

THE USE OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN FOSTERING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE THROUGH LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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ALGEBRA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

GRADUATION THESIS

**THE USE OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
IN FOSTERING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE
THROUGH LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

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Abstract

This graduate thesis will be focusing on the use of communication strategies in fostering employee performance through learning and development. Specifically, the thesis will explore if there is a difference in the probability of an employee signing up for training depending on the type of advertising material promoting the training. Additionally, this thesis will examine and give answers to the problem areas regarding the relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance. The research was conducted in pharmacovigilance and clinical trials industry, specifically Ergomed Group.

Through the practical work, two research surveys conducted in Ergomed Group gave answers to the mentioned problem areas. Furthermore, research results showed that there is a difference in the probability of an employee signing up for a training given the promotional material announcing the training. Secondly, the results showed that there is a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in work-related motivation and proactivity. Relationship between attending training programs and better employee performance in using skills related to emotional intelligence, recognizing different communication styles, understanding cross-cultural communication, and negotiating and resolving conflicts were noticed. Lastly, relationship between attending training programs and better employee performance in using leadership skills was also detected.

The practical contribution of this thesis, in addition to the two conducted studies, analysis and conclusion, will be the proposal of new communication and promotional strategies as well as the development of new training programs within Ergomed. The results of the research will serve as a basis for improving marketing strategy for the promotion of upcoming trainings and attracting new participants, as well as for creating an internal communication strategy and determining topics for future training sessions.

Key words: communication strategies, internal communication, learning and development, human resources, employee performance, training, pharmacovigilance, clinical trials

Sažetak

Ovaj diplomski rad bit će usmjeren na korištenje komunikacijskih strategija u svrhu promicanja radne učinkovitosti zaposlenika kroz učenje i razvoj. Konkretno, rad će istražiti postoji li razlika u vjerojatnosti da se zaposlenik prijavi na edukaciju ovisno o vrsti reklamnog materijala koji promovira edukaciju. Dodatno, ovim će se radom ispitati i dati odgovori na istraživačka pitanja vezana uz odnos pohađanja edukacija i radne učinkovitosti zaposlenika. Istraživanje je provedeno u industriji farmakovigilancije i kliničkih ispitivanja, konkretno Ergomed grupi.

Dva istraživanja provedena u Ergomed grupi dala su odgovore na navedena istraživačka pitanja. Nadalje, rezultati istraživanja su pokazali da postoji razlika u vjerojatnosti da se zaposlenik prijavi na edukaciju s obzirom na promotivni materijal koji najavljuje edukaciju. Drugo, rezultati su pokazali da postoji odnos između pohađanja edukacija i većeg radnog učinka u području radne motivacije i proaktivnosti. Uočen je i odnos između pohađanja edukacija i većeg radnog učinka u području korištenja vještina vezanih uz emocionalnu inteligenciju, prepoznavanje različitih komunikacijskih stilova, razumijevanje međukulturalne komunikacije te pregovaranja i rješavanja konflikata. Naposljetku, je uočen i odnos između pohađanja edukacija i većeg radnog učinka u području korištenja vještina vođenja.

Praktični doprinos ovog diplomskog rada uz dva provedena istraživanja, analize i zaključaka, bit će prijedlog nove komunikacijske i promotivne strategije kao i razvoj novih edukacijskih programa unutar Ergomed grupe. Rezultati istraživanja poslužit će kao osnova za unapređenje marketinške strategije za promociju nadolazećih edukacija i privlačenje novih sudionika, kao i za kreiranje interne komunikacijske strategije i tema budućih edukacija.

Ključne riječi: komunikacijske strategije, interna komunikacija, edukacija i razvoj, ljudski resursi, učinak zaposlenika, obuka, farmakovigilancija, klinička istraživanja

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1. Introduction

Learning and development refers to the investment a company makes in their workforce in the terms of their skills, knowledge, and competencies. These investments can come in various formats such as counseling and guidance or training and development programs. This graduate thesis will explore the area of instructor-led training programs, training performed either virtually or in person by one or more trainers. Today, companies are seeing the benefits of investing in learning and development, specifically employee trainings as employees put personal development opportunities as the most important factor when choosing employers. Additionally, like other business departments L&D has started to see the need for and importance of marketing activities. Through marketing L&D is trying to encourage the employees to attend training programs and showcase the importance of learning and development activities.

In this thesis communication strategies and employee performance will be explored through two research surveys. Specifically, the thesis will explore if employees are more likely to attend training based on the promotional material announcing the training. Additionally, the thesis will show if there is a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in terms of increased employee motivation and proactivity, leadership skills, emotional intelligence, and communication skills as well as negotiation and conflict management. All these questions will be answered by employees working in the pharmacovigilance and clinical trial industry, specifically Ergomed Group.

The focus of this thesis is relatively new, as still not all companies have developed and implemented strong communication and L&D practices, or truly see the benefits of it. Furthermore, the narrow area of the L&D activities and communication strategies in the pharmacovigilance and clinical trials industry is not widely explored and not much information is available on this topic. Here comes the practical part of this thesis which will give a new perspective on L&D and communication strategies from the viewpoint of clinical trials and pharmacovigilance industry. Lastly, the biggest practical application of this thesis is the use of research results to improve the current state of the L&D department at Ergomed Group.

2. Learning and development

2.1. Learning and development in general

Learning and development often referred to as simply L&D lies at the core of any successful organization. “L&D generally represents an organization’s single largest investment in its people” (Pease et. al., 2014, ch. 1). Organizations make these investments in terms of improving employee skills, knowledge, and competencies. Improvements are done either through counseling and guidance or training and development programs.

“In counseling and guidance services expert counselors are recruited, who provide counseling and assistance to the employees in providing solutions to various problems and concerns” (Kapur, 2020). “Within training and development programs, the individuals are provided with knowledge in terms of various aspects of the organization” (Kapur, 2020). “These include, history, departments, personnel, goals and objectives, job duties and so forth” (Kapur, 2020). They can be delivered either as instructor-led training (ILT) or self-directed training. ILT are held by one or more trainers, either face-to-face or virtually. These trainings can come in different formats such as webinars and lectures or workshops. Trainings can be created for bigger audiences or for small groups and one-to-one sessions. Trainers can either be internal company employees or external providers. Organizations often choose internal trainers for smaller costs and simpler organization processes. However, sometimes internal trainers don't have the necessary skill set for delivering a specific training, and companies opt for external trainers which often come with bigger costs and longer organization process. The biggest advantage of ILT is that the training is happening in real-time, specifically attendees have a chance to discuss, ask questions and get feedback in real-time. When it comes to self-directed trainings, employees are given complete freedom to indicate what skills they need to improve and create a specialized plan for achieving their own learning goals. Since these online trainings are pre-filmed, employees have the flexibility of choosing the most suitable time to complete a training. Additionally, they can choose the level of the training as well as length. With self-directed trainings employees experience trainings on their own terms which can be seen as the biggest advantage of this type of training.

“The concepts of learning and development are usually incorporated within the HR department” (Kapur, 2020). However, companies can differ in their placement of learning and development activities. Since these opportunities are available at all levels and departments of a company, they are one of the responsibilities of Human Resources. Some companies place L&D activities as a part of general HR practices, while others have a whole department with trained specialists focused solely on developing L&D strategies. Recently, HR and its departments have experienced one major change. Like Marketing, HR's “view of employees is more oriented to the individual as well, and the goal of HR has become to address a *workforce of one*”. (Pease et. al., 2014, ch. 1). Therefore, organizations need to make a well thought through decision on where to best position their L&D efforts to be able to cater to the employees on an individual level.

Central to L&D is performance, specifically performance augmentation. Before starting to impact organizational performance, companies need “to acquire an efficient understanding of the goals and objectives of the organization” (Kapur, 2020). “Metrics like key goals of business units, whether it’s higher customer satisfaction, increased sales, decreased errors, or faster problem solving, should be put in place” (Quinn, 2014, ch. 1). When goals and objectives are clearly set, businesses must look internally to clearly define the current state of their performances and externally to find how they want to position themselves. This will result in a list of needed performances for the achievement of business goals and objectives. Correctly aligning L&D efforts with organizational objectives is central to a well-developed L&D strategy. “When the individuals will be able to augment their knowledge and skills, they will be able to make use of them in the achievement of desired goals and objectives” (Kapur, 2020). Organizations need to keep in mind the following to avoid major barriers when developing their L&D strategies:

The main barrier comes from lack of clarity resulting in too broad of an alignment. “In other words, when the individuals do not have a clear idea in terms of goals and objectives of the organization or job duties, in such cases, they are unable to understand the meaning and significance of learning and development” (Quinn, 2014, ch.2). “Therefore, in order to acknowledge meaning and significance of learning and development, it is vital to acquire an efficient understanding of organizational goals” (Quinn, 2014, ch.1).

Secondly, leaders need to keep in mind “that the value of a modern company is in the intangibles, most of which consist of some form of human capital: expertise, customer

relationships, employer brand, intellectual property, and business processes” (Pease et. al., 2014, ch. 1). “The companies that thrive and prosper are those that get the most out of their human capital, which requires a deep understanding of what is going on with their workforce, how investments affect it, and how to communicate changes effectively with all parts of the enterprise” (Pease et. al., 2014, ch. 1).

Lastly, “L&D professionals need to keep in mind that it is typically very hard to get people to learn new things, and often it’s easier to get answers out of other people’s heads or to make answers available in the world” (Quinn, 2014, ch.1).

Therefore, it is necessary to create a straightforward roadmap to help businesses align their resources accordingly to promote and showcase the importance of L&D activities. For an organization to be successful L&D activities need to be seen as mainstream, and not an exception.

2.1.1. Benefits of Learning and development activities

Previously, after finishing college graduates would get a stable job and stay within one company for their whole career. However, today “the median number of years that employees have worked for their current employer is currently 4.1 years, according to an Economic News Release from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics” (Doyle, 2021). Therefore, today's employees require significantly more from their employers which in turn means that employers need to invest a substantial number of resources in retaining the existing workforce.

“Employees value feedback about their job performance, opportunities to develop their skills, and work that is challenging and personally fulfilling yet contributes to their organizations’ goals” (Noe et. al., 2014). Additionally, the competition on the job market is increasing, and companies are forced to find new and innovative ways to attract potential employees and keep the existing ones satisfied. Hence, many companies are seeing the benefits of giving employees a chance to develop themselves both professionally and personally within the company.

One of the major benefits of L&D comes from generating competitive advantage for its organization. Competitive advantage can be defined as “an organization’s ability to generate above normal returns as compared with its competitors” (Noe et. al., 2014). This is supported by research “which found that human capital resources are significantly related to firm performance” (Noe et. al., 2014). “Human capital resources are unit-level resources that emerge

through the interaction of employees' knowledge, skills, abilities, and other resources (KSAOs)" (Noe et. al., 2014). They can "contribute to competitive advantage when they are valuable (i.e., wield influence on firm's strategic goals), unique (i.e., are not commonly held by competitors), inimitable (i.e., are difficult to imitate), and no substitutable (i.e., an alternative resource cannot be substituted to achieve the same strategy)" (Noe et. al., 2014). Along with competitive advantage, human capital resources are important in one more aspect – business goals. The simplest way for the companies to achieve its business goals is through their human capital efforts, subsequently learning and development strategies. "Learning and development strategy represents an approach an organization adopts to ensure that the activities related to learning and development support the achievement of goals and objectives" (Kapur, 2020). Businesses can empower individuals to develop their personal and professional potentials as well as organizational goals. Currently, this is of foremost importance for organizations. "According to LinkedIn's 2019 Workforce Learning Report, 94 percent of employees say that they would stay at a company longer if it simply invested in helping them learn" (Hess, 2019). "This interest in learning and development is particularly strong among younger workers, including Gen Z and Millennials" (Hess, 2019). Today employees value a company culture focused on learning and development more than other work-related benefits. It is up to companies to listen to the needs of their employees and fulfill them. Doing so will result in a workforce with a higher job satisfaction level as well as motivation. When employees know their opinion matters, they will be in turn more likely to go beyond what is expected of them. Secondly, implementing this kind of approach comes with one more benefit – reduced turnover.

Lastly, a phenomenon companies have been experiencing recently is the skills gap. Organizations are complaining that they are unable to find employees with the right skill set to fulfill their open positions. However, with the implementation of L&D practices organizations are not required to find candidates that will perfectly satisfy all job requirements. Firms are now able to provide the individuals with all the required training and thus create the workforce they want. Even long-term employees will need constant training as all industries are experiencing rapidly changing new technologies and methods. Employees staying on top of these innovations bring a new and fresh perspective for developing company strategies and products/services. This in turn creates higher processes efficiency and results in greater profits. Therefore, it's of great importance that L&D specialists have the support from the business as a whole – time, budgets, people, and resources.

2.1.2. Connection between Learning and development and employee performance

Employees are at the center of any profitable organization. For organizations to continue to prosper in today's highly competitive environment, they need to constantly develop the skills and competencies of their employees. Skills needed to successfully perform today's jobs are rapidly changing and to have a workforce high in the performance and productivity as well as profitable companies, organizations need to provide continuity in their learning opportunities. Companies need to remember that "human capital differentiates a great organization from a good one" (Muhammad Nda & Fard, 2013), and their focus should be on exactly on these resources.

"Employee performance is the result of work in quality and quantity achieved by an employee in carrying out his duties in accordance with the responsibilities given to him" (Ratnasari et. al., 2019). Research shows that "training has been invaluable in increasing productivity of organizations" (Muhammad Nda & Fard, 2013). "It does not only enhance employees resourcefully, but also provides them with the opportunity to virtually learn their jobs and perform more competently" (Muhammad Nda & Fard, 2013). "Training and development ultimately upgrade not only the productivity of employees but also of the organization" (Muhammad Nda & Fard, 2013). Therefore, it can be said that L&D, specifically training have a positive connection with employee performance. Generally, if L&D practices are not correctly implemented, they will have a negative impact on the employee performance and company reputation as well. Contrary, if they are correctly implemented employees will have higher performance levels which come as a benefit to the company as well. Training programs can be seen as one of the most effective ways of upgrading employee performance and transferring the knowledge of business practices and policies. One of the best examples of this are the new hires. Learning process for new hires should start from the very first moment of employment. L&D professionals need to create an effective onboarding process where the new starters have an insight to all the needed information to perform their job such as business procedures, organizational structure etc. When employees know how the company operates and fully understand what is expected of them, they are more likely to have higher performance and stay in the organization longer. According to data "organizations with a structured onboarding process experience 50% greater new hire productivity (People Matters Editorial Team, 2022)". Other research showed "that investing in training employees on decision making, teamwork, problem-solving and interpersonal relations has beneficial impact on the

organizations' level of growth, as well as impacting employee performance” (Muhammad Nda & Fard, 2013). “Training affects employees' behavior and their working skills which results in enhanced performance as well as constructive changes “(Muhammad Nda & Fard, 2013). Furthermore, “training is the most effective way of motivating and retaining high quality in human resources within an organization” Additionally, training is “a way of enhancing employee commitment and maximizing employee potential” (Muhammad Nda & Fard, 2013). “Training is an instrument that fundamentally affects the successful accomplishment of organizations' goals and objectives” (Muhammad Nda & Fard, 2013). Overall, “training and development has a positive impact on the employees to carry out their work more effectively, increasing their personal and technical abilities, teamwork, job confidence and work motivation” (Muhammad Nda & Fard, 2013). The main goal of any organization is to make profit and the only way organizations can fulfill this goal is through their workforce which needs to have a high performance and productivity levels. With this it can be said that the company is only productive when it's making the necessary investments in the learning opportunities for their employees as “knowledge, skill and abilities are determinants of employee' performance which organizations need to continuously invest wisely to improve their employees' productivity” (Muhammad Nda & Fard, 2013).

2.1.3. Employee trainings

This thesis will be focused on L&D activities in the aspect of instructor led training (ILT). ILT is held by one or more trainers in a training room, either face-to-face or virtually. Since today's world is highly digitalized and is evolving day-by-day, employees are likely to often find themselves in situations which will require developing their skills to continue being successful in their positions and improve. Therefore, L&D makes it a priority to evolve the expertise of an organization's workforce while at the same time contributing to individuals and organizations goals.

“Employers conduct different types of training depending on their requirements, the urgency of their needs and the availability of resources” (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). Trainings can be differentiated based on the following criteria:

- **Training topics**

Like mentioned before, organizations differ in their offerings because of their size, budgets, resources, needs or objectives. Nevertheless, the most common ones can be pointed out.

At the beginning of their employment employees are usually greeted with an orientation program. This program is delivered by the HR department in the very beginning of the employment and focuses on getting the new hires to the workforce acquainted with the following: “corporate culture, company mission, vision, and values, organizational structure, leadership team, corporate policies, administrative procedures, such as computer logins and email setups, new-hire paperwork, benefit plans etc.” (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022).

“Orientation is usually part of a larger process called onboarding, a series of department-related training sessions that occur over an extended time” (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). After finishing their onboarding employees will understand the department's goals, how they fit with the overall objectives of the organization, and ultimately be able to perform their job completely independently. Specifically, during onboarding employees will get a deeper understanding of the areas such as their “needs as a new employee, access to information and skills, technical aspects of the job, improvement of work performance, employee engagement and departmental goals” (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022).

Apart from trainings performed at the start of the employment, employees can engage in various trainings during their employment. Those include technical skills development which can cover topics such as “content writing, social media management, data analysis, coding, and programming” (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). One of the most common training topics are soft skills, centered around conducting yourself properly in professional situations and functioning as a productive team member. Apart from helping employees communicate more effectively these trainings cover the topics of presentation skills, time-management, leadership etc. Furthermore, some additional training topics can be focused on products and services, workplace safety or employees can offer team specific training – team buildings.

· **Trainer**

Trainings can be performed by an external vendor or an internal trainer. Having in mind that both approaches have its advantages and disadvantages, organizations need to define which one better suit their needs.

Starting off with internal training sessions which are significantly easier to organize as organizations already have all the necessities. Additionally, the costs are smaller, and the organization time is significantly shorter. Moreover, internal trainers can directly accept training requests from other co-workers and company departments while having direct

conversations with them to truly get a sense of their needs and how best to solve the obstacles they are encountering. However, internal training has its disadvantages as each of the trainers have their area of expertise and not everyone is skilled at all topics. Sometimes teams will require training on a topic the company trainers don't have expertise in. Furthermore, internal knowledge has its limitations as these trainers are working for the company and are familiar with the training group which makes them more likely to have a bias. Internal trainers are more prone to be stuck in their ways of doing things and have an approach of "*this is how the things are done here*" even though that may not be the best solution.

On the other hand, external providers are less likely to have a bias when teaching a course since they are not previously familiar with the training group. They offer a fresh perspective from the outside, something that people within the company are possibly not familiar with. However, employees can perceive these approaches either as positive since they are providing a new and fresh perspective or negative if they are set in their ways. Employees are also given a chance to learn from the experts, each of the trainers has their respective area in which they dominate. Hiring experts for each topic will ensure that the employees are getting the best possible knowledge. In terms of time and costs, external training is the opposite of the internal ones, costs are higher and organization time is longer.

- **Delivery method**

Lastly, trainings can be divided based on their delivery method.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic many training sessions have switched to online workshops and have stayed that way. These workshops are typically structured as a combination of theoretical and practical parts. Before the training participants are provided with pre-reading learning materials. These are often short document/s containing either a case study or training introduction documents such as summaries or videos, questionnaires etc. During the training the goal is to engage the attendees as much as possible. Therefore, there is a big focus on breakout rooms, encouraging a discussion and sharing the experience between the breakout room members. Afterwards, attendees are given post-training materials and resources to which they can always come back to and refresh their knowledge on the training topic.

On the other hand, organizations can deliver in-person training. These trainings are usually structured in the same way as the online ones. However, this training requires significantly more effort in terms of time, resources, and budgets. Organizations can deliver training in their

workspaces or external locations. In person training is great for creating higher interaction levels between attendees and the trainer. Knowledge is always better shared when people are interacting face to face, especially in engaging group exercises which are at the center of face-to-face training. Therefore, attendees are going to feel more comfortable to ask questions, exchange experiences which will ultimately give them a great networking experience.

2.2. Communication strategies at the organizational level

Communication has a central role in every organization since “organizations do not exist without people, and relationships between people cannot exist without communication” (Tankosic & Ivetic, 2017). To put it simply, for employees to effectively do their jobs they need to communicate among themselves, and often with the external parties such as clients, suppliers, vendors etc.

In general, “communication is usually described as a flow of messages from a sender to a receiver using a channel” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). The concept of communication can be used in a variety of terms, but for the purpose of this thesis communication will be regarded as communication within organizations. In organizational terms, communication can be defined as “the basic flow that enables the performances of an organization” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). Two types can be identified: external and internal communication. “Internal and external communication is a set of activities involved in managing and orchestrating all internal and external communications aimed at creating a favorable point of view among stakeholders on which the company depends” (Tankosic & Ivetic, 2017). “It is the messages issued by a corporate organization, body, or institute to its audiences, such as employees, media, channel partners and the general public” (Tankosic & Ivetic, 2017). “Organizations aim to communicate the same message to all of its stakeholders, to transmit coherence, credibility and ethic” (Tankosic & Ivetic, 2017).

Simply defined, “external communication is bringing information from outside into the organization and out of it” (Tankosic & Ivetic, 2017). “External communication includes organization’s relations within the external environment, namely with suppliers, business partners” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). Through this type of communication organizations are communicating with external parties with the purpose of building brand awareness and favorable image. The goals of external communication include developing and maintaining relationships with important external factors such as customers. Through external

communication organizations can inform their target audience about new product or service launches and build customer loyalty. Besides customers, external communication offers organizations to inform their stakeholders or crucial partners about business developments and updates. Another important external party includes suppliers, and external communication can help build favorable relationships where both the organization and the supplier are benefiting. External communication can be transmitted through different channels, some which are: internet, email, websites, marketing, or advertising including press releases, digital marketing campaigns, social media, brand ambassadors or brochures, conferences, and trade shows. customers can be encouraged to fill out different forms of questionnaires etc.

“Internal communication is the exchange of information and ideas within an organization” (Tankosic & Ivetic, 2017). “It is a type of communication that develops inside an organization, within the relations between human resources and the organization itself” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). “The role of internal communication is to improve business value by communicating effectively with employees, being ‘an important asset to the firm’ and instilling a sense of belonging” (Verghese, 2017). Apart from that, other main roles of internal communication include: “presenting results and balance sheets, transmitting information, knowledge, explaining a new direction, a new project or a new method” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). Moreover “internal communication is a key component in the process of building the image of the organization” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). Internal communication channels include emails, newsletters, Intranet and internal social media channels, employee surveys etc.

2.2.1. Communication strategies within Human resources

During time, the requirements, and expectations of employees towards their employers have significantly changed. Today, employees are no longer working only to receive a salary with little to no engagement in the operations of their organization. In contrast, employees desire to work in organizations where they feel respected, and their work contributions are acknowledged and rewarded accordingly. Moreover, they need to feel as an important part of their team and the whole organization. Businesses can achieve this through creating and fostering a working environment characterized by mutual understanding, encouraging employees to express their opinions as well as inclusion in the decision making. All of these mentioned will result in higher employee performance. However, organizations often find it challenging to achieve these goals. “The successful achievement of these goals requires a continuous effort from the management organization that has to sign a particular importance to

internal communication, a step that has to be done in a systematic organized manner through organizational structures of public relations and human resources management” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). Therefore, this chapter will be focused on the internal communication strategies done by human resources to enhance the employee engagement, performance, and overall job satisfaction.

Internal communication has often been overlooked, but organizations are starting to see its importance as employees are at the center of any organization and its success depends highly on employee performance. In internal communication employees are the audience to which the organization is presenting “how important internal communication is within the organization’s strategy and how can this communication affect long-term goals” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). Along with external communication, internal communication plays a significant part in shaping the image of an organization. “Organizations are well seen by others when its members are motivated, when they can face any problems encountered as they are properly informed, when they are credible and have a positive attitude” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). Apart from this, effective communications organizations excel in 8 areas - “educating employers about the organizational culture and values, helping connect employees to business, aligning employees’ actions with customer needs, providing financial information and objectives, clarified and promoting new programs and policies, integrating new employees into organization, sharing information on the value of total rewards program and demonstrating leadership during change” (Verghese, 2017). Overall, “after receiving the communication, employees should return to their jobs and perform better than ever” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016).

To have a successful communication process, proper means need to be considered. There are different means through which the internal communication strategies can take place and the information can be shared. It all depends on the “content of the message to be transmitted, the internal culture of the organization and the receiver characteristic” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). It is important to mention that internal company culture plays a significant role in determining which means to use. The main means of information used in internal communications are:

- Written communication

Written communication is often regarded as the most important means of internal communication. Its characteristics include “messages which must be clear, readable, and they must contain short words known by most people” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). “The sentences must also be short, with a simple structure, containing a single idea or information” (Pirjol &

Radomir, 2016). “The media of written communication are the memorandum, the report, the written instructions, the manifest, the poster or the bill poster, the company newspaper, the press magazine, the survey, the box ideas and gestures information” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016).

- Oral communication

Oral communication “generates interactions that can be both verbal and nonverbal” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). “This way of communication represents the main resort of information, negotiation and decision-making processes within the company” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). “The media of oral communication are: the telephone or mobile phones, individual discussions, meetings, conference, the visit in the organization, the quality circles” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016).

- Audio-visual communication

Audio-visual communication “will bring more clarity on what was said, making it more interesting and easier to remember” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). Media of audio-visual communication includes: “overhead projector, slides, block notes, the information movie, e-mail, video transmission, cable television” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016).

- Strategic communication

Strategic internal communication is “a set of actions of planned communication, with present objectives, with the help of which information, performance and trust in the organization are maintained between the employees” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). Strategies of internal communications are performed through stages. “Two types of strategies are most often used in internal communication” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016):

- Activities of disseminating the information

Like the name itself says, activities of disseminating the information are focused on information transmission and have “as the final purpose the distribution of representative messages for the organization, products and services offered by it” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). “The tactics that can be used in this strategy are information, internal advertising, the speech of some personalities within the organization, the exposure of informative media in internal public reunions” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016).

- Organization of events

Similarly, to the previous strategy, organization of events focuses on information transmission. “The tactics may be the reaction to an unexpected event, ceremonies, and the events staged for the media, contest and competitors” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). “From the internal communication perspective there are two types of events: events organized for the internal public and events organized for the external public” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016).

Overall, HR has an important role in fostering internal communication strategies as the competitive advantage of organizations comes from their human capital - employees. Organizations that lack these strategies are faced with problems such as “failure in achieving communication goals and image; a poor organization of the specialized department; a poorly organized internal communication” (Pirjol & Radomir, 2016). All the mentioned results not only in poor communication within the company, but unsatisfied employees. When employees are properly informed about the company’s practices and they feel like they and their work truly matter, they will go above and beyond. This can be achieved through implementing strong communication strategies within the company.

2.2.2. Promotion of Learning and development activities

Like in many other business areas, marketing promotion plays a crucial role in successful L&D activities. It’s not enough anymore to have a well-developed training program if you are not able to spread the word about it and attract interested parties. L&D specialists are starting to see that marketing activities are strongly connected to training success. Furthermore, “marketing and L&D industries share the same goal: to influence how others think and behave and help an organization reach its goals” (“4 Ways,” n.d.). With the continuous technological advancements, L&D activities are constantly evolving. L&D needs to be prepared to keep their practices UpToDate with the current learning trends and needs, and in a way which helps organizations reach their business goals. Therefore, L&D has a great impact on the performance of the employees and the organization. It is essential to highlight this value both to the internal and external environment, and the best way to do so it’s through marketing. By marketing organizations can promote the whole scope of work under L&D, as well as specific activities such as training programs.

Since this thesis is focused around ILT, this chapter will discuss different ways through which organizations can promote their training. It is important to promote training programs to make employees aware of the available learning opportunities and showcase the importance of attending. Moreover, marketing activities will create buzz internally, and encourage more employees to attend. If employees see their colleagues talking about training as well as attending, they are more likely to do so themselves. Organizations can create different materials for training promotion such as flyers, infographics, videos, jingles, internal newsletters, announcements, email communication etc. Two of the most popular communication channels

for training promotion include employee intranet and email. “55% of employees discover learning programs via the employee intranet” (“4 Ways,” n.d.). This is a great communication channel not only for training promotion, but for promotion of the whole L&D activities since it is available to all employees. Employees are checking their intranet on a regular basis, and it’s a place where they always come searching for answers on company related questions. Even if they are not searching for training programs specifically, if placed correctly, they will not be able to miss the ad. Secondly, “email marketing is another successful marketing practice that can promote learning opportunities. 65% of L&D teams use email marketing to promote learning opportunities, with 61% of workers discovering learning programs via successful email marketing” (“4 Ways,” n.d.). Emails with catchy subjects and short content including promotional material are the way to go. Employees are getting emails daily, and you don’t want to be just another email that gets overlooked. All materials have one thing in common, content. Materials need to contain information explaining what the training is about, for whom the training is for, training dates and times. This communication needs to be consistent with clear messages across all formats and channels. Additionally, this will help with the professional look of the training and the trainer, which will make employees more likely to attend. Promotion materials need to follow corporate brand guidelines, and the same needs to be applied to actual training materials – pre-materials, training slides, exercises, and post-training materials. Based on their workforce preferences and habits, organizations choose the best format for their marketing communication. However, communication needs to be streamlined, meaning that organizations need to motivate department leaders to be in the loop with the current and upcoming L&D offers as well as sharing them further to their teams. In this way the whole company supports L&D efforts to create a learning culture that encourages employee development through training programs.

2.3. Ergomed Group and Ergomed Academy

L&D activities and their impact on the employee performance will be examined within Ergomed Group through conducting two different research.

Ergomed is a global provider of expert, high-quality services to the biopharmaceutical industry, spanning all phases of clinical trials, post-approval pharmacovigilance, and medical information. Ergomed’s fast-growing services business includes an industry-leading suite of specialist pharmacovigilance solutions, integrated under the PrimeVigilance brand and a full range of high-quality clinical research and trial management services under the Ergomed brand

(CRO). The Ergomed group employs over 1,500 people and operates out of 20 offices around the world, providing its services in around 100 countries globally (Ergomed plc, 2022).

In Ergomed Group L&D is an integrated department of Human Resources. The team consists of 9 members covering a variety of activities some of which include managing company learning management systems and Ergomed Academy activities. Ergomed Academy is the company's initiative for providing learning and development activities. Through the Ergomed Academy website employees can register for one of the classes offered by the company. Moreover, department heads can make personalized training requests based on the specific needs and requirements of their teams. Those can come in the forms of teambuilding or simply developing a specific skill that is perceived to be lacking in the department. All training sessions are online workshops characterized by small and highly interactive group discussions. Depending on the training, some are led by internal trainers, while others are conducted by external providers.

Ergomed Academy operates on the following three general rules:

1. Employees must first successfully finish their probation period to attend any of the trainings ¹
2. Employees have a maximum of two trainings they can attend within a year²
3. Each of the training has a strict number of minimum and maximum attendees

Currently, company offered trainings are divided in the following three groups:

1. Soft skills

Soft skills are the biggest and most popular group of training offered. Under the soft skills category the company offers five different trainings:

o Cross-cultural communication

Cross-cultural communication training is focused on effective communication with a focus on communication across cultures.

¹ The rule doesn't apply if the maximum number of attendees per training has not been reached.

² The rule doesn't apply if the maximum number of attendees per training has not been reached.

o **Introduction to Communication Styles**

The latest addition to the soft skills group of training is *Introduction to Communication Styles*, a two-part training aimed “to enable participants to develop self-awareness through identifying their personality preferences and how to modify their behavior to grow positive influence” (Ergomed Academy, 2022).

o **Emotional Intelligence & Personal Effectiveness**

Two of the most popular Ergomed Academy trainings which are paired together are *Emotional Intelligence* and *Personal Effectiveness*. *Emotional Intelligence* “will enable participants to grow and apply their emotional intelligence by choosing positive responses to the world around them” (Ergomed Academy, 2022). *The Personal Effectiveness* “course will enable participants to be personally effective in managing their workload and choosing positive habits to avoid becoming overwhelmed and able to prioritize workload and hit deadlines” (Ergomed Academy, 2022).

o **Negotiation and conflict management**

Lastly, under the soft skills category we have *Negotiation and conflict management*. “This course will focus on strategies and skills that will help you prepare for and conduct negotiations” (Ergomed Academy, 2022). Attendees will “learn how to set goals, identify priorities, recognize the needs of the other party, assert their position, reduce resistance, explore options, and reach mutually satisfying “win-win” agreements” (Ergomed Academy, 2022).

2. Leadership

Next group of training includes Leadership training. These are the trainings focused on developing leaders and line managers with less than 2 years of experience, or those that expect to become one soon.

Under this category we have only one training, Line Management Fundamentals. This training is structured out of 6 Modules covering different management topics:

- Module 1 - Expectations & Leading Self
- Module 2 - Building the team

- Module 3 - Delegating work
- Module 4 - Managing Performance
- Module 5 - Developing Individuals
- Module 6 - Retaining team

“The aim of this line manager fundamentals course is to increase confidence and ability of those in with line manager responsibilities to effectively manage, develop, coach, mentor and motivate their direct reports” (Ergomed Academy, 2022).

3. Role specific

Last group of training is the Role specific training, centered around a practical application of skills employees need to perform in their day-to-day tasks. For Ergomed these trainings include:

o Project Management/Critical Path

Project Management is the second largest training offered through Ergomed Academy. This is a three part 10.5 hours long training covering in detail some the following objectives: “five phases of project management, role of a team leader, project initiation and scope definition, stakeholder management, work breakdown structure, network diagram, project schedule and critical path, risk assessment, team development, status reporting, project closure and resourcing tools” (Ergomed Academy, 2022).

o Risk Management

“This course introduces a simple and efficient process to risk management in projects and regular tasks” (Ergomed Academy, 2022). “It will help attendees to address risk in a consistent way across the entire organization” (Ergomed Academy, 2022). “Attendees will practice working with a tool to ensure we deal with the most important risks first” (Ergomed Academy, 2022).

Lastly, it is important to mention that the L&D team in Ergomed Group oversees marketing activities for promotion of its training. Each training is promoted approximately a month before the date when a new session is scheduled for. Additional promotions go a week before the

training if there are spaces still available. Training promotion is done by creating infographics, flyers or short videos and trailers. Each of these materials contains short course descriptions, training dates and a link for a direct registration. Materials are sent out via email to the relevant parties, whole company, specific department heads or HR Business partners. The goal of L&D Marketing activities is to keep the employees informed about training offerings and attract more attendees.

3. Survey 1 - Ergomed Academy Feedback Survey

Throughout this thesis two research surveys, *Ergomed Academy Feedback Survey* and *Ergomed Academy Training Advertisements Feedback Survey* will be conducted within Ergomed Group. The goal of the first survey - *Ergomed Academy Feedback Survey* is to investigate to see if there is a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance. All the questions used in this survey were created by L&D team in Ergomed Group. Survey was created in Survey Monkey and sent out via email to Ergomed Group employees satisfying the criteria to become a participant.

For the purpose of this thesis, and specifically the first survey three problem areas to be examined through the survey were defined:

Problem area 1. Is there a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in terms of increased employee motivation and proactivity?

Problem area 2. Is there a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in terms of using emotional intelligence, recognition of different communication styles, understanding of cross-cultural communication and negotiation and conflict resolution?

Problem area 3. Is there a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in terms of using leadership skills?

Based on the stated problem areas that will be researched through this thesis, three hypotheses were derived:

Hypothesis 1. There will be a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in terms of work-related motivation and proactivity. Employees who

attend training will achieve better results on questions about performance in the area of work motivation and proactivity.

Hypothesis 2. There will be a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in terms of using skills related to emotional intelligence, recognizing different communication styles, understanding cross-cultural communication, and negotiating and resolving conflicts. Employees who attend training will achieve better results on performance questions in using skills related to emotional intelligence, recognizing different communication styles, understanding cross-cultural communication, and negotiating and resolving conflicts.

Hypothesis 3. There will be a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in terms of using leadership skills. Employees who attend training will achieve better results on questions about performance in using leadership skills.

3.1. Research and methodology

The first of two research surveys conducted within Ergomed Group is Ergomed Academy Feedback survey. Participants of this survey were Ergomed Group employees who have attended one or more Ergomed Academy trainings within a one-year period. These are the employees familiar with company L&D offers and can share their experiences and inputs about it.

The goal of the survey is to explore if there is a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance. Additionally, survey participants were asked to give their opinions on the current company investments in L&D and offered training programs. Participants were able to leave suggestions for future investments as well as training programs they would like to attend, excluding currently available programs. This data will be later used to develop new training offerings and to improve current L&D practices.

Specifically, the survey consists of the following five parts:

1. Ergomed Academy Training Attendance

The first part of the survey collects information on the number of training participants that have attended within the last year as well as which are those training.

2. Since attending Ergomed Academy training..

The main part of this survey explores the relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance. Depending on the training/s a participant selected in the first part of the survey, they received one of the two variations of this set of questions. All received fourteen statements related to managing work tasks, team collaboration, proactivity, and their overall performance. Participants needed to rate their agreement with the statements on a scale of 5 with 1-Strongly disagree and 5-Strongly agree. If a participant selected, they have attended Line Management Fundamentals they would receive four additional statements, apart from the fourteen mentioned before. The reasoning is that this training is catered to line managers, and not all the survey participants are. Four additional questions for line managers explored their management of teams and direct reports.

3. Learning & development Opportunities Satisfaction

In this section participants were asked to rank their agreement, again, on a scale of 5 with 1-Strongly disagree and 5-Strongly agree. Statements of these sections are related to employee's satisfaction with the current company investments in learning and development as well as quality of Ergomed Academy training and have helped employees in their professional/career development.

4. Improvement of Learning and Development Services

This section is made of four open-ended questions related to the improvement of learning and development services in relation to employee's needs and goals. Additionally, participants were asked to leave feedback on the current performance of Ergomed Academy as well as future training requests and suggestions.

5. Your information

Lastly, the survey collects personal information about the participant such as their age and geographic region. Also, the survey collected employment information like participant's department, level of management and how long they have been working within the company. This part of the survey is the same in the two research surveys conducted within Ergomed Group.

Ergomed Academy Feedback Survey was created in Survey Monkey and sent out in May 2022 to the sample of employees satisfying the main criteria for being included in the survey. The survey was sent out through the official L&D email address. Content of the email explained the reasons for creating the survey such as finding areas for improvement, finding out what's good and needs to be continued as well as what the employees would like to learn more about. Participants were informed that all the data collected would be used to adapt L&D activities to better suit the needs of the company and its employees.

3.2. Research results

Ergomed Academy Feedback Survey included a sample of 45 Ergomed Group employees who have attended one or more training sessions within the last year. Most of the survey participants attended two training sessions within the last year, specifically 19 participants (42.22%). Close second is one training per year, 16 participants (35.56%) have selected this option. Only 8 participants have attended 3 training sessions, while 1 (2.22%) attended four and 1 (2.22%) attended five.

N=45

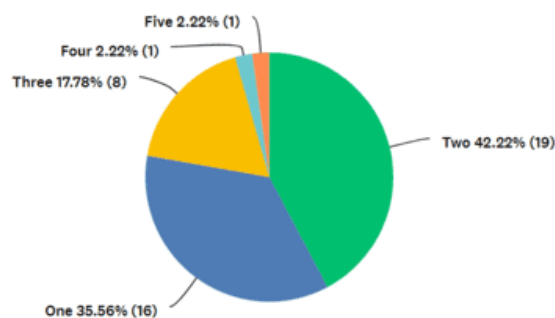


Figure 1 Graphical representation of number of trainings survey participants attended (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

The most popular training session is Emotional Intelligence with 23 attendees (51.11%). Emotional Intelligence is closely followed by Personal Effectiveness with 18 attendees (40.00%). Going from the largest number of attendees to the smallest, other courses are: Cross-cultural communication - 14 attendees (31.11%), Line Management Fundamentals - 12 attendees (26.67%), Introduction to Communication Styles - 8 (17.78%), Project Management/Critical Path and Risk Management both with 8 attendees (8.89%). With this it can be assumed that Ergomed Group employees attend mostly soft-skills training.

N=45

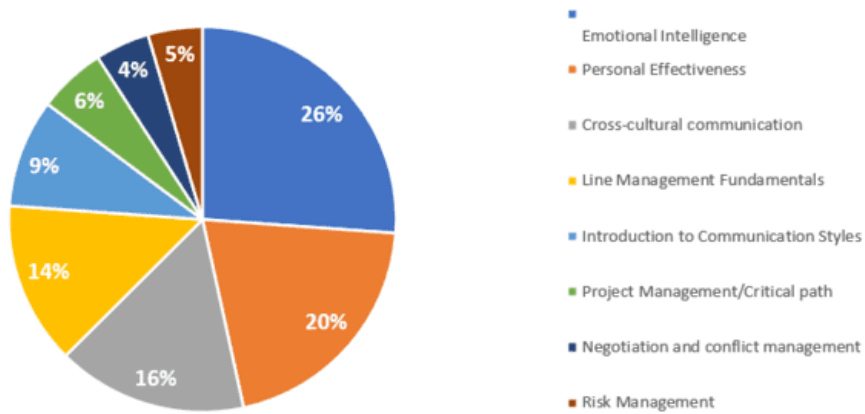


Figure 2 Graphical representation of which trainings survey participants attended (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

The main part of this research survey is finding if there is a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance, firstly, when it comes to employee's work-related self-motivation and productivity. When asked if they feel excited about coming to work since attending Ergomed Academy training, 22 participants (48%) stated they agreed, 14 participants (30%) neither agree nor disagree, 4 participants (9%) strongly agree, 4 participants (9%) disagreed, while 2 (4%) strongly disagreed.

N=45

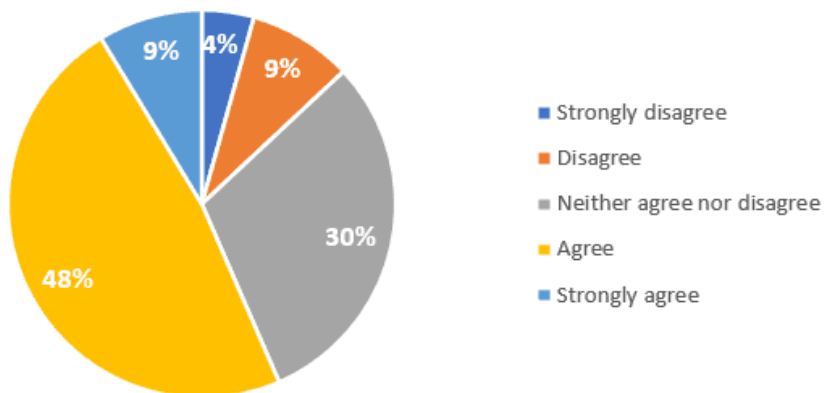


Figure 3 Graphical representation of survey participants excitement about coming to work (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

There is a relationship between attending training programs and giving your best effort at work each day since 27 participants (59%) agreed, 13 participants (28%) strongly agreed, 5 (11%) neither agree nor disagree, and only one person (2%) disagreed.

N=45

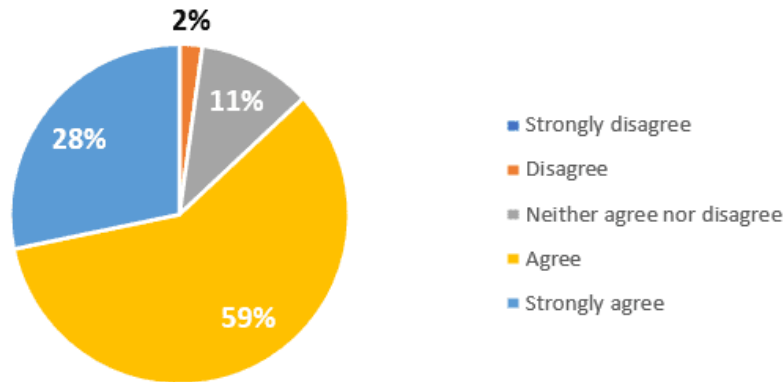


Figure 4 Graphical representation of survey participants determination to give their best effort at work each day (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

Ergomed Group employees attending training in the majority agree (25 participants - 54%) with being motivated to meet their work-related goals. Here, 14 participants (31%) strongly agreed, 5 participants (11%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Two participants (4%) stated that they disagree with being motivated to meet their work-related goals.

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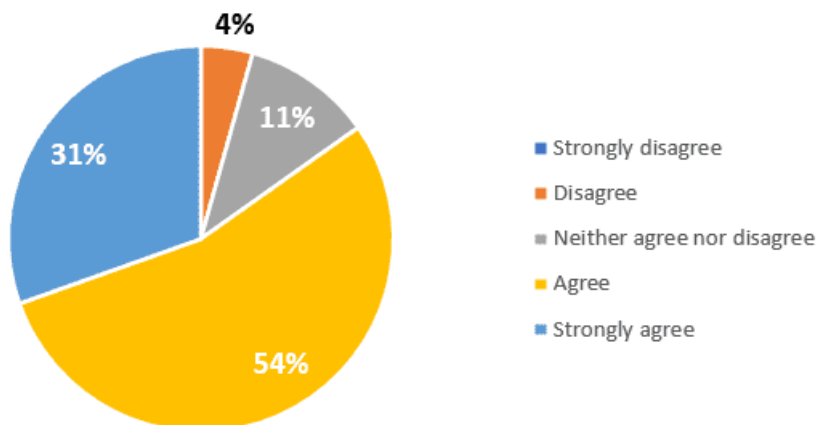


Figure 5 Graphical representation of survey participants motivation to meet their work-related goals (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

One of the biggest measurements of perceived self-motivation is knowing if the employees are willing to go beyond what is expected of them. In the majority (22 participants - 48%) agreed that after attending Ergomed Academy training they are inspired to go beyond what is expected of them, 13 participants (28%) strongly agreed, while 9 participants (20%) neither agree nor disagree. Two participants (4%) stated that they disagree with being inspired to go beyond what is expected of them.

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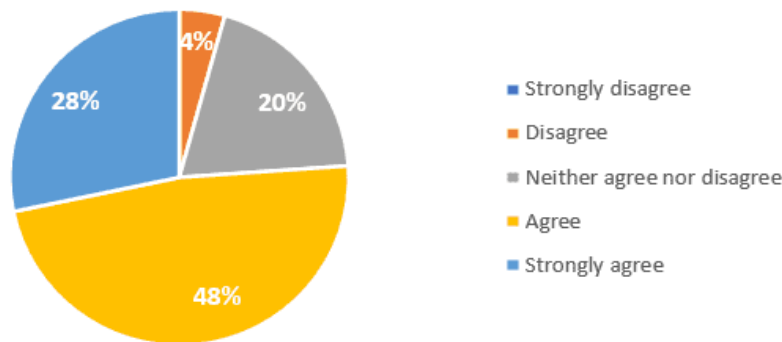


Figure 6 Graphical representation of survey participants inspiration to go beyond what is expected of them (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

The main goal of all Ergomed Academy training is for the participants to gain practical knowledge that they will be able to use in their day-to-day work tasks. Therefore, it is important to mention that 23 participants (50%) agreed that they are excited to take on new projects where they can use skills gained through training, 17 participants (37%) strongly agreed, while 6 participants (13%) neither agree nor disagree. There were no negative relationships detected between attending training programs and being excited to take on new projects where employees can use skills gained through training.

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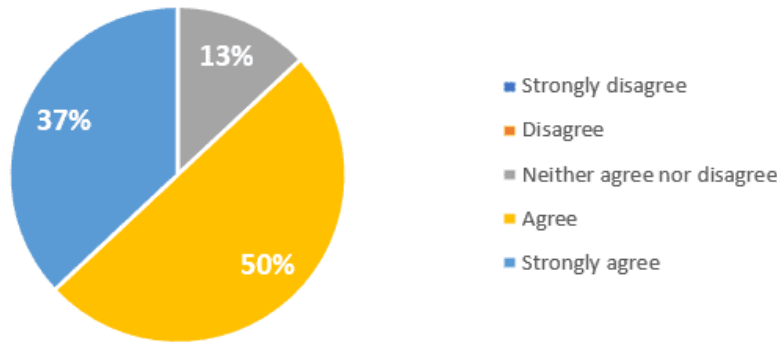


Figure 7 Graphical representation of survey participants excitement to take on new projects where they can use skills gained through trainings (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

Since employees in Ergomed Group work in a highly regulated industry which is constantly undergoing changes it's extremely important to have employees who can identify future challenges and opportunities. When asked, 26 participants (56%) agreed that Ergomed Academy training has helped them to be better in proactively identifying future challenges and opportunities. Secondly, 11 participants (24%) neither agree nor disagree, and 9 participants (20%) strongly agreed. The survey didn't show any employee having negative effects of Ergomed Academy training on their ability to identify future challenges and opportunities.

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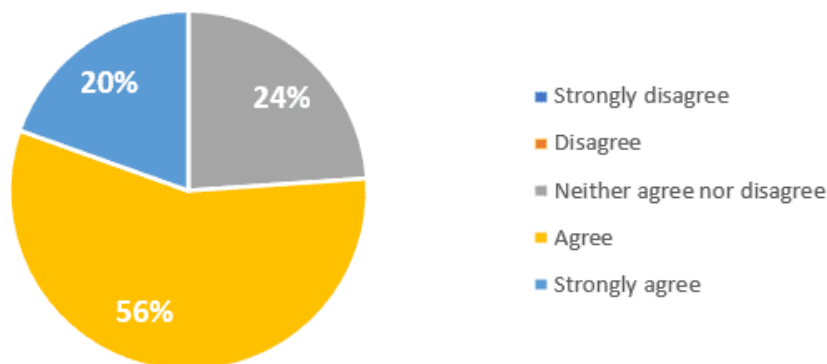


Figure 8 Graphical representation of survey participants ability to proactively identify future challenges and opportunities (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

Similarly, 32 participants (70%) agreed that after attending Ergomed Academy training they can quickly adapt to difficult and unpredictable work situations, while 7 (15%) strongly agreed and again, 7 participants (15%) neither agree nor disagree. The survey didn't show any

employee having negative effects of Ergomed Academy training on their ability to quickly adapt to difficult and unpredictable work situations.

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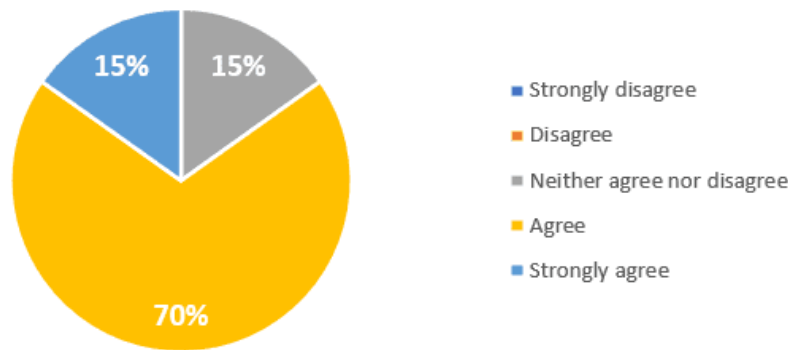


Figure 9 Graphical representation of survey participants ability to quickly adapt to difficult and unpredicted work situations (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

With seeing results of these 7 questions related to the first problem area for this thesis and research surveys, the first hypothesis that there is a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in terms of work-related motivation and proactivity can be confirmed.

Next will be presented the results of questions related to the second defined problem area, seeing if there is a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in skills such as emotional intelligence, recognizing different communication styles, understanding cross-cultural communication, and solving conflicts. Firstly, participants stated that they mainly agree with working better within teams after attending training programs. Specifically, 24 participants (52%) agreed, 10 (22%) participants strongly agreed and 12 participants neither agree nor disagree. This question didn't indicate any negative relationship with training programs and teamwork.

N=45

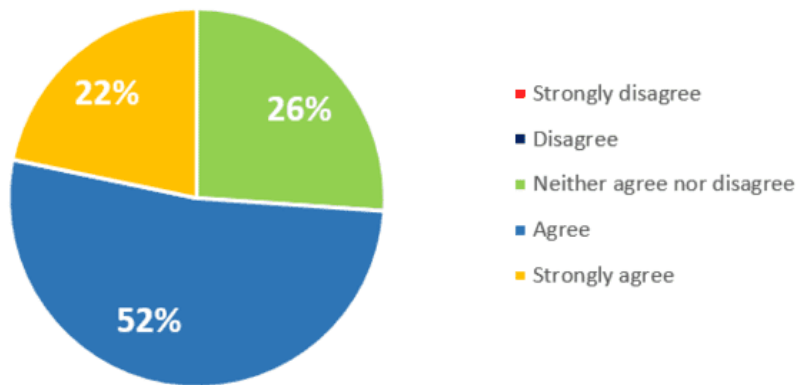


Figure 10 Graphical representation of survey participants ability to work better within a team (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

When it comes to communications between different cultures, participants mainly agree that they can better adapt their communication styles to other parties to reach effective communication. Exactly 26 participants (57%) agreed, while 12 (26%) strongly agreed and only 8 (17%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Again, the research didn't indicate any negative relationship between attending training programs and effective communication skills.

N=45

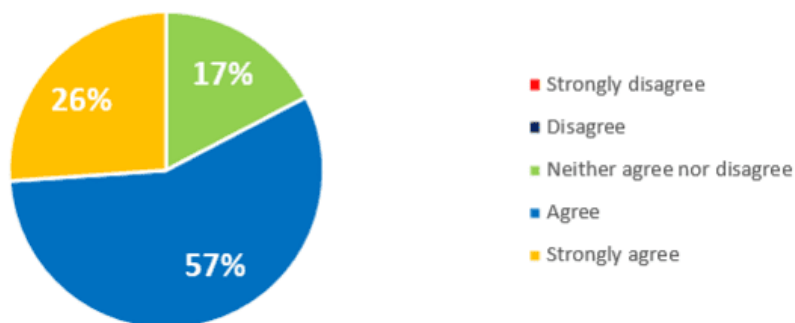


Figure 11 Graphical representation of survey participants ability to recognize traits and cultural specifics to adapt their communication approach (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

Ergomed Group employees have strong skills for dealing with misunderstandings, relationship issues and conflicts. When asked 28 participants (61%) said they agree with being able to easily prevent misunderstandings, relationship issues and conflicts after attending training, 9

participants (20%) said they strongly agree, and again 9 participants (19%) neither agree nor disagree.

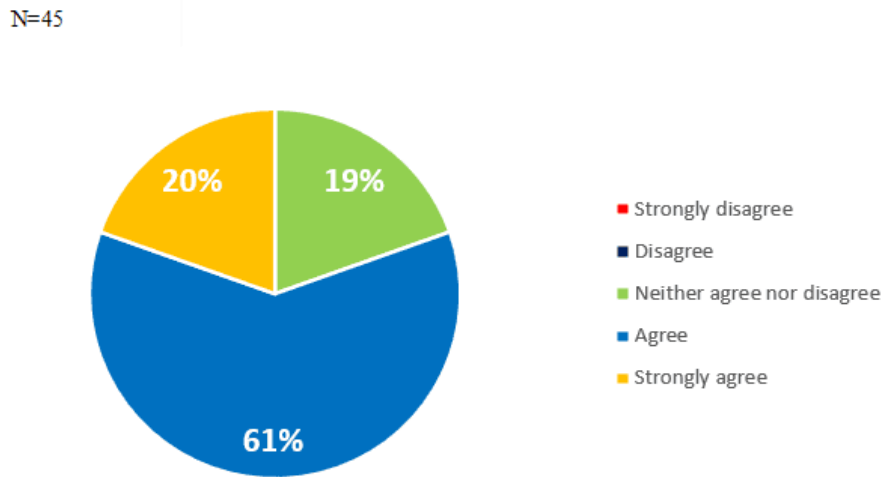


Figure 12 Graphical representation of survey participants ability to easier prevent misunderstandings, relationship issues and conflicts (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

In a rapidly changing world and especially industry where employees are in parallel working on few different projects with constant client calls and requests, it's of great importance for Ergomed Group to have a strong workforce who can prioritize and produce on time. When asked about it, the majority agreed (23 participants - 50%) that after attending Ergomed Academy training they are better able to efficiently prioritize their workload to meet the deadline and produce high quality outputs. Strongly agreed 11 participants (24%) and neither 11 participants (24%) as well. Here, the results showed only one person (2%) who disagreed.

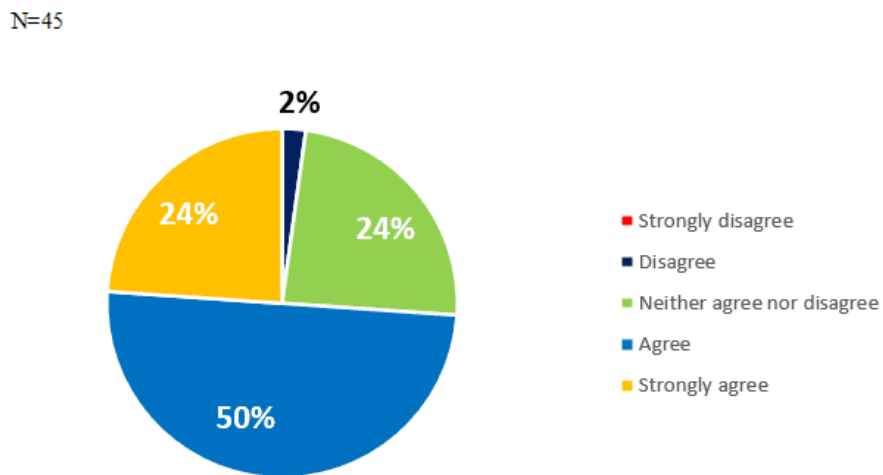


Figure 13 Graphical representation of survey participants ability to efficiently prioritize their workload to meet the deadlines and prove high quality outputs (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

Likewise, most employees - 23 (50%) agree that since attending Ergomed Academy training they are able to continuously use techniques to help them be the best version of themselves. Strongly agreed 13 participants (28%), while 9 (20%) neither agree nor disagree. Here, we had one person (2%) who said that they disagree with being able to use techniques to be the best version of themselves.

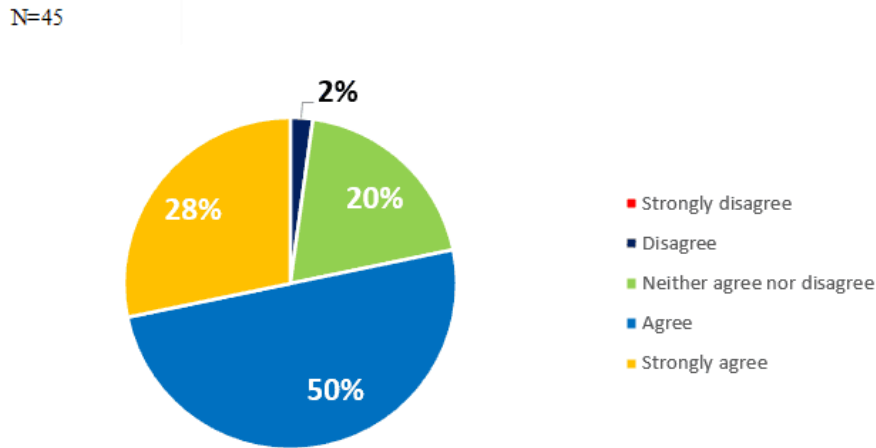


Figure 14 Graphical representation of survey participants ability to continuously use techniques that help them to be the best version of themselves (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

Lastly, when asked to rank their effectiveness in choosing positive habits to avoid becoming overwhelmed, 28 participants (61%) agree, 12 participants (26%) neither agree nor disagree and 6 participants (13%) strongly agree.

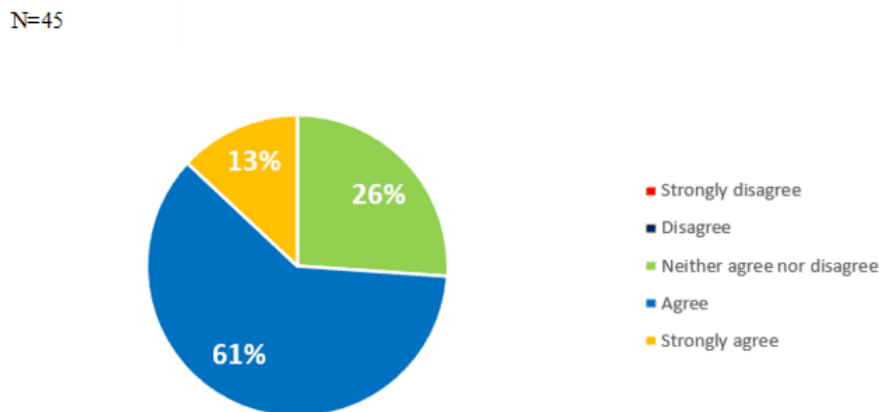


Figure 15 Graphical representation of survey participants effectiveness in choosing positive habits to avoid becoming overwhelmed (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

Overall, employees who attended training programs achieved high results on work performance questions in using skills related to emotional intelligence, recognizing different

communication styles, understanding cross-cultural communication, and negotiating and resolving conflicts.

The third problem area this thesis tries to solve is to determine whether there is a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in the area of using leadership skills. Thirteen participants that attended Line Management Fundamentals training mainly agreed (6 participants - 46%) with understanding their personal impact and having increased self-awareness of their own leadership style. There were 5 participants (39%) that have strongly agreed with this statement, while 2 neither agree nor disagree. There were no negative relationships between attending training and personal impact as well as self-awareness of leadership style.

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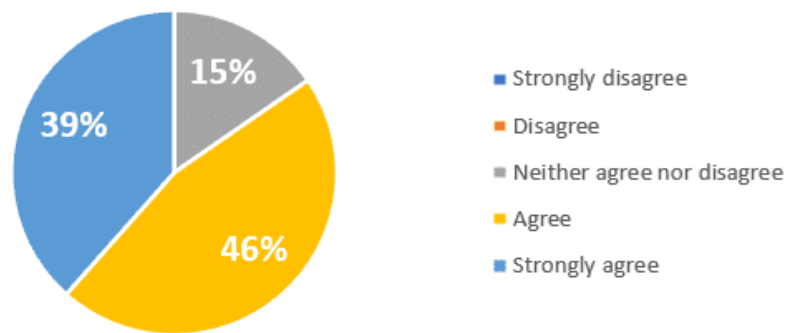


Figure 16 Graphical representation of survey participants understanding of their personal impact and having increased self-awareness of their own leadership style (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

Following, participants in the majority agreed (8 participants - 61%) with being able to build trust and effective work relationships with their direct reports. The question indicated that there were 4 participants (31%) that strongly agreed with this statement, while 1 participant (8%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Again, there were no negative relationships between this question and attending training.

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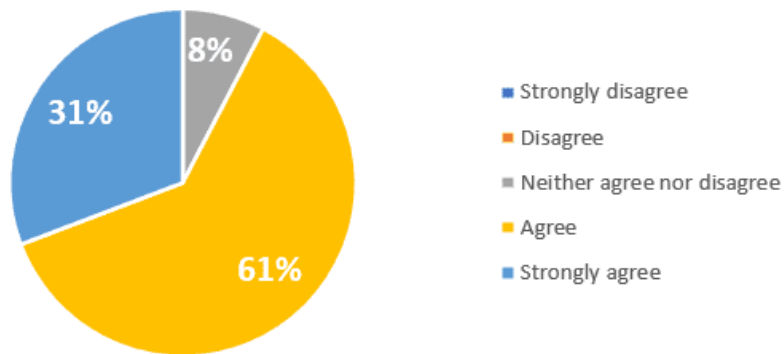


Figure 17 Graphical representation of survey participants ability to build trust and effective work relationships with their direct reports (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

Similarly, Ergomed Group leaders agree that they are able to give effective feedback for development of their direct reports. Three participants (23%) strongly agree and 2 participants (15%) neither agree nor disagree. Since giving constructive feedback is of great importance for any person to develop and achieve their goals, it is important to mention that no participant stated any level of disagreement with this sentence.

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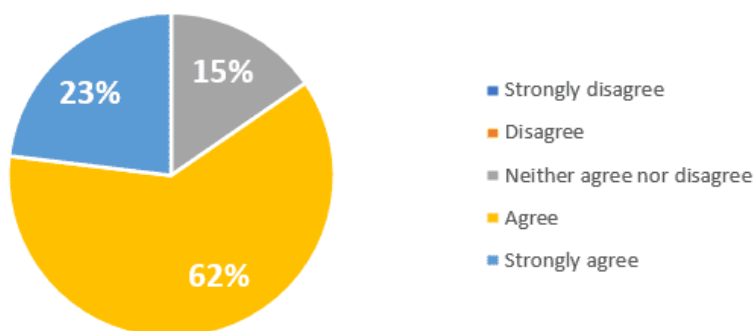


Figure 18 Graphical representation of survey participants ability to give effective feedback for development of their direct reports (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

To conclude with this theme of questions, leaders were asked to rank their agreement with being able to create a high performing team. Here 6 participants (46%) agreed, 4 participants (31%) strongly agreed and 3 participants (23%) neither agree nor disagree.

N=45

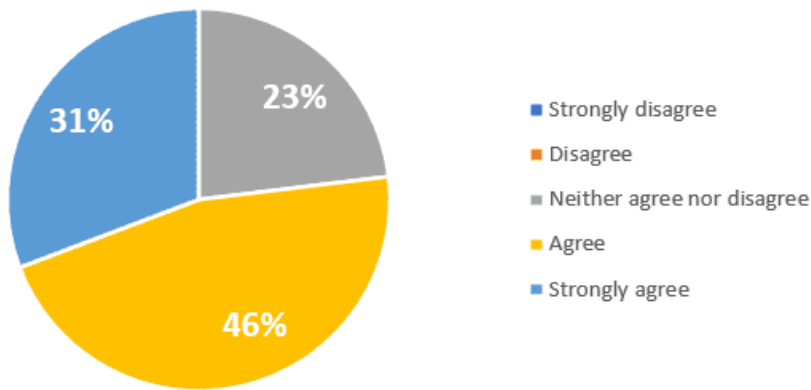


Figure 19 Graphical representation of survey participants ability to create a high performing team (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

With seeing participants' answers to leadership related questions, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between attending training programs and higher work performance in the area of using leadership skills.

At the end the overall satisfaction with the learning opportunities provided by the company will be presented. Apart from questions related to the employee performance, survey participants were asked to rank their satisfaction with the learning opportunities provided by the company. In the vast majority participants agreed (28 participants - 62%) that they are satisfied with the learning opportunities provided by the company. Next, 5 participants (11%) strongly agreed, 4 participants neither agree nor disagree. However, the survey indicated 4 participants who disagreed (9%) and 4 (9%) who strongly disagreed indicating that there is still room for improvement when it comes to Ergomed Academy.

N=45

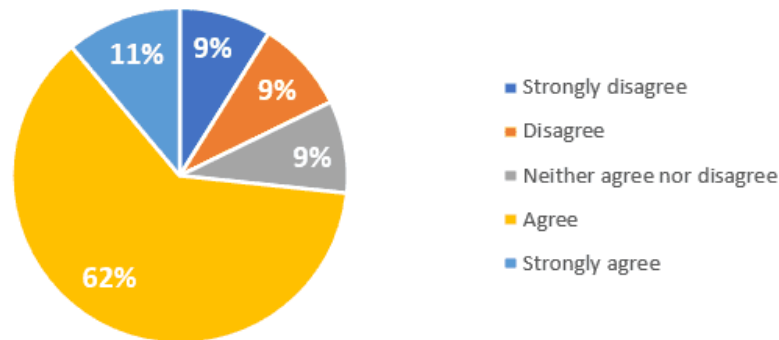


Figure 20 Graphical representation of survey participants satisfaction with the learning opportunities provided by the company (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

At the end, participants were given open-ended questions where they could express their opinions on which training topics, they would like to see offered through Ergomed Academy. The most common request was centered around communication skills, specifically employees said that they frequently notice a lack of communication from their line managers when it comes to change that has in recent times become a norm. Employees stated they would like to have a training about open, transparent, and timely communication about work related changes as well as how to best adapt to change. Additionally, managers requested training to better their skills of transferring information about upcoming changes and truly explaining the reasoning behind a change as well as benefits employees will experience from it. Other training mentioned were technical training such as Excel, business English and business ethics. This information will later serve as a basis for developing new training programs.

4. Survey 2 - Ergomed Academy Training Advertisements Feedback Survey

The second survey conducted within Ergomed Group is *Ergomed Academy Training Advertisements Feedback Survey*. The goal of this survey is to examine if there is a difference in the probability of an employee signing up for training depending on the type of advertising material promoting the training. Survey was created in Survey Monkey and sent out via email to Ergomed Group employees satisfying the criteria to become a participant.

For the purpose of this thesis, and specifically the second survey one additional problem area (Problem area 4.) to be examined through the survey was defined:

Problem area 4. Is there a difference in the probability of an employee signing up for training given the promotional material announcing the training?

Based on the stated problem that will be researched through this thesis, the last hypotheses (Hypothesis 4) were derived:

Hypothesis 4. There will be a difference in the probability of an employee signing up for training given the promotional material announcing the training. Along with the material that contains information about the positive experiences of previous participants and a 100% recommendation, employees will give answers that will indicate a higher probability of signing up for the training.

4.1. Research and methodology

The second survey conducted within Ergomed Group is Ergomed Academy Training Advertisements Survey. All the questions used in this survey were created by L&D team in Ergomed Group. Participants of this survey were the same as in the previous survey. This survey included two different advertisements for one of the Ergomed Academy trainings, Emotional Intelligence. Both advertisements were visually the same and included information such as training objectives, dates and where to register. However, there were two differences between the advertisements; one of them (Advertisement No.2) included positive feedback statements from previous attendees and a message that 100% of attendees recommend this training. The goal of the survey was to see if participants are more likely to attend a training if they know previous attendees recommend it and if they see their positive feedback. Additional aspects of the advertisement were examined like how visually appealing the advertisements are, information presented on it, would the participant share or attend the training promoted. Data collected through Ergomed Academy Training Advertisements Feedback Survey will be used to better adapt L&D promotional activities to attract more attendees.

The survey consists of four parts:

1. Training advertisement No.1

Participants were shown Advertisement No.1 (advertisement without additional messages on 100% attendee recommendation and positive feedback) and following it asked a couple of questions regarding their perception about it. Some of the questions included are:

- *What first comes to your mind when looking at the advertisement?*
- *How visually appealing is the advertisement?*
- *How likely are you to research more about the topic promoted?*
- *How likely are you to share the advertisement with a colleague?*
- *Does the advertisement contain all the information you need about training?*
- *How likely are you to register for the training being promoted?*

2. Training advertisement No. 2

This section of questions is the same as the Training advertisement 1. The only difference is in the advertisement. This time the advertisement includes the two additional messages about 100% attendee recommendations and positive feedback statements from previous attendees.

3. Comparison of Advertisement No.1 and No.2

Here participants are shown the two advertisements side by side. They are asked to compare the advertisements based on the criteria such as which advertisement is more visually appealing, contains all the information they need to know about a training, which one would encourage them to explore more or register for the training. Here a participant can select the *No preference* response to indicate that they have no preference between the two advertisements based on the asked criteria. Additionally, participants were asked if they are more likely to attend a training knowing that 100% of attendees recommends it or positive feedback.

4. Your information

Lastly, the information section is the same as in the previous surveys, Ergomed Academy Feedback Survey.

This survey was created in Survey Monkey and sent out as part of email for the Ergomed Academy Feedback Survey. Data for this survey was collected through May 2022. The survey was sent out through the official L&D email address.

4.2. Research results

Ergomed Academy Training Advertisements Feedback Survey was completed by 30 employees. Again, most employees are between the ages of 26-41, exactly 21 participants (70%). The second largest age group of participants is between 42-57 (23.33%). Lastly, there was one participant between the ages of 18-25 and one 58+. With this information, it can be presumed that the majority of Ergomed Group workforce attending training are Millennials.

N=30

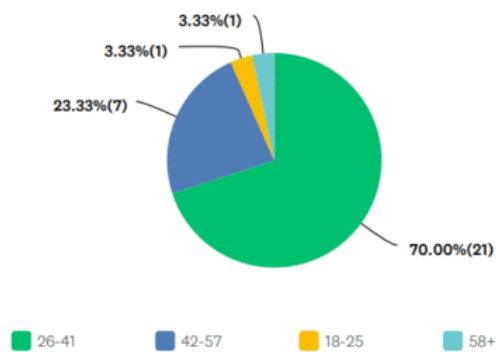


Figure 21 Graphical representation of survey participant's age (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

This survey was exploring if there is a difference in likelihood of training registration regarding the promotional material, specifically do advertisements with messages of 100% recommendations of previous attendees as well as positive feedback play a part in making employees more likely to attend training programs.

When shown the two advertisements side by side (Advertisement 1 without the additional messages, and Advertisement 2 with) participants needed to select which one they prefer based on the asked criteria. Firstly, participants needed to select the one which is more visually

appealing. Here 23 (76.67%) preferred Advertisement 2, 5 (16.67%) participants preferred Advertisement 1 and only 2 (6.67%) had no preference. Secondly, participants needed to choose the advertisement which would encourage them to explore more, and again the majority (22 participants - 73.33%) chose Advertisement 2, while 6 (20%) participants chose Advertisement 1 and only 2 individuals (6.67%) had no preference. Third question was to choose the advertisement which is more likely to encourage them to register for the training. Advertisement 2 came in first place again with 21 votes (70%), followed by 6 participants (20%) voting for Advertisement 1 and 3 (10%) had no preference. Lastly, participants selected the advertisement which had all the information they needed about training. As previously, Advertisement 2 came in first place with 18 (60%) answers, 8 participants (26.67%) chose Advertisement 1 and 4 participants (13.33%) had no preference.

N=30

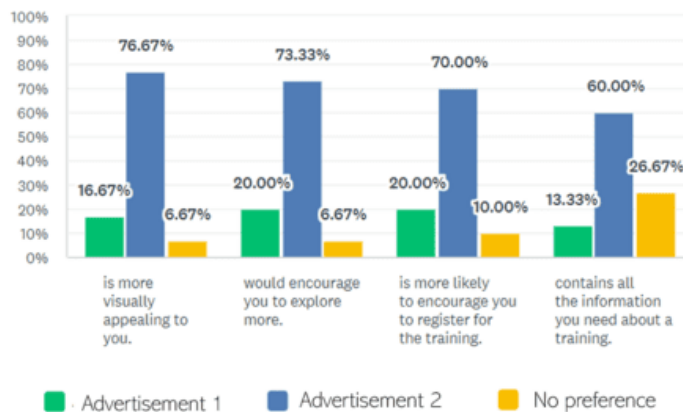


Figure 22 Graphical representation of comparison of training Advertisement 1 and Advertisement 2 (source: created by the author according to Survey Monkey)

There is indeed a significant difference in the probability of an employee signing up for training given the promotional material announcing the training. Advertisement 2 came strong in the first place for all the questions. It is important to connect this with the fact that when asked what is the first thing participants noticed when looking at the Advertisement 2, 70% of participants stated 100% recommendations, positive testimonials or both. With this it can be said that there is a difference in the probability of an employee signing up for training given the promotional material announcing the training. The material (Advertisement 2) contains information about the positive experiences of previous participants and a 100%

recommendation, employees gave answers that indicate a higher probability of signing up for the training.

5. Discussion

In this part of the thesis the four different hypotheses stated at the beginning of the research will be discussed. Through the research all the hypotheses proved to be true, and there could be a few possible reasons for it which will be discussed in this part as well. Lastly, discussion will touch on the methodological shortcomings and practical implications of the research.

First confirmed hypothesis is that there is a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in work-related motivation and proactivity. Employees who attend training achieve high results on questions about performance in work motivation and proactivity. There is one possible reason for this which can be found in the fact that employees, especially younger generations, highly value an opportunity for development within the company they are working for. Employees often position the benefit of learning and development programs before other work-related benefits. In Ergomed Group employees have a constant chance to attend different training programs, therefore, they have an opportunity for professional development. Consequently, satisfied employees who feel their needs matter will have a greater motivation for their job and a proactive approach to their day-to-day tasks.

Second confirmed hypothesis showed that there a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in using skills related to emotional intelligence, recognizing different communication styles, understanding cross-cultural communication, and negotiating and resolving conflicts. Employees who attend trainings achieve high results on performance questions in using skills related to emotional intelligence, recognizing different communication styles, understanding cross-cultural communication, and negotiating and resolving conflicts. Reasons for this can be found in the fact that many of the training attendees are first time learners about topics of emotional intelligence, communication styles, cross-cultural communication and negotiation and conflict management. As such they are more likely to have an interest in these topics and higher motivation to implement these approaches in real work life. Even if attendees have some previous experience in these topics, people are more likely to have a higher incentive to directly implement new approaches and see their effectiveness in their day-to-day work.

Third confirmed hypothesis showcased that there is indeed a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in the area of using leadership skills. Employees who attend training achieve better results on questions about performance in the area of using leadership skills. As already mentioned in the previous confirmed hypothesis, employees have a higher will to implement and work on things they perceive as new and interesting. Likewise, here employees are often new learners on the topics of expectations & leading self, building the team, delegating work, managing performance, developing individuals, and retaining a team. Therefore, after finishing an extensive training they are more than likely to have a newfound motivation to try out these things in the practice. In the case of leadership skills this is especially true since people generally have a need to be liked by others and be perceived as more than adequate to perform their jobs. Here leaders have a whole team to lead while being perceived as competent and at the same time be liked by their subordinates, all which is best seen by the employee's successful performance.

Last confirmed hypothesis regarding training advertisements confirmed that there is a difference in the probability of an employee signing up for training given the promotional material announcing the training. Along with the material that contains information about the positive experiences of previous participants and a 100% recommendation, employees gave answers that indicated a higher probability of signing up for the training. There was indeed a significant difference since the Advertisement 2 (with positive experiences from previous attendees and 100% recommendation) came first on all criteria. Reasons for this can be connected to one of the 6 principles of persuasion - Social Proof. People are guided by the opinions and actions of others, and if lots of people attend training and have a positive experience, the training must be good. Additionally, the more the people on the advertisement are like the viewer the higher the impact of it. This is especially high in this case since the reference group is their colleagues. Another reason can be found in the fact that when asked what the first thing is they noticed when looking at the Advertisement 2 70% of participants stated 100% recommendations, positive testimonials, or both. For Ergomed this means that future training advertisements can focus on testimonials and recommendations from previous attendees.

Lastly, it's important to mention methodological shortcomings of this research. The main one is the use of self-assessment as a measure of performance. When people use self-assessment as a measure, they tend to have a subjective approach and are often not able to objectively evaluate

themselves. Additionally, even though this survey was anonymous, people still tend to give socially accepted answers. Each employee gets its performance evaluated yearly based on certain criteria and metrics, but that data is highly confidential to the employee and their line manager, and therefore, not accessible for the purpose of this survey. The second shortcoming of this survey was the sample where it was not a large sample with an equal distribution of participants by departments which would give a more detailed look into the company. However, people in general are not always open to filling out surveys, especially when the survey is related to their work as they would not like to have any negative consequences. The last shortcoming of this survey is the use of non-experimental methodology due to the impossibility of drawing conclusions about cause-and-effect relationships. Therefore, it's not known whether employees are more successful thanks to attending training, or whether their success is based on something else. At the end, based on the resources available, the L&D team managed to encourage the most possible number of employees to participate in the survey, give their honest opinion and based on the collected data draw the most accurate results.

5.1. Promotion of employee trainings

After conducting the research survey *Survey 2 - Ergomed Academy Training Advertisements Feedback Survey* the L&D department of Ergomed Group has started to implement new approaches to the promotion of training programs. From before, L&D has developed specific feedback surveys which are sent out at the end of each training by the trainers. A detailed look at all the training surveys was taken to find particular attendee feedback that can be used when creating new promotion materials. Additionally, a look was taken at the responses of the second main question: *Would you recommend this training to others?* Based on the responses and upcoming training scheduled, the L&D team has created three new promotional flyers that were sent out to the possible attendees. Flyers were sent out via email to the relevant parties including department heads and HR business partners, all which could then forward or nominate employees who would benefit the most from these training sessions. Those flyers were made for the following trainings:

1. Risk Management (Figure 23)

100% OF ATTENDEES RECOMMEND THIS TRAINING!

RISK

RISK MANAGEMENT

- Simple and efficient process to risk management in projects and our regular tasks. Helps us to address risk in a consistent way across the entire organization. Additionally, you will practice working with a tool to ensure dealing with the most important risks first.
- Three short parts:
 - Part 1: Introductory video plus prep work which you can do at your own pace and schedule
 - Parts 2 and 3 are two 90-minute hands-on virtual workshops
- Experienced trainer and coach focused on leadership skills, communication skills, project management and presentation skills.
- "Great training! - reminded me on how great a tool the Risk Log is, and thus think that the training is equally valuable for new and not-so new PMs, and also other functions."
 "Nice exchange with other PM colleagues across the company which faced similar issues as I am facing."

**OCTOBER 13TH & 14TH
NOVEMBER 14TH & 15TH**

REGISTER NOW!

ERGOMED Academy

CONTACT US AT TRAINING@ERGOMEDPLC.COM

Figure 23 Risk Management advertisement (source: Ergomed Group)

2. Cross-cultural communication (Figure 24)



CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

November 8th & 15th

THIS TRAINING IS OPPORTUNITY

- to explore other cultures communication specifics
- to increase awareness of consequences of assumptions based on culture
- to get e-mail guidelines for communication across cultures

PARTICIPANTS IMPRESSIONS

"Nice and useful training. Loved it!"
 "My normal doesn't have to be your normal."
 "This was a great training - we got a new and interesting perspective on the topic!"
 "Culture really has impact on the way we behave, think and feel."

100% OF ATTENDEES RECOMMEND THIS TRAINING!

HOW IS TRAINING ORGANIZED?

This workshop is split into 2 session per 90 minutes
 Participants need to commit to attending both sessions.

CONTACT US AND APPLY
training@ergomedplc.com

ERGOMED

PRIMEVIGILANCE

Figure 24 Cross-cultural Communication advertisement (source: Ergomed Group)

3. Introduction to Communication Styles (Figure 25)



INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION STYLES

October 4th & 11th

November 3rd & 10th December 6th & 13th

<p>THIS TRAINING IS AN OPPORTUNITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify personal preferences in communication and behaviours • To develop self-awareness about your communication style • To learn how to better understand communication styles of others • To learn how to modify your behaviour and grow positive influence 	<p>100% OF ATTENDEES RECOMMENDS THIS TRAINING</p> <p>"Amazing training! Highly interactive and interesting"</p> <p>"Organized, interactive and useful training"</p> <p>"I have learned a lot about myself and how to communicate more effectively with others"</p>
<p>HOW IS TRAINING ORGANIZED?</p> <p>This workshop is split into 2 sessions per 90 minutes</p> <p>Participants need to commit to attending both sessions.</p>	<p>CONTACT US AND APPLY</p> <p>training@ergomedplc.com</p> <p>ergomedacademy.com</p> 

Figure 25 Introduction to Communication Styles advertisement (source: Ergomed Group)

Apart from this already taken activity, L&D team will be implementing additional practices when it comes to the promotion of training programs. Until now all the material for training promotion has been sent through one communication channel, email. Ergomed Group recently introduced new Intranet site and Yammer. These sites are currently just starting to be used and shared among employees to encourage them to both visit and engage in posting. Future promotions will be conducted on these new channels Intranet and Yammer as well as email. On Intranet and SharePoint employees will be able to see the promotional materials for the upcoming training and email will serve as a reminder. When it comes to the promotional materials itself, L&D will regularly update the materials with the new testimonials as well as make design changes to the flyers to keep them new and fresh. Apart from flyers, other types of promotional materials will be created such as GIFs and different infographics. All in all, L&D team will take the results gained through the research of this thesis as a base for all the

future promotions which will be always kept updated and shared with the relevant parties to attract the most possible number of attendees.

5.2. Developing new employee trainings

As mentioned in the results of *Survey 1 - Ergomed Academy Feedback Survey*, employees expressed a need for training about effective communication and introduction of change in their work as well as how to best adapt to and manage change. Since change is an inevitable part of work and life in general there is no growth without it. Change teaches people about strengths, values, and typical ways of reacting. However, change can also be very challenging for all, and individuals need to find their own coping styles while dealing with it. For these reasons, Ergomed Academy has developed two new ILT programs, *Growing through change* and *Leading through change*. Both trainings are online workshops characterized by interactive activities, small group discussions and active participation.

Growing through change has been created to support all employees before, during and after change. The course helps employees to understand their own reactions towards change, to recognize what they need from their managers to go through change more easily, to remind themselves of their own strengths and helpful strategies and to build resilience. This training consists of a few exercises focused on understanding the importance of adjustment and flexibility in times of change. During the training participants are divided into breakout rooms where they are supposed to work on the given exercise while sharing their own personal experiences and connecting over them. *Growing through change* course is split into two 90 minutes sessions and participants need to commit to attending both sessions

Leading through change has been created to help all managers to communicate more efficiently with their direct reports about change, to become familiar with and increase awareness about diversity of typical reaction to change and to build resilience within their teams. Exercises within this training are focused on understanding manager's role in change and on supporting team members in change adoption and sustainment. This course is split into three 90 minutes sessions and participants need to commit to attending all three sessions.

Training facilitators for both sessions are internal company trainers, company L&D Director and Trainer. Until September 2022 *Growing through change* was successfully completed by

120 employees. After finishing with the training programs participants received the usual training feedback survey where they were able to share their experiences of attending. Survey indicated a 95% recommendation to others to attend this training. Participants stated the most valuable aspect of the training being the breakout rooms. There, they got a chance to engage and connect with other colleagues through sharing real-life experiences and having an open and honest discussion which will not leave the training. Leading through change was completed by 20 employees which gave the training a 100% recommendation to others. Apart from enjoying the benefits of breakout room discussions like the *Growing through change group*, attendees acknowledged the importance of this type of training since it is applicable for all roles and inevitably, we are all going to experience a change at some point and need to know how to properly communicate it and handle it.

Apart from the already mentioned new training programs, L&D Team will implement new practices, in general, when creating training programs. It is important that L&D has all the relevant information regarding the state of each of the company departments to be able to create effective training for employees to excel in their positions. Therefore, regular meetings with department heads should be put in place to gather the information about training needs. The frequency of these meetings should be determined along with the department heads based on discussions and the number and complexity of training demands. L&D team will put the biggest focus on aligning business goals with training programs to create a workforce able to fulfill all the business objectives set in place. Based on these meetings and business objectives new training programs will be created. Additionally, it is important that these new trainings are produced on the regular and to not always offer the same training programs. Overall, a variety of training should be offered where the training programs are regularly switched and developed based on the current needs of the employees and business goals. In that way the company would excel at their business operations, employee performance and satisfaction.

5.3. Implementation of Cornerstone Learning management system

Ergomed Group is focused on providing employees with the highest level of learning experience. Different teams within the company require various training programs often not instantly available through Ergomed Academy. On top of that, the majority of Ergomed's workforce works in the CRO (Contract Research Organization) and PV (Pharmacovigilance) operations where they are constantly being pulled into different client calls, and their schedule

is often unpredictable with possible urgent project or audit requirements. Therefore, staff would benefit from having the option to create their own training schedules and adjust them to their day-to-day work obligations. Recently, Ergomed Group has introduced a new learning management system (LMS) Cornerstone. This section of the thesis will be focused on the rest of the L&D activities in terms of Cornerstone LMS. The goal of Cornerstone Learning is to have one place for all self-directed training. Additionally, Cornerstone will open new possibilities for employee's professional development journeys, enable discovery of new skills and capabilities and support those they already have. With the implementation of Cornerstone Ergomed Group wanted to show their dedication to growth, agility and change through the development of new skills, capabilities, mindset, and culture for every employee. On Cornerstone employees can find more than 10.000 courses about various topics such as mental health, leadership and professional skills, development programs and much more. Specifically, here employees can find all the other trainings requested in the Survey 1 - Ergomed Academy Feedback Survey, such as Excel, business English or business ethics. When selecting a training user can choose the most appropriate one through various filters such as subjects, duration - ranging from training of 15 minutes to 2 hours, providers, languages etc. Once the user has chosen the training, they are able to immediately start with the training or save it for later and finish it at a more convenient time. The platform has a modern and intuitive interface as well as being mobile friendly and giving the staff the option to take desired training any time, in any place and through any device. L&D along with company executives wanted to encourage employees to take time during their workdays and dedicate it to learning about a topic of their interest. Employees should feel free to work on their learning, and not worry about constantly working on their day-to-day tasks. Everyone can and must devote a time during their workday for themselves and what better way to do so then by developing and learning more about a topic they have always been interested in. On top of that, the company offered employees one additional benefit, everybody can download Cornerstone on their smartphones regardless of if they have a work phone or not, and take training truly whenever suits them the best. Overall, employees are encouraged to explore the areas of their interest, see what is in there for them and enjoy this opportunity for personal and professional development. On the other hand, Cornerstone brings one more benefit in terms of learning. Since the company is divided in PV Operations and CRO Operations, each side previously had its own LMS managed by L&D system administrators assigning SOP (standard operating procedure) and non-SOP training to staff. However, with the implementation of Cornerstone both systems will be shut down and all the data will be transferred and now available in one place, Cornerstone.

The introduction of Cornerstone was accompanied with a marketing campaign to create a buzz, anticipation and raise interest among the company workers. Firstly, a week before the official launch a countdown GIF was sent out to the whole company. GIF was sent out from the official Cornerstone Learning email address and included a countdown infographic counting down the days to the official Cornerstone launch. Additionally, the L&D team along with the Marketing team developed a Cornerstone for Ergomed logo. The main part of the logo is a tree symbolizing the growth and all the learning opportunities now available to the whole company. Lastly, the logo includes inspirational quotes about learning which are changed every so often. In the first week of the Cornerstone introduction over 400 training sessions were completed which marked a great success of the implementation.



Figure 26 Cornerstone for Ergomed logo (source: Ergomed Group)

Overall, L&D team will implement new practices when it comes to the rest of its activities. Employees will be regularly encouraged to take the time to learn about skills needed to perform their jobs better as well as learn about other areas they have interest in. Cornerstone as a LMS will be promoted with different training recommendations based on the relevancy or popularity. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, L&D should cater to the individual training needs of employees and through LMS employees are able to create their own training plans and schedules. Lastly, courses offered on Cornerstone should be interchanged and added based on the attendee feedback about training topics they would like to see as well as formats.

5.4. Internal communication strategies

Three of the previous chapters discussed parts of internal communication strategy. This chapter will focus on combining the broad spectrum of internal communication activities and providing an overall look on the communication strategy of Ergomed and its role in fostering employee performance. Human resources within Ergomed Group have recently undergone improvements in its operations. One of the main improvements includes the creation of an Internal communications team. Internal communication team is made of 10 employees from different positions within HR and from different locations. The team meets once a week for one hour with the purpose of developing and maintaining the company's internal communication strategy. Specifically, the team tries to cover important world topics and connect them to the company values - Integrity & Trust, Agility & Responsiveness, Quality, Drive & Passion, Belonging and Collaborative Partnerships. Moreover, the team promotes employee engagement through various initiatives and overall strives to create a collaborative culture of belonging and mutual understanding. Additionally, the internal communications team is open to new ideas and contributions from the rest of the colleagues. A special email address, ergomed_news@ergomedplc.com, was created as a place where employees can raise questions regarding internal communication as well as write their suggestions for improvements on current practices or give suggestions for the future content. This mailbox is monitored by the internal communications team, specifically, each member has their preassigned day where they are answering inquiries.

The biggest projects internal communications team developed and is currently working on include:

- Intranet

With the launch of the Intranet, employees now have one place on which they can stay up to date with the organization. The main components of Intranet include corporate news and news from different offices all over the world, links to all important internal pages a new starter needs to know as well external which are closely related to the industry, company calendar with the important upcoming events, introduction of the new colleagues, contacts to the internal communications team and a short survey where employees can express their opinions on the current Intranet site and suggest improvements.



Figure 27 Ergomed Intranet page 1 (source: Ergomed Group)



Figure 28 Ergomed Intranet page 2 (source: Ergomed Group)

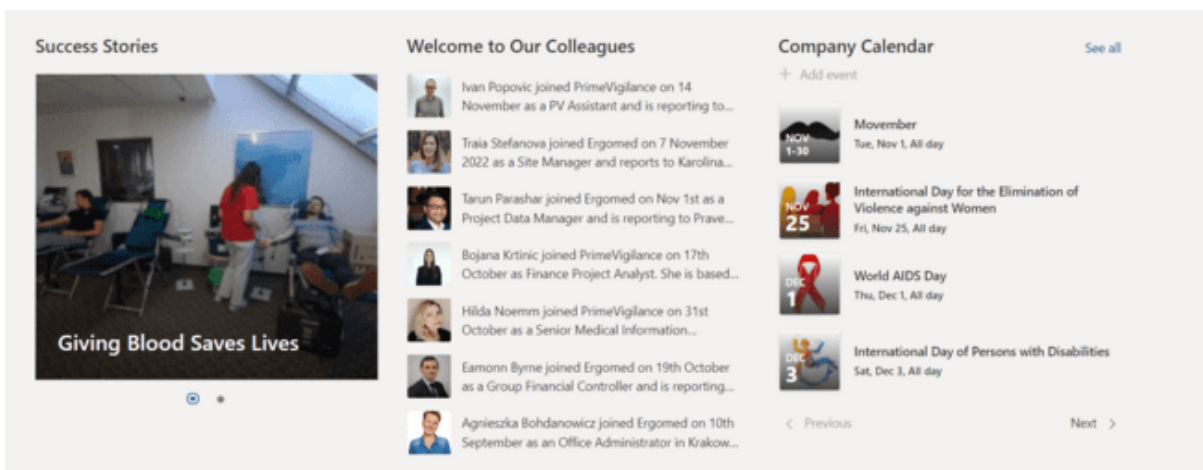


Figure 29 Ergomed Intranet page 3 (source: Ergomed Group)

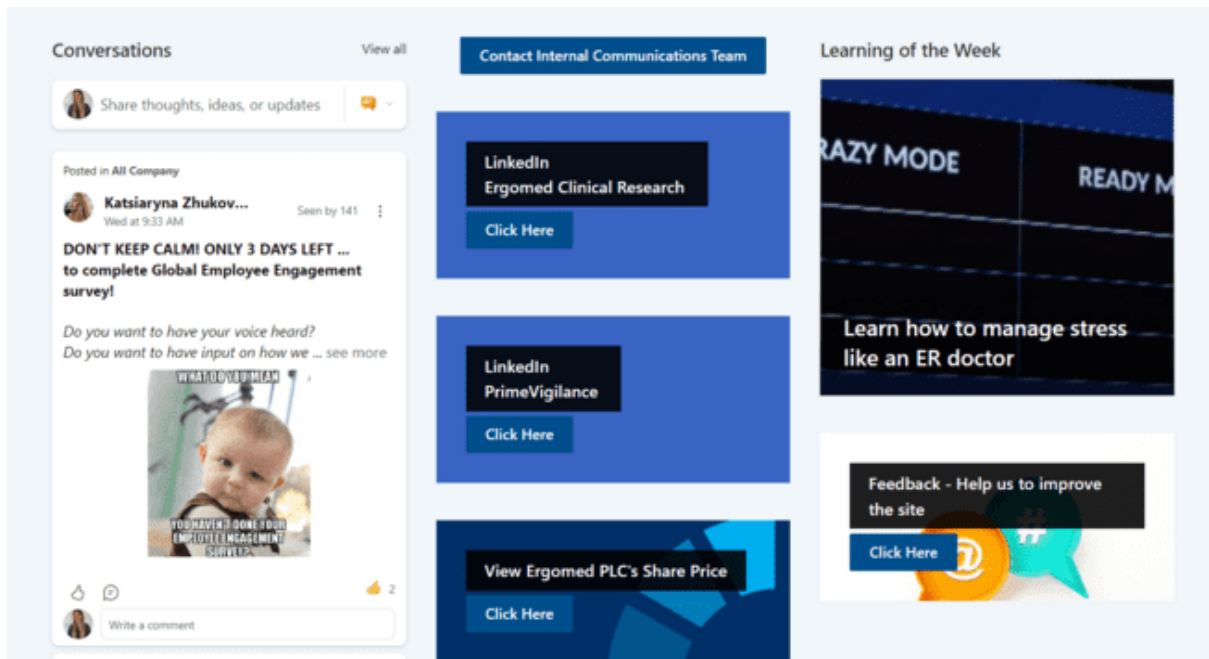


Figure 30 Ergomed Intranet page 4 (source: Ergomed Group)

- Yammer

Yammer, commonly referred to as a business or corporate social media network, was one of the new additions implemented by the internal communications team. This platform offers employees a more informal communication where they can share experiences on topics other than work. Even when employees are sharing corporate news, they try to keep the informal tone of voice. Additionally, employees are encouraged to create and join different communities with all who share a similar interest. Some of the popular Yammer posts include:

Katsiaryna Zhukovich
Wed at 9:33 AM

Seen by 140 ...

**DON'T KEEP CALM! ONLY 3 DAYS LEFT ...
to complete Global Employee Engagement survey!**

*Do you want to have your voice heard?
Do you want to have input on how we can do things differently?
Do you want to share what your Work-Life balance looks like to you?*

Click the link, which you have received in the email from McLean&Co and share your **anonymous** opinion.
Only together we can make the workplace a better place!



Figure 31 Global Employee Engagement survey Yammer post (source: Ergomed Group)

Marita Bitanga
Oct 10

Seen by 759 ...

Join us in prioritizing mental health for all our staff. Not only today on World Mental Health Day, but every day. There are things that we can do every day to look after our mental health. Check it out. :)

Today we choose to engage in activity that really brings us joy.
What activity helps you to feel good? Show us and inspire other colleagues. 😊

And remember, **there is no health without mental health!**

Figure 32 Mental Health Day Yammer post (source: Ergomed Group)

 Elizabeth (Liz) Buchanan
Oct 31 1 share • Seen by 271 ...

Happy Monday and Happy Halloween! Just wanted to introduce our newest furry coworker. This is Freya, she's a 6 month old rescue that I adopted on Thursday. She's already well on her way to being spoiled rotten. #pets

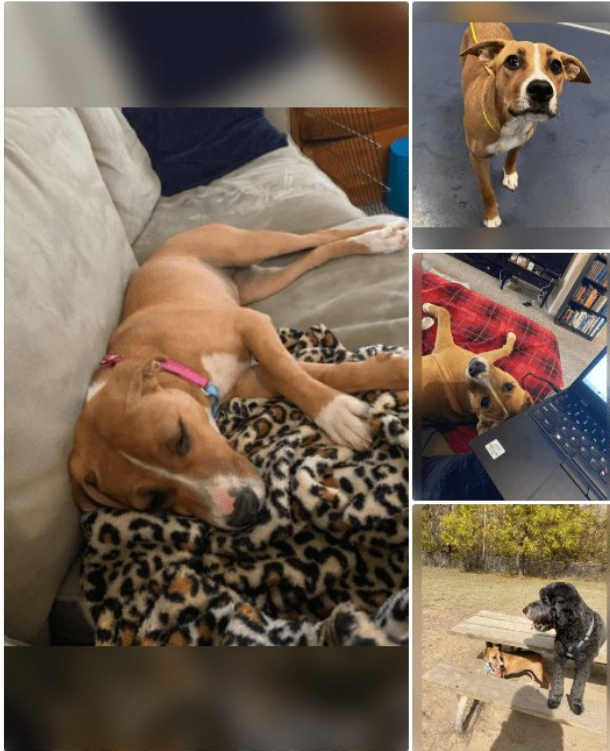


Figure 33 Example of informal Yammer post (source: Ergomed Group)

- Webinars - *Ask an expert*

Apart from Intranet and Yammer, the internal communications team developed a new series of webinars by the title *Ask an expert* where a subject matter expert is called, and employees get a chance to ask them questions. Until now two such webinars have been held, both of which gain high engagement and positive feedback from employees:

- Ask an Expert: Interview with Marie Bonneterre on Breast Cancer Awareness

As October is the month of breast cancer awareness, the company offered employees an opportunity to speak to dr. Marie Bonneterre, Board-Certified Medical Oncologist and Senior Vice President of Global Medical Affairs. The goal of this webinar was to raise awareness about the impact of breast cancer, discuss the importance of early detection, risk factors and what has been done regarding breast cancer research.

- Ask an Expert: Webinar on men's health

As November is men's mental health awareness month the company organized a webinar, focused on men's health. This webinar was an opportunity for the employees to learn more about prostate cancer, mental health in men, and how we can all help each other to feel safe and remain healthy. On top of that, the company was raising money for Movember which will

fund men's health projects in mental health, suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer.

Additional practices the company, or specifically the internal communications team will be implementing in the future include a focus on creating a company culture where employees are engaged in other company activities, other than their day-to-day work activities. With regular posting on pages such as Intranet and Yammer the team will encourage others to do so as well. The end goal would be to have high engagement and activity from employees on these sites. Moreover, the company got high engagement and attendance from employees on *Ask an expert* webinar. Attendees were openly asking questions and expressed the need for future webinars like this. Therefore, it is important for the organization to keep up this practice and explore through surveys which topics would employees like to know more about.

Conclusion

Learning and development can be defined as all the investments organizations make in their workforce with these investments being focused on improving the skills, knowledge, or competencies of the employees. Companies are experiencing various changes on the regular and therefore, need to be consistent in providing their employees with the necessary training to stay on top of the rapidly changing world. Training programs have one goal, to improve the performance of the employee in different work-related areas depending on the training topic. Previous research concluded that there is in fact a positive impact of training programs on the overall employee performance. Specifically, training has a positive impact on the employees to carry out their work more effectively while increasing their abilities, confidence, and motivation to perform a job as well as overall performance.

This graduate thesis provided a deeper look into the use of communication strategies in fostering employee performance through learning and development. Connection between L&D and employee performance was explored as well. All the mentioned was explored from the point of view of the clinical research and pharmacovigilance industry, an area where not much information is currently known. The research performed in this thesis confirmed the previous studies and provided further insight into other areas of L&D as well. Results showed that there is a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in work-related motivation and proactivity. This can be most likely attributed to giving the employees a constant chance for attending different training programs, which is the benefit employees position at the top of their criteria when choosing an employer. Furthermore, there is a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in using skills related to emotional intelligence, recognizing different communication styles, understanding cross-cultural communication, and negotiating and resolving conflicts. When people are first time learners about topics, they have higher interest in these topics and want to implement them and see their effectiveness in real work life. Results showcased that there is a relationship between attending a training program and better employee performance in the area of using leadership skills. As already mentioned before, employees have a higher will to implement and work on things they perceive as new and interesting, especially in terms of leadership where individuals have a need to be liked by others and be perceived as more than adequate to perform their jobs. Lastly, there is a difference in the probability of an employee

signing up for training given the promotional material announcing the training where employees are more likely to attend when they see 100% recommendation, Reasons for this can be connected to the fact that people are guided by the opinions and actions of others, and if lots of people attend training and have a positive experience, the training must be good.

Data gained through the research conducted for this thesis served as a base for improving L&D practices and communication strategies in Ergomed Group. When it comes to the promotions of employee training the organization started to implement previous attendee's testimonials and recommendations on their advertisements. On top of that, other suggestions indicated that the promotional materials should come in a variety of formats - videos, GIFs, infographics, and should be sent through other communication channels along with email - Intranet and SharePoint. The overall goal is to keep the audience interested and create greater demand for trainings. Secondly, based on the training requests collected through the research of this thesis, two new training programs, *Leading and Growing through change* were created. L&D team will regularly conduct meetings with the department heads and gather the training needs of employees which will serve as a base for creating future trainings. Moreover, the company introduced a new LMS through which employees can access more than 10.000 different trainings in various formats and on various topics. The biggest highlight will be put on aligning training programs with the business goals, along with catering to the individual needs of the employees. To sum up, Ergomed is putting a major focus on its communication strategy with the creation of the Internal Communications team which oversees developing and maintaining the company's internal communication strategy. The team developed a new Intranet site where employees can see company news, as well as Yammer which gives employees a chance to interact with each other in a more informal setting. Lastly, one of the biggest contributions of the Internal Communications team are the *Ask an expert* webinars where a subject matter expert is called, and employees get a chance to ask them questions. In the future the team will be focusing on creating a company culture where employees are engaged in other company activities, other than their day-to-day work activities.

To conclude, organizations biggest competitive advantage comes from their human capital - their employees. All of them have one goal in common - generating high profits. Organizations need to understand the power of L&D, especially employee training, as profits are only gained through employees and as shown through this thesis one of the most effective ways to increase employee performance is through training.

“By submission of this application, I hereby acknowledge and accept that the Master’s Thesis which will be prepared as a result of this application will be my own individual work, prepared in accordance with advices and consultations received from my mentor and other teachers / experts I might consult, and using literature and sources referenced in my Thesis.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that no part of my Thesis will be taken from other uncited authors, and that I will not breach the rights of any author.

While preparing my Thesis I will follow best academic practices in respect to authorship and proper citing and referencing work of others.

If breach of stated principles is proven through an independent check of the referenced sources any time in the future, I am fully willing to bare corresponding formal consequences, including the possibility of my diploma and academic degree achieved as a result of this Thesis to be revoked.”

Zagreb, February 2023

Tera Šuperina

List of Abbreviations

HR	<i>Human Resources</i>	Ljudski resursi
L&D	<i>Learning and development</i>	Edukacija i razvoj
ITL	<i>Instructor-led trainings</i>	Vođeni treninzi
LMS	<i>Learning management system</i>	Sustav za upravljanje edukacijama
SOP	<i>Standard operating procedure</i>	Standardna operativna procedura
CRO	<i>Contract research organization</i>	Ugovorna istraživačka organizacija
PV	<i>Pharmacovigilance</i>	Farmakovigilancija

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Appendix

Ergomed Academy Feedback Survey

Ergomed Academy Training Attendance

* 1. How many Ergomed Academy trainings have you attended within the last year?  0

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> One | <input type="radio"/> Four |
| <input type="radio"/> Two | <input type="radio"/> Five |
| <input type="radio"/> Three | <input type="radio"/> More than five |

* 2. Please select the trainings you have attended.  0

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-cultural communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Risk Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Intelligence | <input type="checkbox"/> Project Management/Critical path |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Effectiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> Line Management Fundamentals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation and conflict management | <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to Communication Styles |

Since attending Ergomed Academy training/s

* 3. Please choose your level of agreement with the following sentences.  0

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel excited about coming to work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am determined to give my best effort at work each day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am motivated to meet my work related goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am inspired to go beyond what is expected of me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am excited to take on new projects where I can use skills gained through trainings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I work better within a team.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I recognize traits and cultural specifics in others and I'm able to properly adapt my communication approach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to easier prevent misunderstandings, relationship issues and conflicts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to efficiently prioritize my workload to meet the deadlines and provide high quality outputs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I continuously use techniques that help me be the best version of myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am personally effective in choosing positive habits to avoid becoming overwhelmed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I proactively identify future challenges and opportunities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I quickly adapt to difficult and unpredicted work situations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



[Line Managers] Since attending Ergomed Academy training/s

* 4. Please choose your level of agreement with the following sentences.  0

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel excited about coming to work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am determined to give my best effort at work each day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am motivated to meet my work related goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am inspired to go beyond what is expected of me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am excited to take on new projects where I can use skills gained through trainings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



I work better within a team.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I recognize traits and cultural specifics in others and I'm able to properly adapt my communication approach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to easier prevent misunderstandings, relationship issues and conflicts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand my personal impact and have increased self-awareness of my own leadership style.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to build trust and effective work relationships with my direct reports.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Learning & Development Opportunities Satisfaction



* 5. Please choose your level of agreement with the following sentences.  

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am satisfied with the learning opportunities provided by the company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the investment my organization makes in employee learning and development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ergomed Academy trainings have helped my professional success.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning and Development department has the tools needed to continuously maximize my potential within the company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ergomed Academy has quality trainings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would recommend Ergomed Academy trainings to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Improvement of Learning & Development Services


* 6. How can Learning & Development team better support your needs and goals?  

* 7. How can we improve your experience with the Ergomed Academy trainings?  



* 8. Please state if there are any trainings you would like to attend, which are not currently available through Ergomed Academy.  

* 9. Do you have any additional comments or feedback for us?  

Your Information



* 10. Which category below includes your age?  

- 18-25
- 26-41
- 42-57
- 58+

* 11. Please select your region.  

- North America
- Eastern Europe
- Western Europe

* 12. Please choose the department you work in.  

* 13. Please choose your level of management.  

- Top Level of Management
- Middle Level of Management
- Lower Level of Management
- Non-management Professional Staff

* 14. How long have you been working within the company?  

- Less than a year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

Ergomed Academy Training Advertisements - Feedback survey

Training advertisement No.1

Please take a close look at the advertisement below (advertisement No.1). Following questions are related to your perception of the advertisement No.1. ☺ 0

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE


- 1 Personal growth and applying Emotional Intelligence by choosing positive responses to the world around you.
- 2 Assessing your current levels of Emotional Intelligence, becoming aware of your individual unique super-powers, and learning how to work with what is stopping you from being the best version of yourself.
- 3 Experienced coach and Inspirational Speaker who develops high performing leaders & teams through emotional intelligence.



MAY 19TH & 26TH
JULY 7TH & 14TH
MORNING SESSION: 09:00 - 10:30 GMT
AFTERNOON SESSION: 13:30 - 15:00 GMT

REGISTER NOW!



ERGOMED
Academy

CONTACT US AT
TRAINING@ERGOMEDPLC.COM



* 1. What first comes to your mind when looking at the advertisement No.1?  

* 2. What is your first reaction to the advertisement No.1?  


- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Positive | <input type="radio"/> Somewhat negative |
| <input type="radio"/> Somewhat positive | <input type="radio"/> Negative |
| <input type="radio"/> Neutral | |

* 3. How visually appealing is the advertisement No.1?  

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Very appealing | <input type="radio"/> Somewhat unappealing |
| <input type="radio"/> Somewhat appealing | <input type="radio"/> Very unappealing |
| <input type="radio"/> Neither appealing nor unappealing | |

* 4. How likely are you to research more about the topic promoted in advertisement No.1?  



- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Very likely | <input type="radio"/> Somewhat unlikely |
| <input type="radio"/> Somewhat likely | <input type="radio"/> Very unlikely |
| <input type="radio"/> Neither likely nor unlikely | |

* 5. How likely are you to share the advertisement No.1 with a colleague?  



- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Very likely | <input type="radio"/> Somewhat unlikely |
| <input type="radio"/> Somewhat likely | <input type="radio"/> Very unlikely |
| <input type="radio"/> Neither likely nor unlikely | |

* 6. Does the advertisement No.1 contain all the information you need about a training?  

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> Somewhat no |
| <input type="radio"/> Somewhat yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| <input type="radio"/> Neutral | |

* 6. Does the advertisement No.1 contain all the information you need about a training?  

- Yes
- Somewhat yes
- Neutral
- Somewhat no
- No

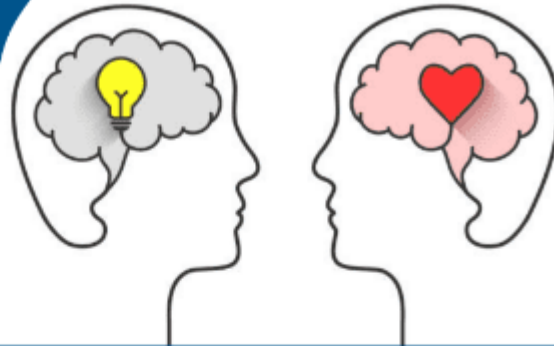
* 7. How likely are you to register for the training promoted in advertisement No.1?  

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely

Training advertisement No.2

Please take a close look at the advertisement below (advertisement No.2). Following questions are related to your perception of the advertisement No.2.  

100% OF
ATTENDEES
RECOMMEND
THIS
TRAINING!



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

1

Personal growth and applying Emotional Intelligence by choosing positive responses to the world around you.

2

Assessing your current levels of Emotional Intelligence, becoming aware of your individual unique super-powers, and learning how to work with what is stopping you from being the best version of yourself.

3

"Very interesting training that helped me in everyday situations at work (and in personal life)."
"I enjoyed the training, it's good to think about what triggers your emotions."
"It was interesting and useful, it's important to know that motivation and positivism can be learned and improved."

4

Experienced coach and Inspirational Speaker who develops high performing leaders & teams through emotional intelligence.

MAY 19TH & 26TH

JULY 7TH & 14TH


MORNING SESSION: 09:00 - 10:30 GMT
AFTERNOON SESSION: 13:00 - 15:00 GMT


**REGISTER
NOW!**




ERGOMED
Academy

CONTACT US AT
TRAINING@ERGOMEDPLC.COM


* 8. What first comes to your mind when looking at the advertisement No.2?  0

* 9. What is your first reaction to the advertisement No.2?  0

- Positive Somewhat negative
- Somewhat positive Negative
- Neutral

* 10. How visually appealing is the advertisement No.2?  0


- Very appealing Somewhat unappealing
- Somewhat appealing Very unappealing
- Neither appealing nor unappealing

* 11. How likely are you to research more about the topic promoted in advertisement No.2?  0


- Very likely Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely Very unlikely
- Neither likely nor unlikely

* 12. How likely are you to share the advertisement No.2 with a colleague?  0

- Very likely Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely Very unlikely
- Neither likely nor unlikely

* 13. Does the advertisement No.2 contain all the information you need about a training?  0

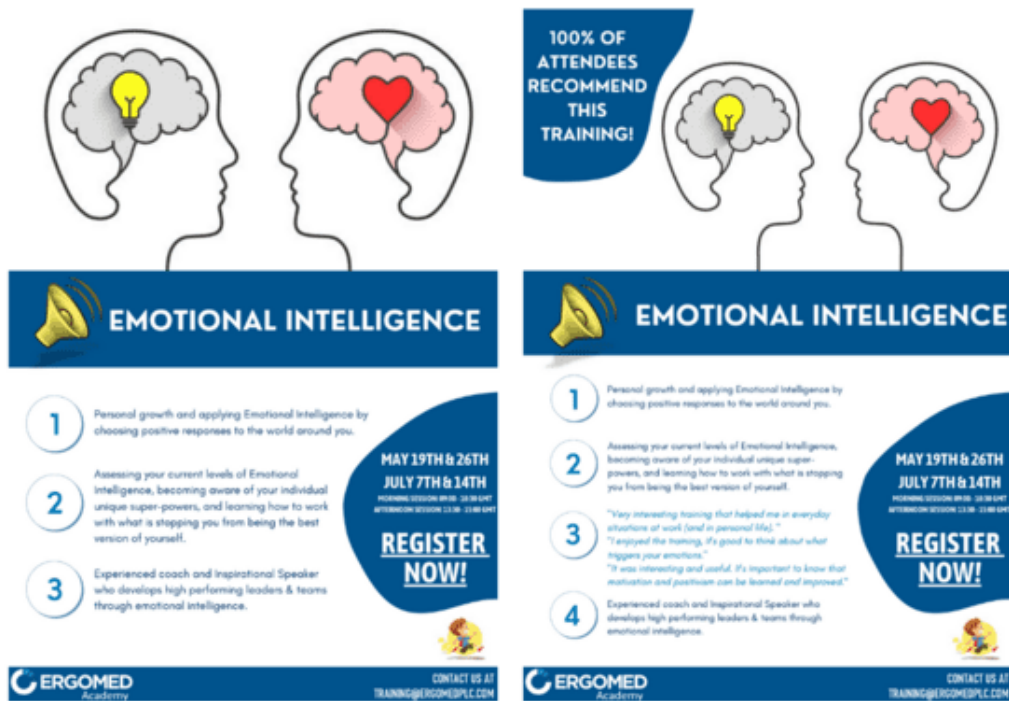
- Yes Somewhat no
- Somewhat yes No
- Neutral

* 14. How likely are you to register for the training promoted in advertisement No.2?  0

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Very unlikely

Comparison of Advertisement No.1 and No.2

Please take a look at the advertisement No.1 and No.2 side by side, and answer the following questions.



100% OF ATTENDEES RECOMMEND THIS TRAINING!

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- 1 Personal growth and applying Emotional Intelligence by choosing positive responses to the world around you.
- 2 Assessing your current levels of Emotional Intelligence, becoming aware of your individual unique super-powers, and learning how to work with what is stopping you from being the best version of yourself.
- 3 Experienced coach and Inspirational Speaker who develops high performing leaders & teams through emotional intelligence.

**MAY 19TH & 26TH
JULY 7TH & 14TH**
FORWARD SESSION 09:00 - 10:30 GMT
AFTERNOON SESSION 13:30 - 15:00 GMT

REGISTER NOW!

ERGOMED Academy CONTACT US AT TRAINING@ERGOMEDPLC.COM

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- 1 Personal growth and applying Emotional Intelligence by choosing positive responses to the world around you.
- 2 Assessing your current levels of Emotional Intelligence, becoming aware of your individual unique super-powers, and learning how to work with what is stopping you from being the best version of yourself.
- 3 "Very interesting training that helped me in everyday situations of work (and in personal life)."
"Enjoyed the training, it's good to think about what triggers your emotions."
"It was interesting and useful, it's important to know that motivation and passion can be learned and improved"
- 4 Experienced coach and Inspirational Speaker who develops high performing leaders & teams through emotional intelligence.

**MAY 19TH & 26TH
JULY 7TH & 14TH**
FORWARD SESSION 09:00 - 10:30 GMT
AFTERNOON SESSION 13:30 - 15:00 GMT

REGISTER NOW!

ERGOMED Academy CONTACT US AT TRAINING@ERGOMEDPLC.COM

* 15. Please choose the advertisement which.....

	Advertisement No.1	Advertisement No.2	No preference
is more visually appealing to you.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
would encourage you to explore more.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is more likely to encourage you to register for the training.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
contains all the information you need about a training.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 16. Are you more likely to attend a training after knowing 100% of attendees recommend it?

- Yes Somewhat no
- Somewhat yes No
- Neutral

* 17. Does seeing positive feedback from previous attendees affect your likeliness of attending a training?

- Yes Somewhat no
- Somewhat yes No
- Neutral

Your information

* 18. Which category below includes your age?

18-25

26-41

42-57

58+

* 19. Please select your region.

North America

Japan

Western Europe

India

Eastern Europe

* 20. Please choose the department you work in.

* 21. Please choose your level of management.

- Top Level of Management
- Middle Level of Management
- Lower Level of Management
- Non-management Professional Staff

* 22. How long have you been working within the company?

- Less than a year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years