal communication between employees, often due to their physical location, often takes place by telephone or e-mail. Employees' awareness of various projects depends on the method of communication developed by the heads of structural units. There is a challenge to be united in the company and similarly implement company's values.

A short history of creating organizational values in Latvijas Pasts

Step1: early 2017

Understanding that a company's values are the core of its culture (Coleman, 2013), in early 2017, a working group that included the company's board, directors and outside advisors was set up to work on creating the company's values. Initially, the survey was conducted involving 35 participants. However, only 17 participants were involved until the end of the process and completed all questions.

The questionnaire consisted of 5 open-type questions: 1) *What, in your opinion, distinguishes LPs from other companies?* Responses received were grouped according to 7 values (safety, quality, independence, accessibility, stability, uniqueness, reliability), of which "stability" (9 times) was the most mentioned. 2) *What, in your opinion, describes the employees of the LP in a positive way?* Of the respondents' answers, 27 characteristics were highlighted, of which most mentioned values were responsibility (10 times) and loyalty (4 times). 3) *Please mention the values of the LP that should be maintained by the company in the future.* Respondents' replies mentioned 37 values, of which responsibility was the most mentioned (9 times), and quality (6 times) the second popular. 4) *Which of the values of the company mentioned above are the most vivid in your view, i.e., they appear clearly and*

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most frequently in the business, in the hands of executives and employees, etc.? 24 values were mentioned, the most frequently identified were responsibility and quality (5 times each). 5) *What new values do you think should be developed and restored to ensure that the company is successful in the future?* Respondents' responses produced 34 values, of which repeatedly mentioned were values such as simplicity (4 times), innovation (3 times), and motivated worker (3 times).

On 14 February 2017, the results of the survey were presented to the working group and 4 potential company values were raised: 1. Interest; 2. Cooperation; 3. Broad vision; 4. Responsible growth. The company's board of directors worked further on values and three company values were created and accepted in June, of which only one was the original "interest" value. At the strategic meeting on June 15, the board presented to employees the newly created 3 company values: 1. Interest; 2. Responsibility; 3. Simplicity. Further, the task for employees was to split into teams, debate, and send in examples of action – where these values appear every day for each employee. There was a chance to win awards for activeness.

Step 2: the first attempt to make the values live – late 2017 until 2019

In late 2017, the guidelines for employees were created. The guidelines were placed on the company's intranet as a visual material and printed out for new employees when they entered the job. The following customer service guidelines were created based on approved values:

- We are human and simple with our customers. For example, we simply respond to the customer without using abbreviations and terms accepted by our organization.
- We take responsibility for our tasks by finding the most efficient (quickest, most efficient, etc.) solution. For example, we do everything we can to answer a customer's question or solve the problem according to the "one-stop principle". We "do not overplay" the problem.
- We are interested in clarifying and meeting customer needs and strengthening mutual cooperation. For example, we immediately notice someone who needs special treatment (a person with special needs, a young mother, a senior, etc.), and we take the right steps to help and provide excellent services.

Moreover, the guidelines for employee-to-employee cooperation were created:

- In cooperation with colleagues, we are human and simple. For example, when writing orders, procedures and process descriptions, we choose a "one-page principle" and a language that is easy to understand.
- We take responsibility for our tasks by finding the most efficient (quickest, most efficient, etc.) solution. For example, we undertake to do the work within the agreed timeframe, scale and quality. If we have made a commitment to a colleague, then we also do it.
- We are interested in clarifying the needs of a colleague and in strengthening mutual cooperation. For example, when meeting, we hear and we are interested in understanding the other's point of view, even if it is different from ours.

In 2018, postcards were created with the company values that were issued to all existing employees and they are still being issued to new employees along with a labor contract (see Appendix Exhibit 1). The values were inscribed on a wall in the main office building near an elevator in a visible place.

Explanations for the values were also created:

- **Simplicity** – we approach the customer with simplicity, clarity, and human touch.
- **Responsibility** – we take responsibility for our tasks, seeking the most elegant and effective solution to every challenge.
- **Interest** – we are eager to discover and satisfy a customer's needs and foster a mutually beneficial partnership.

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In 2019, mugs printed with company values were presented to all employees for Christmas. Mugs are currently given as an onboarding gift to new administrative staff (see Appendix Exhibit 2).

Step 3: re-launching the values

May 2021 was declared as a value month, and all employees were given the opportunity to participate in a value challenge carrying out a task related to the company's values each day. 260 employees (21 teams) participated in the challenge. Since this type of activity in *Latvijas Pasts* took place for the first time, engagement was considered to be good, but sadly the Postal Department employees were not as active as administration employees. This is probably due to the current work load: the number of shipments has increased significantly, due to restrictions on COVID19, and only a certain number of employees may be present at the same time in the post office, so the amount of work is significantly higher than usually. Therefore, employees showed frustration at any additional activity.

The Department of Postal Network

The largest (70% of all employees) and most challenging in communication is the Department of Postal Network. The management of the department is divided into five geographical regions: 1) Riga (the capital of Latvia), 2) Kurzeme, 3) Vidzeme, 4) Latgale and 5) Zemgale) and there are more than 600 offices. The offices are geographically far away from each other, and they are different in size. The number of offices in the regions varies from 59 (in Zemgale region) to 73 (in Vidzeme region) – see Appendix Exhibit 3.

The Department of Postal Network is managed by the director and eight administrative employees. Each region has 3 administrative employees: a head of the regional department and two deputy heads. The number of employees in the offices varies from one employee to 15 employees.

The age distribution of the employees is more skewed towards older generations - 10% of employees are in the age of 30 to 39, 22% of the employees are from 40 to 49, 36% of the employees are from 50 to 59, and almost 26% are 60+ years old. This fact is also related to the seniority of the employees. 27% of employees work for 1 to 5 years and 19% of employees work for more than 20 years in the company. Almost 90% of employees in the department are women.

The Challenge

Values can set a company apart from the competition by clarifying its identity (Lecioni, 2002). Organisational values also offer a set of guidelines for employees on the behaviours and mindsets (Coleman, 2013). However, organisational values possess an opportunity only if they are accepted and supported by employees. In *Latvijas Pasts* the values still seem to be 'living their own lives'.

In 2019, Aiga Liepa started to work in *Latvijas Pasts* and she was appointed as the head of personnel development. She had to bring the company values to life. However, at the moment, there are more questions than answers. The challenges are formulated in the following questions:

- How to make the values accepted by all employees even in the most distant offices? How to turn them into a living mindset and guiding day-to-day behaviours?
- How to make the values of *Latvijas Pasts* working and contributing to organizational effectiveness and success?
- Are the values strong enough? Do they differentiate *Latvijas Pasts* positively from its competitors?

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The collaboration between the departments and implementation of the values has been measured several years in a row. One of the methods for measuring whether values have been incorporated into an undertaking is a collaborative study carried out annually (at the end of the year). Each department had to evaluate five other departments in the following categories: 1) Customer orientation; 2) Clear and simple communication; 3) Achieving results; 4) Taking responsibility.

In the “customer orientation” section, the following action indicators related to the value interest of the company were inserted:

- Business staff show interest in finding a better overall solution for business and/or customers.
- Business employees offer solutions that meet the needs of our department.

In the “clear and simple communication” section, the following action indicators related to company value responsibility and simplicity were put in place:

- Staff of the Structural Union respond to e-mails in a timely manner.
- Business employees clearly and easily explain professional issues to colleagues in other departments,

In the “achieving results” section, the following action indicators related to the company's values responsibility and interest were inserted:

- Business Department employees meet deadlines for completing tasks.
- Business Department employees find out or specify expected results before starting work.
- Unit employees address the questions in substance, not formally “check” by.

Under the heading “taking responsibility”, the following action indicators related to the company's values responsibility, and interest were put in place:

- Business employees identify the best way to solve the problem or question you asked.
- Business members complement or recycle initially incomplete work.
- Unit staff undertake new non-standard tasks that go beyond their basic responsibilities.

This study allows measuring effectiveness (on a 100-point scale as % from the maximum possible score¹⁾ and cooperation in the above-mentioned four different areas (on a 5-point scale). In the last 3 years, the average results of the collaborative study have not changed overall in the company (changes are minor within 0.1 points). The efficiency rate has not been higher than 81 points in any department, which means that no department has been evaluated as a collaborative partner whose support and responsiveness others can always rely on. The lowest rate of effectiveness (58.9) is for the Postal Network Department, which points to the reputation of a questionable collaborative partner whose consistent handling of situations where support and responsiveness are needed cannot be relied on by others.

The following Figures characterize the situation in the Postal Network Department. Latvijas Pasts have five regions where the postal network department works. There are different situations in rural regions than in the capital. As the chart points out, the lowest results are in the Riga region (capital).

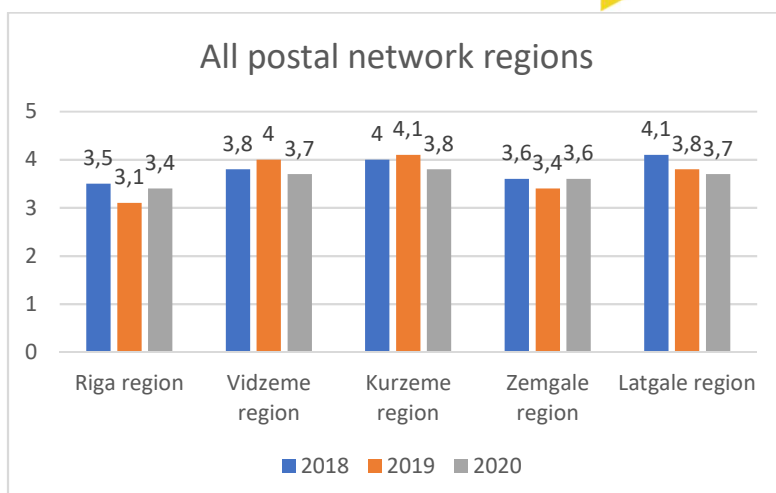


Figure 2: Average score for all four dimensions by regions (measured in 5-point Likert scale)

The 2020 target for collaborative study results was set to four points in all criteria. Results for the collaborative study show that the situation for some regions in 2020 is better than in 2019, but none of the criteria has achieved a target. Moreover, for some regions, the situation is becoming worse. COVID-19 can be blamed, but still, the situation seems to be alarming. The figure below describes the results for the Department of Postal Network for the four measured collaboration categories. The situation seems to be improving, but still, none of the categories has achieved the target (four points).

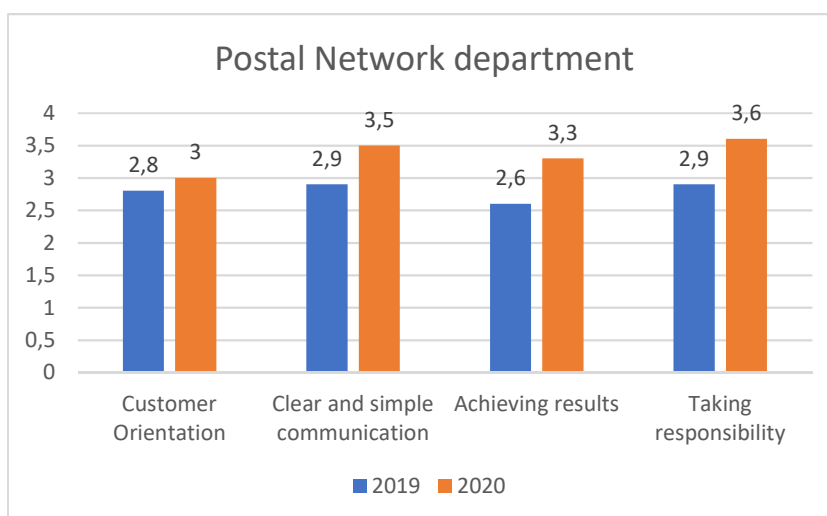


Figure 3: Results for Postal Network Department for four co-operation dimensions (measured in 5-point Likert scale)

Overall, the results of the study give a picture in different directions, including the reintroduction of values. If there are low valuations on issues related to company values of several consecutive years, it makes to think that employees do not see the values as main drivers in day-to-day work.

Building a values-driven organization requires a cultural transformation and whole system approach (Barrett, 2006). Organizational culture is a complex phenomenon (Tong & Arvey, 2015) and the core values are the deeply ingrained principles that guide all of a company's actions; they serve as its cultural cornerstones (Lecioni, 2002). As suggested by the researchers, core values need to be integrated into

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every employee-related process, and employees should constantly be reminded that core values form the basis for every decision the company makes (Coleman, 2013). Among the behaviors that are central to managing complexity are enabling and sensemaking (Tong and Arvey, 2015).

So, how to enable the values, put them to life, and make them contribute towards company performance? What else could be done by the HR management function to make sense of the values?

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Appendix

Main Competitors:

DPD Latvija, <https://www.dpd.com/lv/en/>

Omniva, <https://www.omniva.lv/eng>

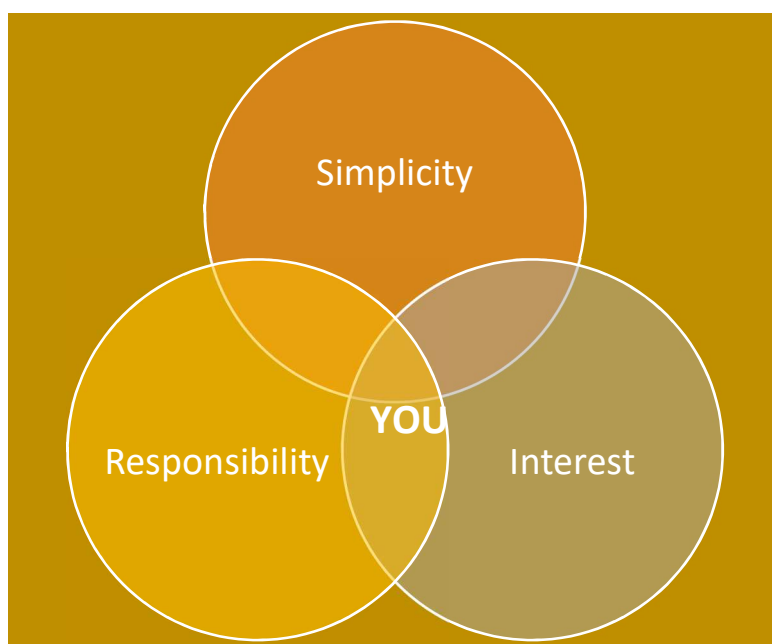
Venipak Latvia, <https://venipak.lv/en/>

DHL Latvia, <https://www.dhl.com/lv-en/home.html>

Exhibit 1: New employee card



Translation:



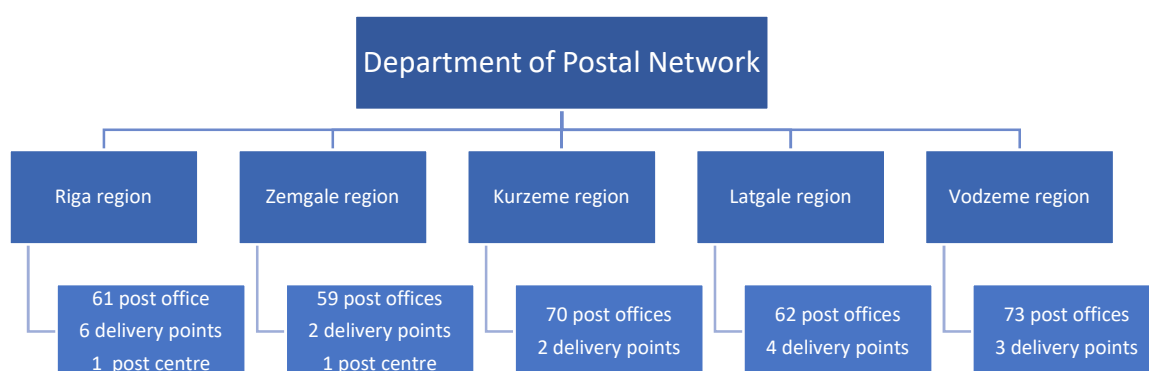
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Exhibit 2: The Mug



Exhibit 3: Structure of the Department of Postal Network



ⁱ If all the answers are 5, then this is assumed as 100%