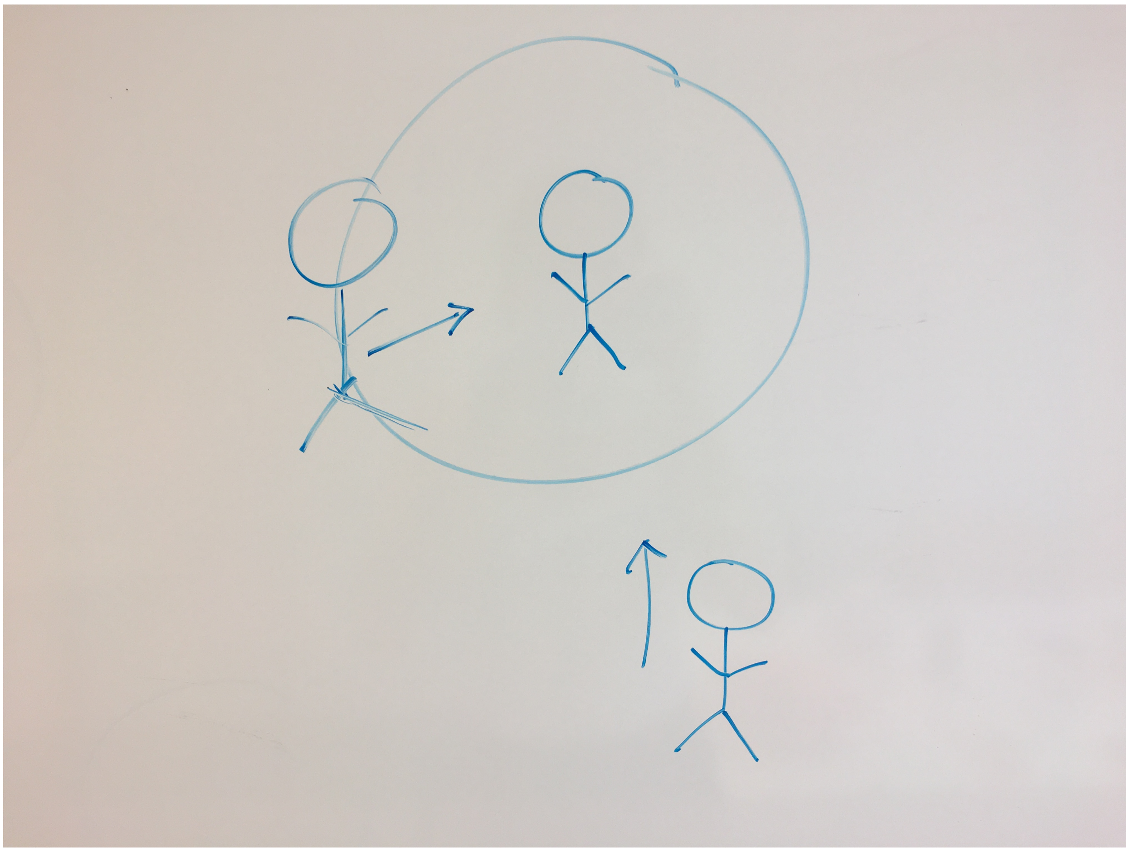
CHALMERS
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



The journey from an organizational outsider to insider

Onboarding processes at three sites in the global company Aptiv

Master's thesis in Learning and Leadership

JULIA DARVELID & NICOLINA EKLUND

Department of Communication and Learning in Science
CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
Gothenburg, Sweden 2020

MASTER'S THESIS 2020

The journey from an organizational outsider to insider

Onboarding processes at three sites in the global company Aptiv

JULIA DARVELID & NICOLINA EKLUND

Department of Communication and Learning in Science
CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
Gothenburg, Sweden 2020

The journey from an organizational outsider to insider
Onboarding processes at three sites in the global company Aptiv
JULIA DARVELID & NICOLINA EKLUND

© JULIA DARVELID & NICOLINA EKLUND, 2020.

Supervisor Aptiv: Nazanin Vahabi, Aptiv
Supervisor Chalmers: Becky Bergman, Communication and Learning in Science
Examiner: Samuel Bengmark, Mathematical Sciences

Master's Thesis 2020
Department of Communication and Learning in Science
Chalmers University of Technology
SE-412 96 Gothenburg
Telephone +46 31 772 1000

Cover: Onboarding can be seen as a process of going from an organizational outsider to insider (by Becky Bergman).

Typeset in LaTeX
Gothenburg, Sweden 2020

The journey from an organizational outsider to insider
Onboarding processes at three sites in the global company Aptiv
JULIA DARVELID & NICOLINA EKLUND
Department of Communication and Learning in Science
Chalmers University of Technology

Abstract

Today's labour market is more globalized and rapidly changing than ever before. In the engineering area there is a high demand on skilled workers for complex roles which makes it important for companies to attract and retain employees. One big part in making sure that employees stay is an efficient and well-functioning onboarding program.

Aptiv is a global company operating in the car industry working on software solutions for autonomous driving, among other things. During the last year a journey towards One Aptiv has begun, where the harmonization of onboarding across the sites is one step.

This thesis aims to firstly map the onboarding processes at three Aptiv-sites, in Gothenburg, Krakow and Wuppertal, and secondly to exemplify informal aspects connected to said onboarding. Thirdly the results from these questions are analysed to see how Aptiv facilitates the journey from organizational outsider to insider, from the perspective of the organizers of the onboarding.

To fulfill this aim a method divided into two phases was created. In phase 1 the onboarding process at each site was mapped, and this was done through review of site-specific documents and interviews with all responsible parties. In phase 2 the informal structures were examined by six interviews, three with managers and three with mentors.

The results in phase 1 show a similar division of responsibilities between the organizers, consisting of human resources, managers, trainers and mentors. However, the execution and content differs, for example regarding role distribution and amount of activities. This was investigated further in phase 2 using the data driven themes of organization, SFO-role and mentorship.

All three sites have onboarding processes in place to take care of new employees, but there are gaps where improvement is desirable. Three key areas for improvement were identified: expressing expectations, syncing the onboarding between and within sites, and increasing the support for mentors.

Keywords: Onboarding, organizational socialization, Aptiv, mentorship, communities of practice.

Acknowledgements

First of all we would like to thank our lovely supervisor Becky Bergman. This thesis would not have been the same without her expertise that has guided us through many different takes of this work, and she has also made us laugh more than once. We would also like to send a big virtual hug to our supervisor at Aptiv, Nazanin Vahabi, who has put aside a lot of time and effort to help us to get in touch with the right people, and supported our work in various ways.

A special thanks to Mats Björnerbäck at Aptiv for his interest in this topic, without him this thesis would not have happened.

We would also like to thank all of the interviewees at Aptiv for their contribution that made this possible. We hope that you find this thesis enjoyable to read and that it gives you a better insight of the onboarding at Aptiv.

Due to corona we did not have the possibility to spend that much time at Aptiv's Gothenburg office, but we felt most welcome during the time we did spend there. Thanks to everyone that made this possible. Our ping-pong skills are not what they once were, but maybe we get a chance for a comeback someday?

This would not be complete without thanking Samuel Bengmark, who personifies the master's program Learning and Leadership. We are very happy to have had the opportunity to learn from your expertise and guidance.

Last but not least, a big thanks to all the people who have made our years at Chalmers very fun, festive and fantastic. It really would not have been the same without you!

Julia Darvelid & Nicolina Eklund

Gothenburg, May 2020

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

AS Active Safety

EGM Engineering Group Manager

FFO Feature Function Owner

GOT Gothenburg office

HR Human Resources

RQ Research Question

SFO Sensing Function Owner

SYS engineer System engineer

TAK Technical Academy Krakow

TCK Technical Center Krakow

UX User Experience

WUP Wuppertal office

1 Introduction

Today's labour market is changing faster than ever before (By, 2005). Therefore the need to attract and keep well-functioning staff is a factor for success and profit-making (Stein & Christiansen, 2011). Globalization has fueled the pace of change and is an important factor for many companies (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). To decrease the cost of recruitment and get new employees up to speed more quickly, a well-functioning onboarding program has been considered vital (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011).

Onboarding is defined as: *"the process in which new employees gain the knowledge and skills they need to become effective members of an organization"* (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). As shown, onboarding is a process to help new employees to get familiar with their new jobs. Another commonly used term is socialization, defined as: "*the process through which new employees move from being organizational outsiders to becoming organizational insiders*" (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011), what we today often refer to as onboarding.

This thesis will focus on the onboarding processes at the global company Aptiv. Aptiv is a technical company working with development of autonomous driving functions. Within this field, the demand for engineers is supposed to be greater than the number of available engineers. It is therefore important for them to recruit and keep engineers.

Aptiv has 160 000 employees in 44 countries (Aptiv, n.d.). Although they work within a variety of contexts at different locations, the goal is to be One Aptiv, the same company throughout all sites. There are many big projects across the company which need someone with an overview and a broader perspective. In many projects, this overview is known by a job role called Sensing Function Owner (SFO). These SFOs need to get training in order to be able to do their work in an effective way. The way of organizing onboarding for this role can depend on how each site has organized themselves.

The initiative to become One Aptiv has started during the last year and focuses on common values and cross-site team spirit. One way to work towards this One Aptiv is to harmonize the onboarding of new personnel across sites. Since most projects have cross-site workforces, a harmonized onboarding will lead to a minimized knowledge gap between colleagues and reduce the risk of double work being done.

To be able to harmonize the onboarding across the sites, the various ways of onboarding need to be mapped. There are several technical centers in Europe with the two main ones in Krakow, Poland, and Wuppertal, Germany. It is interesting to map the onboarding at these two sites and in Gothenburg to see whether the goal and practices align, or if there are big differences in how new employees are introduced to their job. This is important since these three sites share several big projects and have cross-site project teams. It is also interesting to examine what kind of informal structures might lay beneath the surface, as a way to explain possible similarities and differences at the different sites.

To be able to examine what is done in the onboarding at Aptiv, the following definitions of formal and informal will be used in this report:

The definition of formal will be activities and structures that are planned, documented and systematically set in place. These issues are part of the organizational structure and could be written down.

The definition of informal is structures that exist but outside official documentation and rules. They manifest themselves in unwritten rules and expectations. To find informalities you have to examine things that people mostly are unaware of (Esaiasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson, Towns, & Wängerud, 2017).

1.1 Aim

The aim of this study is to facilitate Aptiv's work towards One Aptiv. This study aims to get an overview of how onboarding of the role SFO is done at three different Aptiv-sites in Europe. The focus is getting a broad image of how it is organized at the sites, why it is chosen to be that way and what they can learn from each other.

The goals for this project has therefore been formulated into the three following research questions for investigation:

1. Map and discuss the onboarding process a new SFO undergoes at the offices in Gothenburg, Krakow and Wuppertal respectively.

2. Exemplify informal aspects connected to the onboarding of new SFOs.

3. Analyse how the results from RQ1 and RQ2 facilitate the journey from organizational outsider to insider for a new SFO.

1.2 Delimitations

Onboarding is a broad term including both pre-onboarding, general onboarding and role-specific onboarding (Davila & Piña-Ramírez, 2018). In this particular study, the pre-onboarding will not be considered, only the onboarding taking place after a person has been hired. The study aims to focus on the onboarding processes that are done for the SFO-role. The perspective in focus for this master's thesis is the onboarding organizer's point of view, and not the view of new employees who undergo this process.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, travel restrictions were introduced in Europe. This limited the possible methods for examining onboarding processes at the different sites, for further discussion on this see section 4.4.

2

Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the field of onboarding and organizational socialization. It starts with an introduction and a motivation to get an overview of why onboarding is important. It then continues with a historical context and some different models are presented such as institutionalized and individualized tactics by Jones (1986) and organization, role and relationship from Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019).

After the field of onboarding, a useful model called communities of practice is introduced, which connect to onboarding since it describe how to facilitate newcomers' learning and ways to become an organizational insider. The view of knowledge according to this model is also presented.

2.1 Introduction to onboarding

The terms "onboarding" and "organizational socialization" are used synonymously in this text, as defined by Bauer and Erdogan (2011).

The need for effective onboarding has increased during the last decades due to a more mobile and global work labour market (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). Since organizations are restructuring more often and the economy fluctuates, people are shifting jobs more often (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). There is also a high competition for talented employees, especially in the engineering area (Stein & Christiansen, 2011) since the demand is bigger than the available workforce. Today's service labour market has more complex jobs and organizations than before (Davila & Piña-Ramírez, 2018), engineering is one such area. One goal with onboarding is to reduce the feeling of uncertainty for the new employee (Klein, Polin, & Leigh Sutton, 2015). Offering enough guidance to get role clarity will reduce anxiety, and formal activities will reduce anxiety more than informal activities (Jones, 1986).

According to Korte, Brunhaver, and Sheppard (2015) as well as Gupta, Bhattacharya, Sheorey, and Coelho (2018) it is very costly for companies to recruit and train people, and the more complex the role, the more training is needed. Therefore the goal is to retain the people that have been recruited (Korte et al., 2015; Stein & Christiansen, 2011). A good onboarding program prepares the new hire to learn the work they are supposed to do, helps them come up to speed quicker and helps them to build relationships in their new organization (Bauer & Erdogan, 2014; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2019). To get to know colleagues is a positive outcome of a well-functioning onboarding (Bauer & Erdogan, 2014). To have more activities offered during onboarding is positively correlated to the extent of the newcomers' socialization (Klein et al., 2015).

New employees' early experiences are very important for their performance, satisfaction and retention (Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007). In their study, Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, and Gardner (1994) confirmed that people who stay in the same job have higher scores on different dimensions of social factors than people who changed role inside or outside of the company. The organizational goals are also related to career effectiveness (Saks & Ashforth, 1997).

The next section will present some major studies in the onboarding area and their findings about how to classify what is needed in an onboarding process. An overview of the authors and works that will be covered can be found in table 2.1.

Table 2.1: In the following section these authors and their corresponding works about onboarding will be presented.

Author	**Article**	**Year**
Van Maanen, J., & Schein, E.	Toward a theory of organizational socialization.	1979
Jones, G. R.	Socialization tactics, Self-Efficacy and Newcomers' Adjustment to Organizations.	1986
Cooper-Thomas, H. D., et al.	The Newcomer Understanding and Integration Scale: Psychometric Evidence Across Six Samples.	2019
Wenger, E., McDermott, R. A., & Snyder, W.	Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge.	2002

2.2 Current onboarding research

As earlier mentioned, onboarding is quite a young field. One of the first major articles written about this subject is "Toward a theory of organizational socialization" by Van Maanen and Schein (1979). In this article Van Maanen and Schein discuss the culture of work organizations. As a person commits themselves to work in an organization, they also commit themselves to a way of life connected to that organization. The life, or culture, of an organization is passed from generation to generation as new people start at the organization and are incorporated in both the work and the life of the organization. To do this in a more controlled and planned way, many companies have created onboarding programs with the explicit goal to make this process from organizational outsider to organizational insider shorter and easier, both for the individual and the organization itself. These programs can look very different depending on what the organizations want to convey. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) built a theoretical base for studies around organizational socialization by developing six dimensions of tactics that companies choose both consciously and unconsciously while creating the onboarding experience for their newcomers. The six tactics that were developed can be found in table 2.2.

Table 2.2: The six tactics for organizational socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Tactics	
Formal	Informal
In groups	Individually
Standard set of experiences	Randomly determined steps
Fixed time frame	Variable time frame
Serial (together with established role models)	Disjunctive (without role models)
Investiture (acceptance of new employees' unique qualities)	Divestiture (strict standards of behaviours)

The two values on every tactic are meant to be seen as polar opposites on a continuum, as onboarding programs do not have to be fully one or the other. It is then discussed what tactics give rise to what kind of behaviour or response from the newly employed. It is the different ways that the information is shaped and delivered, by using the different tactics, that gives rise to different responses (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). They classify the responses into custodianship, content innovation or role innovation. The custodial response accepts the status quo and fights to preserve the role as it is. The content innovator seeks to improve and streamline, while the role innovator seeks to redefine the entire role. They also discuss the tactics that produce different responses, for example that collective socialization is more likely to produce a custodial response, as the group act as a constraint on the individual, i.e. the group suppresses extreme views of individuals. It should be pointed out that these tactics and the responses are only discussed in theory, and not studied in practice in this article.

It is also discussed what kind of organizations are more likely to use what kinds of tactics. One example that is discussed is that organizations that take in a lot of new members at the same time, and where the profession is relatively stable in its practice, like police for example, are more likely to use collective and formal tactics. This line of reasoning coincides with the thought of Mintzberg (1979) who concludes that the older and bigger the organization is, the more bureaucratic it is. Even if this might not always be the case, stable professions are often part of older organizations, and organizations with a lot of newcomers are generally bigger in size. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the onboarding in an organization is affected by the level of bureaucracy within the organization.

The article by Van Maanen and Schein can be seen as the groundwork for most studies in the field of onboarding and organizational socialization. Jones (1986) took the tactics from their article, grouped them and defined a continuum of institutionalized and individualized tactics. The institutionalized programs use the tactics formal, collective, sequential, fixed, serial and investiture, and lead to more custodial role orientations. Other companies let their new hires immediately start "working" and let them figure things out on the way, the individualized way. This way of organizing onboarding uses the tactics of informal, individual, random, variable, disjunctive and divestiture, and leads to innovative role orientations (Jones, 1986). Later studies have shown that employees going through the institutionalized socialization tactics tend to experience more positive job attitudes, better fit to the job and lower levels of turnover than the ones who go through individualized tactics (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). It has also been shown that the institutionalized tactics are negatively related to role innovation (Ashford & Black, 1996), as the employees are expected to keep to the status quo in a stricter sense.

In recent times, more emphasis has been put on the real-life aspects of onboarding. All organizations who have some kind of onboarding program build them through a series of activities, where everything from getting greeted and picked up on your first day to formal lectures are examples of activities. The content within these activities is supposed to help the newcomer be able to perform his or her job. The earlier work focused on the big picture of the organization of onboarding programs and tactics for these programs, while the later work has focused on the content that fills up these onboarding programs. Several studies have been done on what kind of topics need to be covered before someone is ready to take on a job. Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019) reviewed four different ways to classify the content needed to start a new job, see figure 2.1. Their review of earlier classifications showed overlap between several domains in the examined scales for measuring of newcomer socialization. For example, in the article by Chao et al. (1994) the language domain mixes items about organization, group, trade and profession.

Figure 2.1: Overview of the four ways to classify socialization content reviewed by Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019).

The goal of the study of Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019) was to establish core domains of newcomer socialization content, as well as creating a clear and robust revised measure for the progress of socialization. After review, Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019) settled on the three domains organization, role and relationship. All information a newcomer needs to be able to perform their work is part of one of these three domains. These three domains are relatively similar to the domains of Haueter, Macan, and Winter (2003), with the most important difference being relationship instead of group, since not all newcomers will work in a group in today's labour market (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2019). They are also quite similar to the categories of Taormina (1997) with the exception for the category "Future prospects", as they found this unnecessary for new employees.

While the tactics formulated by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) can be observed over the whole course of an onboarding program, the categories of Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019) can be used both by the organization and the newcomer to assess the socialization process. Within each of the three categories organization, role and relationship are five items that can be used either to assess the progress of socialization, or to just facilitate conversations between the newcomer and the manager or other concerned part of the organization. These items can be found in table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Question items for role, relationship and organization (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2019).

Role
I understand how to perform the tasks that make up my job
I understand which job tasks and responsibilities have priority
I know what my supervisor considers as good performance
I know what it takes to do well
I understand what all the duties of my job entail
Relationship
Other workers have helped me on the job in various ways
My coworkers are usually willing to offer their assistance or advice
Most of my coworkers have accepted me as a member of this company
My relationships with other workers in this company are very good
I believe most of my coworkers like me
Organization
I am familiar with the history of this organization
I know the internal structure of this organization
I am familiar with the unwritten rules of how things are done at this organization
I understand this organization's objectives and goals
I know who the most influential people are in my organization

2.2.1 Mentorship

To get a mentor or buddy can be part of an onboarding program. Kram and Isabella (1985) examined positive effects of mentorship and found that a good mentor can support for example psychosocial and career development. Bauer and Erdogan

(2011) bring up that an organizational insider, for example a mentor, has a very important role in helping the newcomer to adjust to their new workplace. A mentor can help the newcomer with learning the organizational structure, be there to answer questions, and guide through work tasks, and by this improve the new employees' adaption to the job. Even more recently Sluss and Thompson (2012) have examined the relationship between a supervisor and employee and found that the socialization and newcomers' adjustment benefits from that. On the other hand the new employees' job satisfaction did not benefit from the supervisory socialization tactics. Offering a buddy is very beneficial for a new employee according to the employees' themselves (Klein et al., 2015).

A mentor helps with all three parts, organization, role and relationship that can measure the progress of a newcomer (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2019).

According to these works, a mentor seems like a beneficial thing to include in an onboarding. Something to be aware of is that a mentorship or supervisory support could take a lot of time.

2.3 Outsider to insider

As stated, onboarding is extremely important for companies to keep skilled new employees. When going through onboarding, the new employee is supposed to transition from organizational outsider to organizational insider (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011), becoming a full member of the organization. In the previous section, different ways to plan this road were presented. The question now is what being an insider means, what defines this threshold of being in, out, or on the verge?

Communities of practice is a framework for talking about groups of people who share a domain of concern or problems, who explore this domain and its solutions together (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). This way of defining a group of people fits well in with the kind of organization that Aptiv is.

2.3.1 Communities of practice

Communities of practice do not have to be built by people who work together every day, the most important part is that they share a set of problems and a passion to solve them (Wenger et al., 2002). These kind of communities have been around ever since humankind started collaborating on common problems, but are now more important than ever. Organizations in today's world have realized that knowledge has become the key to success and that cultivating communities of practice that arise spontaneously is a way to facilitate learning within the organization.

Before starting to talk about these communities, it is important to define the term knowledge. A common problem is the confusion between knowledge and information (Nonaka, 1994; Wenger et al., 2002). Information is something static that can easily be stored in places like big wikis (Wenger et al., 2002). Knowledge on the other hand is more than what can be written down. Information can become knowledge if picked up and "carried" by a person. Knowledge is created not only from information but also from connection to, and interaction with, other people.

Knowledge can be divided into two distinct categories. First there is the explicit knowledge that can be transferred through systematic language (Nonaka, 1994). This has a lot in common with information and can be written down and saved. The second part of knowledge is what is called tacit knowledge. This knowledge is part of a person and is hard to formalize and communicate, it is something one knows how to do, for example how to ride a bike. Tacit knowledge needs interaction and informal learning between people to be transmitted and created (Wenger et al., 2002). This kind of knowledge is from an organizational standpoint the most important, as it is needed for problem solving of complex proportions. This type of knowledge is also hard for competitors to replicate as it lives within people and in their interactions with each other.

The nature of knowledge creates the need for places like communities of practice to spread and develop knowledge within a certain field. These communities of practice can have many different forms, be big or small, structured or unregulated, spontaneous or intentional, among other categories (Wenger et al., 2002). Even though these communities can have very different structures, there are still three fundamental elements that are needed for them to be called communities of practice:

1. A shared *domain* is needed to create a subject for people to gather round. The domain needs to be well-defined to make it clear what is fitting to share and discuss within the community.

2. The *community* is a big part of this. Knowledge and learning is something inherently social and a strong community built on respect and trust give its participants the courage to discuss misconceptions or new ideas in a constructive way.

3. A shared *practice* builds the frame of communication needed to facilitate discussions within the community. This practice consists of ideas, experiences, abbreviations, information, documents etc that are shared between the participants as a way to maintain and develop the domain.

Within the engineering field, the creation of new knowledge and innovation is crucial, without it companies fall behind and get ousted (Nonaka, 1994). Communities of practice are places for knowledge creation and are a natural part of organizations, whether they are recognised as such or informal. The belonging to these communities is a way of classifying if someone is an organizational insider or not.

In figure 2.2 a visualisation of different levels of participation in a community of practice can be seen. Wenger et al. (2002) describe how people in the community take part in the work in various ways. The outsider is not at all in the community. The peripheral members observe what happens in the community but do not actively take part in it. There can be different reason for this, maybe they are stakeholders in some other way and want to be updated about what happens, maybe they are not interested in the current work but would be active if the focus shifted, maybe they are on their way in. The active members take part in the community and the core group are beside active also leaders (Wenger et al., 2002). A person's position in the community can fluctuate depending on experience and interest which creates movement between the circles.

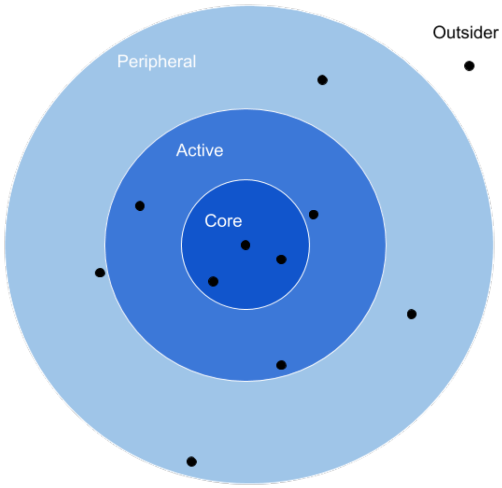


Figure 2.2: A visualisation of being an outsider, peripheral member, active member or belonging to the core group of a community of practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

In earlier work Lave and Wenger (1991) describe how an outsider can move into a community by legitimate peripheral participation. The method for a newcomer to be part of the community is by first observe, then to participate. Without active participation it is not possible to be an insider. The way to be active is to begin with low-risk tasks and then continue with more complex tasks.

The way of learning things and beginning to take part in a community of practice through legitimate peripheral participation can be seen as a form of apprenticeship (Lave & Wenger, 1991). An apprentice learns from a master by starting to observe the work being done and how to socialize in the profession, and then continues by doing some parts of the work. To fully master the profession the apprentice must actively participatw in doing the tasks, to both absorb and be absorbed by the culture of the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The tasks can be learned simultaneously and by parts, but not necessarily in the order they occur, before putting them all together in mastery.

3
Aptiv

As earlier presented, Aptiv is a global company with sites in many countries. Aptiv is present in five continents with either or both technical sites and production sites (Aptiv, n.d.). Aptiv is operating in the automotive industry by developing software for autonomous vehicles by the use of cameras and/or radar. Radars are also produced by Aptiv. Another part of the company deals with the cables in cars, an area called Power and Signal solutions. A third area of Aptiv is User Experience (UX). The part of Aptiv in focus for this report is the one developing software, belonging to the area Active Safety (AS). SFOs work in the area of AS and therefore the following facts are only representative for that part of the company.

This study focuses on three Europe sites in Gothenburg, Krakow and Wuppertal and maps the onboarding processes at these sites. There are some general guidelines from the company on what should be considered during the onboarding of new employees at these and other sites.

The information presented here comes partly from documentation about onboarding found at internal sites of Aptiv, regarding the general guidelines. The other information source was interviews with persons working at the three Aptiv sites included in the study. The persons interviewed have different roles such as HR, Engineering Group Manager (EGM), training-responsible and employee in the AS-area. Some site-specific documentation was also sent from those interviewees. More details about the methodology regarding this can be found in section 4.2.

The data presented here is regarding the present (spring 2020) and may change in the future. During the recent years the company has been recruiting quite heavily due to having procured a lot of big projects from various car companies. Due to the spread of COVID-19 and not starting as many new projects the recruitment pace may slow down.

3.1 Onboarding at Aptiv

There is a general onboarding Aptiv website with some documentation regarding onboarding in different languages. Here templates for welcome emails to the new employees can be found, as well as a checklist for the manager of things that should be prepared for the newcomer. There are also some guidelines for a buddy-system. Every new employee should get a buddy assigned whose purpose is to help the newcomer to get assimilated into the team and the office. The global buddy guidelines can be found in appendix A.

On the general website there are also country pages regarding the onboarding for some countries, including Germany and Poland, but not Sweden.

3.2 Presentation of offices

The three different offices in Gothenburg, Krakow and Wuppertal will be presented here. The division between the offices is because each office has certain characteristics that are needed to be able to explain why things might differ between them. In table 3.1 the following data is presented: # of employees in total, # of new employees 2019, # employees to EGM and # HR. The category # employees to EGM means how many employees that are connected to the EGM responsible for the SFOs at the site. # HR means the number of people working in the HR department at the site.

Table 3.1: Overview of the size of each office and configurations of employees.

Site	# employees	# new employees 2019	# employees to EGM	# HR
GOT	280	30	60	4
TCK	3000	1000	30	45
WUP	700	100	12+3	15

3.2.1 Gothenburg

Right now there are three offices in Gothenburg containing different areas of the company. In total that makes 280 employees. The two offices that do not contain the AS-area will not be involved in this study as there are no SFOs working there. The Gothenburg office containing the AS-area has around 100 employees and will be the one considered in this report.

The HR department is the same for all offices in the Gothenburg area.

The AS-office has an open office configuration with desks and some conference rooms. There is no restaurant in the building but a kitchen facility with microwaves.

The language used for work and documentation is English but during breaks and if there are only Swedish speakers present, Swedish is used.

The background of new employees are mainly people directly from the university. Many of them have also been working there before as summer interns or as part-time workers beside their studies.

In the team where the SFOs are a part, the number of employees to the EGM is

60 which can be seen in table 3.1. That is many of the 100 employees in the office. The number of SFOs among them is 22. Recently, around 4-5 new SFOs have been hired every year.

3.2.2 Krakow

The office in Krakow is very big and around 3000 employees work there in many different business areas. Last year (2019) around 100 new employees began every month. The amount of people working in HR is therefore quite big as seen in table 3.1.

The office consists of several buildings. The general office configuration is an open office with individual desks. Higher managers have their own rooms. There are kitchen facilities in the different buildings as well as restaurants on the ground floors.

The languages used are Polish and English, but mostly Polish.

Many new employees in the AS-area come directly from the university but some have some experience from previous employments.

Regarding the role of SFO, the employees having this role belong to one of two teams whereof one of them comprises 30 employees, seen in table 3.1. This team has an EGM that recruited 4-5 new employees as SFOs last year. The two teams include both Feature Function Owners (FFO) and SFOs, the numbers of each are not very clear. Beside those two teams, there are no more SFOs in Krakow.

For some training included in onboarding, the internal internet site Aptiv Academy is used.

3.2.3 Wuppertal

The office in Wuppertal contains around 700 employees distributed in different business areas. There is also a branch in Munich that belongs to the Wuppertal office. During the last two years around 200 new employees have been recruited whereof around eight per year as SFOs.

The office configuration in Wuppertal is a set of cubicles four and four, on some floors. A transformation has started to create an open office configuration to be able to work according to SCRUM-teams so some floors look like that. The building has a restaurant in it.

The languages used in Wuppertal depend on situation. For work and documentation internally it is English. Sometimes people can begin to talk German to each other but if someone does not understand they switch to English. German is used for contact with some local customers who demand it.

Many new employees in the AS-area come directly from university, but some have earlier experience.

HR is a department with a number of specialisations including talent acquisition and training. Around 15 people work here according to table 3.1.

All the SFOs are in the same team with the same EGM. That team consists of 12+3 persons, as can be seen in table 3.1. This means that 12 of those employees sit in Wuppertal and 3 of them in Munich.

For some trainings included in onboarding, the internal internet site Aptiv Academy is used.

4
Methods

This chapter will describe the process of choosing and defining the methodology. At first a common research outline is presented. Then the two different phases of the method are presented in more detail.

To answer the research questions, a method divided into two phases was created. Phase 1 focused on mapping the onboarding processes at the different sites and then answering RQ1. This was done by both reviewing documents and interviewing several people of interest at every site. Phase 2 focused on informal aspects connected to the onboarding of SFOs, answering RQ2. To answer RQ3 the results from both phase 1 and 2 were needed. It is therefore no additional method of data collection for this question.

Because of the aim of this project and the initial information regarding the topics available at the company a qualitative approach was chosen. When coming to the analysis in phase 2, a deductive methodology was found most suitable.

The two phases are quite different from each other since they are supposed to answer two different kinds of questions. What they have in common is the qualitative approach and interviews as a way of collecting data.

4.1 Research outline

The aim of this study is to answer the research questions about the onboarding planned for new employees, informal parts of it, what similarities and differences there might be and how this facilitates the journey from organizational outsider to insider for a new SFO. To be able to answer these questions, a qualitative methodology was chosen. One reason for choosing a qualitative approach is that it can help to explore people's views and get deeper understanding of a phenomena (Creswell, 2009; Esaiasson et al., 2017; Yin, 2016). When doing a qualitative study, peoples' opinions are in focus and they are studied by for example conducting face-to-face interviews, doing observations and reading documentation (Creswell, 2009). A qualitative rather than quantitative approach is better when the possible answers are not known beforehand. If the answers are unknown it is not possible to create questions with fixed answers that are used in quantitative research. A visualisation of the produced methodology can be seen in figure 4.1.

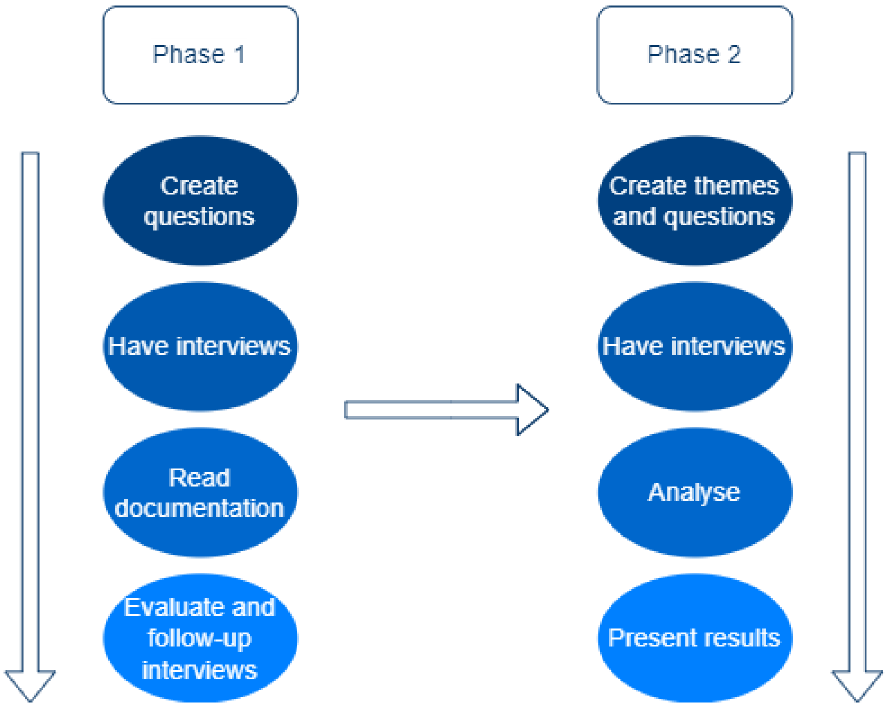


Figure 4.1: A visualisation to explain the method used. The method is divided into two phases that are similar but with different goals.

One drawback to a qualitative approach is that it is often not possible to get that many opinions when doing longer interviews. There is also no statistical confirmation about the results (Esaiasson et al., 2017).

The strengths, especially if interviews are chosen, are that it is possible to ask follow-up questions which can deepen the picture, and it is possible to examine an unexplored field (Creswell, 2009).

To strengthen the credibility, a triangulation of methods was chosen (Yin, 2016). A triangulation means that three methods are chosen to study the same phenomenon. The three methods chosen were interviews in two phases and document review. In phase 1 less structured interviews were held with more people with different responsibilities. In phase 2 only EGMs and mentors were interviewed. The document review was part of phase 1. The two phases later on became very different and answered on one of each of the first two research questions. From here onwards they are therefore split and will remain so during the report.

From the beginning the plan was to do a triangulation between interviews, documentation review and observations. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 across the world, the observations became impossible to perform. It was then decided to extend the interview-part of the study by doing them in two phases.

4.2 Phase 1

Phase 1 aimed at answering research question 1:

Map and discuss the onboarding process a new SFO undergoes at the offices in Gothenburg, Wuppertal and Krakow respectively.

To be able to answer this, both documentation review and interviews were chosen for collecting the data. The interviews had an informal character. At the beginning the goal was to read the appropriate documentation before the interviews, but this was not always possible and will be discussed further below.

4.2.1 Document review

When mapping the onboarding process at each site responsible persons were asked to send the researchers any material and written documentation of the onboarding process. This documentation was in some cases sent before the interviews, sometimes explained during the interviews and otherwise received and read after the interview. The questions proposed during the interview could depend on whether documentation was sent and read beforehand or not, and was one of the reasons for keeping the interviews unstructured.

4.2.2 Interviews

The interviews in phase 1 were done as a pilot-study. The goal to map the processes was clear, but the persons responsible and having the knowledge about it was not. When mapping the onboarding process, the perspective was from the planners' point of view. The interviews were therefore held with the EGMs responsible for the onboarding of SFOs, and those responsible for onboarding at the HR-department at each site. To find the persons that were able to answer our questions the method "snowball-effect" (Esaiasson et al., 2017; Yin, 2016) was chosen. The "snowball-effect" means finding relevant persons by asking previous participants about people who are connected to the question and might know more things of relevance. By this method those responsible for training were also found at each site.

It was not obvious who to talk to at the start of the study. Phase 1 of this study has been run entirely from the Gothenburg office, which meant that the search for people was a big part, as meeting in person and asking people at other sites was not possible. The supervisor at Aptiv gave the names of the people responsible for intro-trainings in Gothenburg and the EGM of the SFOs. During their interviews about the onboarding in Gothenburg they also provided names that could be of interest at the other sites. These people were then contacted and were either of interest and then interviewed, or not of interest and then forwarded us to other possible people of interest.

After the two first interviews in Gothenburg it became clear that there were three roles of interest when it comes to onboarding of SFOs:

- HR responsible for new hires
- EGM responsible for SFOs
- Person or persons responsible for trainings

In table 4.1 all the found people of interest are presented. The person or persons responsible for training were holding different positions at the different sites. During some of the interviews more than one person with the role was present.

Table 4.1: Roles included in the phase 1 interviews.

Role	**Interview Phase 1**
EGM GOT	x
Training EGM GOT	x
HR GOT	x
EGM TCK	x
Training HR TCK	x
Training TAK TCK	x
HR TCK	x
EGM WUP	x
Training HR WUP	x
HR WUP	x

The interviews in phase 1 were not structured as they were used to find information, not for comparison. This means that not all questions were asked to all persons, the questions were not worded exactly the same and it was not always the same person asking the questions. However, a question guide, see appendix B, was used to provide a semi structure. The interviews started with some small-talk and introducing the project. In the invitation to the interviews the consent form, see appendix D, was attached with a small introduction as well, but to be sure about the consent it was also a part of the start of the interviews. The first interview question was more open-ended by asking them to describe the whole process of the onboarding. With time and practice the researchers learned how to ask questions and developed their interview skills.

All interviews were audio-recorded and notes were taken by hand by both researchers. Soon after the interview, the recordings were listened to and detailed notes were taken. Both of the researchers took their own detailed notes from the same recording. The different versions of detailed notes were then compared and discussed to see if there were any points of the conversation that were interpreted differently by the two researchers. If there were points that were unclear or if more information was needed an email was drafted with clarifying or additional questions.

4.3 Phase 2

Phase 2 aimed at answering research question 2:

Exemplify informal aspects connected to the onboarding of new SFOs.

In phase 2 six interviews were held, three with EGMs and three with mentors. The goal of these interviews was to go deeper into some interesting topics from phase 1. The interviews were then transcribed, analysed and coded for interesting themes. These themes were then grouped and reduced to three major ones: organization, SFO-role and mentorship. An overview of the process is presented in figure 4.2 and will be explained in detail further down.

The interviewed EGMs were the current EGMs of SFOs at the sites in Gothenburg, Krakow and Wuppertal. The EGMs were then asked to recommend two to three persons from their team at their site who had acted as mentors at least once. One person per list was randomly selected and asked about participation in an interview. If the first person gave a positive answer, this was the person who was interviewed as mentor from that site, if the answer was negative the next person was contacted. In summary, three EGMs and three mentors, one from each site, were interviewed.

Figure 4.2: A schematic view of the process used in phase 2.

4.3.1 Input from phase 1

After phase 1 was done, the gathered information was reviewed together with the supervisor from Aptiv to find interesting topics to analyse more carefully in phase 2. It was an unstructured discussion relying a lot on what the researchers had found interesting or surprising from the interviews in phase 1. This discussion led to the decision to focus on organizational structure, the view of the SFO-role and mentorship. All these topics connected to the onboarding of new SFOs and were interesting to examine.

4.3.2 Creation of interview guides

After the interesting topics had been chosen, two interview guides were created, one for EGMs and one for mentors. Since the topics covered needed some time for reflection it was decided that the participants should get the questions one day before the interview. Because of this, emails to both invite and then present the questions were created to make sure all interviewees got the same information.

The interviews fell somewhere between structured interviews and qualitative interviews (Yin, 2016). Two guides were created with a specific set of questions to be asked to EGMs and mentors respectively, all questions can be found in appendix C. Both EGMs and mentors got questions about the organizational structure at their offices and about mentorship to be able to compare the views between the two professions. This way of creating a questionnaire is what is characteristic for structured interviews to make comparison possible (Yin, 2016). The questions were made to be open and give the possibility for reflection, therefore yes and no questions were avoided. The goal was to ask short questions and get long answers from the interviewees. This is something that is usual for qualitative interviews where the researchers want the participants to answer the questions with their own words (Yin, 2016).

Both guides and emails were written in both English and Swedish as the interviews were to be held in the most natural language depending on the situation, Swedish when the interviewee was Swedish and English otherwise.

4.3.3 Trial step

A trial interview with a mentor from the site in Gothenburg was held to test out the questions as well as testing if one hour was enough time set aside. After the test interview, the mentor also read the questions for the EGMs and gave feedback on them.

From the feedback from the mentor the questions were reworked to better suit the purpose of addressing organizational structure, the view of the SFO-role and mentorship. The final questions can be found in appendix C.

4.3.4 The interviews

All participants were invited to their interview via email. They were all sent identical emails to make sure everyone got the same information. The day before the booked interview, the questions were sent to the interviewee together with a request to please read them through.

All interviews in phase 2 were held over Skype with camera to try to imitate face-to-face conversations as much as possible.

The two researchers held three interviews each, researcher 1 held all interviews with EGMs while researcher 2 held all interviews with mentors. During the interview only the researcher who was responsible asked questions while the other listened and took notes. In the end of the interview there was a possibility for open questions from both researchers and the interviewee.

4.3.5 Transcription of interviews

All interviews were transcribed in a light way, meaning that filler words like “um”, “ah” and similar were omitted and that discussions unrelated to the topics were skipped. The researcher who was responsible for asking the questions was the one to do the transcribing.

4.3.6 Coding of transcripts

After all interviews had been transcribed they were coded. Here the data was deconstructed to facilitate analysis (Yin, 2016). Initially both researchers coded the same two interviews, one with an EGM and one with a mentor. The coding was then compared and discussed to make sure that similar codes were to be used for the same things. After this the responsible researcher coded their own interviews using a program specifically for coding of transcripts, Nvivo.

Two types of codes were used in parallel during this process. When both researchers started by coding two interviews each, open coding was used (Yin, 2016). This means that the codes were created as the transcripts were read. The codes that were created during the very first interview could then be reused for the later interviews, but new codes could also be created if needed. The other system that was used in parallel was based on the domains of onboarding as developed by Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019). In this system only three codes were used: organization, role and relationship.

4.3.7 Finding of themes

After all transcripts had been coded (the EGMs by researcher 1 and the mentors by researcher 2), the files were merged together in Nvivo. Here the reconstruction of the data took place (Yin, 2016). The goal of this step was to make sure all transcripts used the same kind of coding to highlight comparison of opinions and experiences between the interviewees.

The first step was to merge open codes that were the same but with slightly different wording. After this, codes that were deemed very similar were either merged or recoded to a code that mirrored the combination of the two. Codes that were considered to be too broad were broken down and the quotes recoded to more fitting codes, while too narrow codes were removed and the quotes recoded.

The codes built on Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019) were used to get a feeling for which of the three domains organization, role and relationship were talked about most frequently.

When all open codes had been worked through the big themes were found. This was done by looking at what codes appeared in at least five of the interviews coupled with which codes had been used the highest number of times. In the end there were three major themes with several subcategories that were used to find quotes to exemplify different experiences and views.

4.4 Discussion of methods

The whole construction of the methodology in this thesis has been affected by the extraordinary state of the world in 2020. In the beginning of this work the plan was to visit all sites to do interviews face-to-face and to do observations. These plans had to be revised during the project due to the spread of the corona virus and the subsequent closing of borders. This led to the extension of the interview-part of the study into two separate and distinctly different phases, where notably phase 2 was done exclusively via Skype.

The two phases in this project are noticeably different. They have two different aims and therefore utilize the tool of interviews in two very different ways. The goal of phase 1 was to find information. Here the interviews in Gothenburg were held face-to-face while the interviews with personnel from other sites were held via Skype without camera. This was not seen as a problem since the goal of the interviews was to get objective facts about the onboarding processes at the sites. Different questions were asked to people with different responsibilities to be able to map the processes as accurately as possible.

Even though only one person was interviewed regarding a special part of the onboarding in phase 1 the result was found trustworthy when it could be compared to sent documentation which is a method to increase reliability (Yin, 2016). When there was no documentation, the information was trusted because of the strategic choice of interviewees (Esaiasson et al., 2017).

During phase 1 all work was done at the site in Gothenburg. This opened up for the possibility of talking about the thesis with more people in an unofficial way that was not recorded. If there were uncertainties about parts that people from the sites in Krakow and Wuppertal talked about during their interviews, there were the possibilities of sending emails or ask for another Skype-meeting to get clarity. This was done, also with the interviewees in Gothenburg, but in addition to this clarifications could also be given by people with other roles at the Gothenburg office. This further validates the results from Gothenburg, but does not take away the credibility from the results from other sites.

In phase 2 the aim was to exemplify different views of some interesting topics connected to the onboarding of SFOs. For this aim it was decided that EGMs and mentors should be interviewed, EGMs since they have a lot of responsibility for the onboarding of new SFOs and mentors since they are the ones who have most contact with the newly employed. Two interview guides were created, the reason for some of the questions to be different for EGMs and mentors is that it was interesting to ask about the responsibilities that fall within each of those specific roles.

One objection to the chosen number of people to interview in phase 2 is that they are very few, only one mentor and one EGM at each site. This means that the data could possibly not be used to draw conclusions of “the view” of a certain topic at a certain site. At the same time the EGMs chosen are three of the four EGMs responsible for all of the SFOs at those sites. This can be seen as a strategic selection of people (Esaiasson et al., 2017). Those EGMs hold all but one possible view on the asked questions. The choice of mentors can also be seen as a strategic selection since they were chosen on recommendation that they all should have been mentors at least once. Even if the selection of interviewees cannot be seen as representative for all possible views on the topic, it is not a problem since the goal is to exemplify and not find every possible view. To be able to tell if the number of interviewees is enough theoretical saturation can be used as a measure (Esaiasson et al., 2017). If it is found that the same views reoccur, the theoretical saturation is met and the opinions found are probably all possible views on the matter.

All interviews in phase 2 were held over Skype, even for the interviewees from Gothenburg. This was decided since the aim of phase 2 was to be able to compare opinions and views and it therefore was important to keep the interviews as similar as possible. The interviews were held with camera to make it possible to at least see facial expressions and body language to some degree. All interviews were held in the language that felt most natural for the situation. The people from the office in Gothenburg were interviewed in Swedish as this would be the most natural in the context of a Swedish interviewer and interviewee. Even though the interviews needed to be as similar as possible, it was considered more necessary that the interviewees felt comfortable in the situation and could express themselves freely.

The questions in phase 2 were constructed to be open-ended and give the possibility for long and reflective answers. It was deemed necessary to send the questions to the interviewees one day before the interview to give them some time to reflect. This approach of course has the possible problem of people creating answers beforehand that are not truthful, but the risk for this happening here was considered small as the topics were not very sensitive.

To be able to collect the data from the interviews according to common research ethics a consent form was created, sent and approved by all interviewees in both phases. In this it was stated how the data from the interviews was going to be used, called informed consent (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). There are ethical dimensions to consider while doing personal interviews, personal data must be handled with care (Swedish Ethical Review Authority, n.d.) and to be able to get to know a person's true opinion you need to have their trust (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). The consent form was one way to try to get their trust and show transparency of the handling of the data. The questions in the interviews were also reviewed after the trial interview to make sure that they were not too personal. For example a question to the mentors about the leadership style of their EGM was removed after the trial interview since this information might be sensitive. To handle the confidentiality promised in the consent form, the answers are not tracked to individuals with their full name and responsibility. To be able to fulfill this, the Swedish answers in the results are presented translated to English. All EGMs and mentors also get a randomized number to make it harder to track a certain answer to a specific person. All of these precautions are to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees within Aptiv since this is where the confidentiality might be compromised. We have taken as many precautions as possible to protect the confidentiality of our interviewees.

The coding of the transcripts from the interviews in phase 2 could be challenged. The reason for that is that the inductive approach makes it possible to find many different themes. The reason for trusting the coding is the systematic process of it in several steps with comparison between the two researchers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). When working in parallel and then comparing the findings and finding out that categories may overlap even though different words have been used to describe the same phenomenon strengthened the credibility.

5

Results and discussion - Phase 1

Below the result from phase 1 is presented. To get a better understanding of the onboarding that is done, the result is divided according to site. Then every site is subdivided into the roles responsible for different parts of the onboarding. The focus for phase 1 is RQ1: *Map and discuss the onboarding process a new SFO undergoes at the offices in Gothenburg, Wuppertal and Krakow respectively.* First the mapping is presented and then the chapter ends with a discussion.

5.1 Phase 1 - Mapping

When starting to look for the people to get information from in phase 1, the first groups of people that were found were HR and Engineering Group Managers, EGMs. When collecting more data trainers and mentors were also found. The mentors were not asked anything in phase 1, but it was clear that they existed in some form at every site.

To make it easier to overview the onboarding that takes place it has been divided into the key responsible parts:

- HR
- EGM
- Mentor
- Training

All these four can be found at every site even if the training part is handled by different persons or teams at the different sites.

The onboarding process at each site is first presented with a visualisation and then the parts of each responsible person are presented.

5.2 Gothenburg

As mentioned in the Aptiv chapter the Gothenburg office have around 100 employees in the AS-area. The site is the smallest one in the study, and it is one of the smallest technical sites in Europe. There are around 30 new employees per year including 4-5 that get the role of SFO. An overview of the onboarding process is presented in figure 5.1. The onboarding process is mostly organized from the nearest manager which can be seen in green. One speciality in the onboarding for SFOs is the training week for SFOs. This is special since it differs from the onboarding of other SYS-engineers.

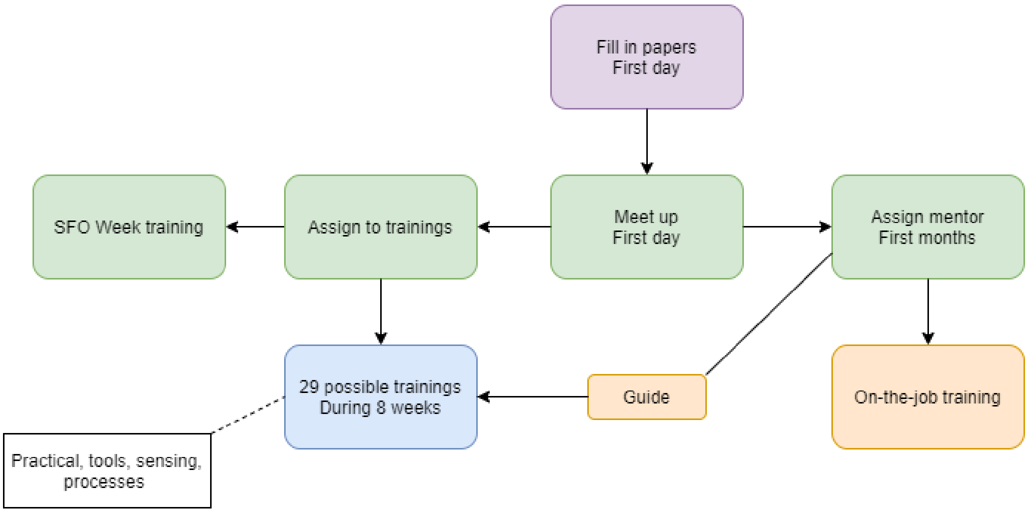


Figure 5.1: An overview of the onboarding of SFOs in Gothenburg. Purple means HR responsibility, green means EGM responsibility, blue means training team responsibility and orange means mentor responsibility.

5.2.1 HR

In Gothenburg there are four full time employees working within the AS & UX (User Experience) area. However there is only one of them that works actively with onboarding. The HR responsibility lies more in the recruiting process than in the onboarding process. In the onboarding the HR-department take care of the new employee during the first hours of their first day. During this time the employee signs necessary papers related to the job and gets some information about time reporting and other practical information. The HR-department has a checklist that is given to the supervisors when they have a new employee. When the EGM has fulfilled the tasks in the checklist the HR-department take it back for storage.

5.2.2 EGM

The EGM get a checklist from HR and is responsible for that the new employee does the things on the checklist. The checklist includes mostly practicalities like getting access to systems and tools. This is done both before and after the first day for the employee. The employee is given a mentor that the EGM has been choosing to match the project, role and competences that the new employee needs. The EGM is also responsible for assigning the employee to trainings. There are 29 possible trainings during a period of eight weeks. The EGM invites the new employee to the trainings and the mentor guides the new employee as to which trainings are most important for their work.

5.2.3 Mentor

The mentor that is assigned by the EGM is responsible for daily questions of various kinds. This person is the one guiding through project specific programs. One main responsibility is guiding the new employee to valuable contacts in the organization. Often, but far from always, the new employee is supposed to take over some or all of the work tasks from the mentor, because the mentor has too much to do or is getting new responsibilities.

5.2.4 Training

As can be seen in figure 5.1 there are 29 trainings that the training team is responsible for. The training team consists of the EGMs. They are responsible for deciding which trainings there should be, which person should be responsible for each training and making sure that the training will be held. The 29 training opportunities are distributed on four prioritisation periods, each period is two weeks which makes it a total of eight weeks. The whole set of trainings is supposed to be held one time in the autumn and two times during the spring.

The people holding the trainings are experts in different areas. Both the persons and the topics of the trainings are chosen by EGMs. The experts use their own material and execute the trainings. They book a time slot during their two week period, make an event in the common training calendar and invite the EGMs. The EGMs then forward the invitation to whoever they find suitable for taking the training. So the EGM forward the invitation to their new employees they find in need for the training. The system of trainings is quite new, therefore not only new employees can attend but also more experienced colleagues who may not have attended them before. The invitation is extended to experienced colleagues if there are extra seats.

5.3 Krakow

Technical center Krakow is one of the largest sites in Europe. It contains many different areas. The general onboarding process from the HR-department is the same for all new employees, regardless of the field they will work in. The only division is between Polish and non-Polish speakers. In figure 5.2 the onboarding process for a new SFO can be seen. The three obligatory trainings in one of the blue boxes is specific for engineers. Other specifics for SFOs depend on their EGM and what project they will work in.

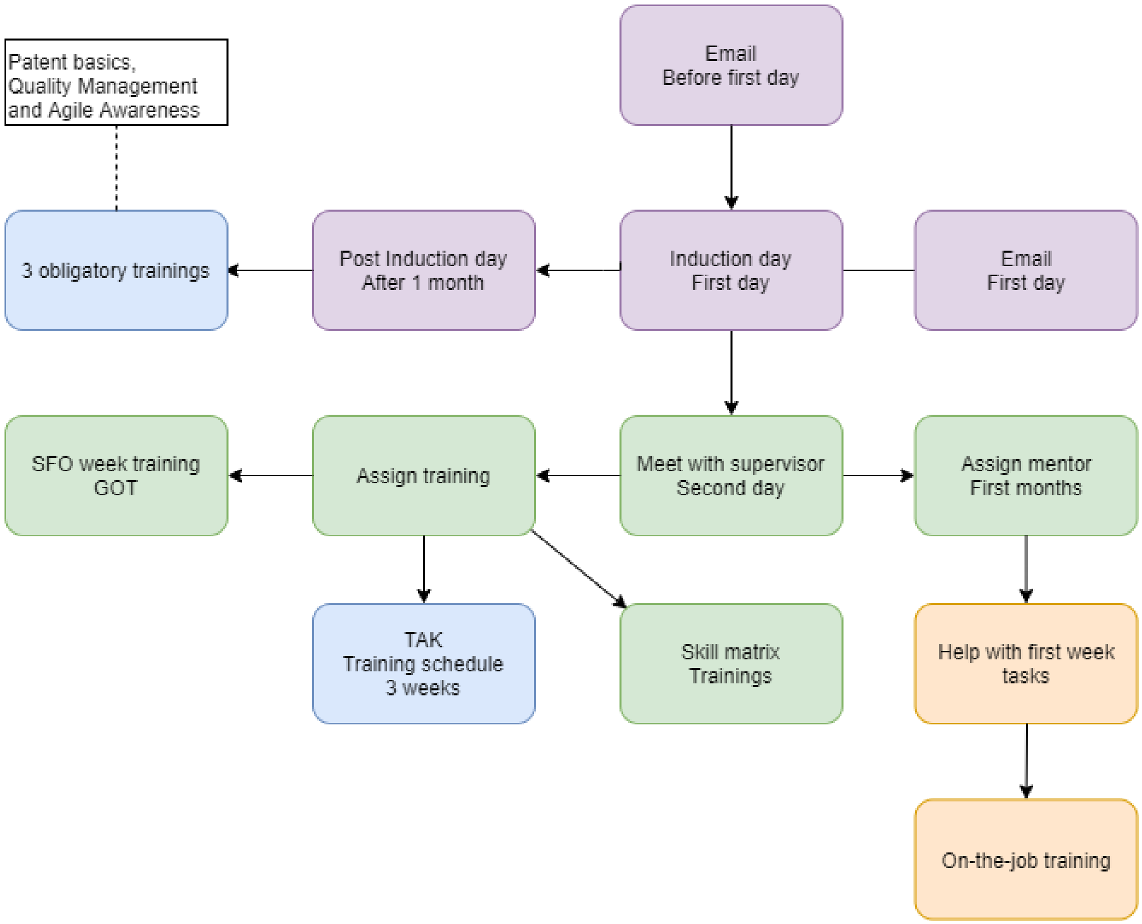


Figure 5.2: An overview of the onboarding of SFOs in Krakow. Purple means HR responsibility, green means EGM responsibility, blue means training team responsibility and orange means mentor responsibility.

5.3.1 HR

The HR-department in Krakow consists of around 40 employees. They are responsible for mainly three parts. Firstly for sending out emails with information to the new employees, secondly for the first day called Induction day, and thirdly for a meeting after one month called Post-Induction day. All these are general for all new employees. The last year there have been around 100 new employees each month and they have then divided them into two groups, one group starting the first Monday of the month and one group starting on the Monday in the middle of the month.

During the Induction day a number of activities take place. One person from the HR-team is responsible for presenting the HR-parts. In Poland there are also legal requirements of educations that are mandatory for all new employees at all companies regarding Quality Management, Facility Management and Health and Safety. Here the schedule of the first day is presented:

- Coffee with Aptiv
- Welcome to Aptiv – HR Intro
- Payroll Q&A
- Quality Management
- Lunch Break
- Health and Safety
- Facility Management
- Documents & Photos
- Office Tour

If the new employee do not speak Polish they are gathered together for an English session of the first day. This is done by making sure that all non-Polish speakers start working on the same day.

After one month of employment there is a Post-Induction meeting held by HR for new employees. In this meeting the newly employed get divided depending on business unit, and they get to meet the HR-responsible for their specific unit together with all the new employees in that area.

5.3.2 EGM

The EGM is responsible for delegating and organizing on-the-job training. The items included in on-the-job training are decided by the EGM. In the team for the SFOs this includes a list of tasks to do during the first week. Then the trainings given depend on the project that the person will work in. Different projects use different tools, systems and ways of working.

The EGM also get help from the SCRUM-master who monitors if everyone in her or his team is properly trained. Also the team-leaders support the EGM by following up the trainings.

5.3.3 Mentor

The mentor is a more experienced colleague that will guide the new employee through a list of tasks to do during the first week. After that the mentor is there to help to answer all daily questions for some months and guide the new employee to suitable tasks.

5.3.4 Training

The training team in HR is responsible for getting trainers to the mandatory training sessions on Induction day. They are also responsible for three mandatory trainings for engineers that should be done some time during the new employee's first 30-, 60- or 180 days.

Beside this program there are other types of trainings organized for engineers called TAK - Technical Academy Krakow. This initiative came from the engineers themselves and is driven by an experienced SFO. When there is a new group of SFOs they start a graduation scheme of three weeks with training sessions intertwined with self-studies. The training sessions are held by experienced engineers in the topics. There are around 30 topics covered during the different training sessions and self-studies. In parallel with the graduation scheme of TAK there is a system set in place for trainings to other engineers that need to refresh their knowledge in the areas covered.

5.4 Wuppertal

The last two years around 200 new employees started working in the Wuppertal office. They typically start working on Mondays. If there are not enough new employees starting at a certain week they wait for more new employees before they collect them to begin the planned onboarding from HR. The onboarding process for an SFO can be seen in figure 5.3.

The responsibility for the onboarding process in Wuppertal is divided between mainly the HR-department, the EGM and the mentor. There are also trainings included in the onboarding process. The main responsibility for those trainings lies in the HR department which find suitable trainers. Special for SFOs are some trainings in the Induction plan that are only for engineers and then also the SFO-week in Gothenburg.

5.4.1 HR

The HR-department in Wuppertal begin the onboarding process with an email before the first day with some attached documents and information about the top 10 things to do. They have also created an email for the manager to send out before the first day.

On the first day a person from HR meets the new employee to have a guided tour around the office with some additional practical information. After this the new employee is taken to their manager. Typically a new employee starts on a Monday. The following Friday there is a planned New Hire Orientation which is a two hour

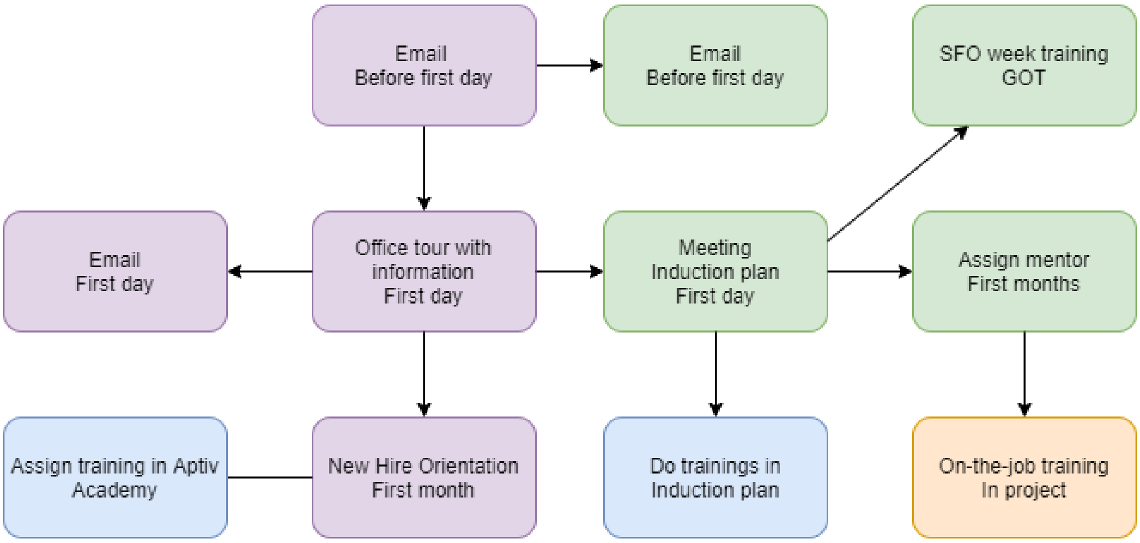


Figure 5.3: An overview of the onboarding of SFOs in Wuppertal. Purple means HR responsibility, green means EGM responsibility, blue means training team responsibility and orange mean mentor responsibility.

meeting held by two HR persons, one of them in HR training.

The HR department have recently started to include a social event during an evening for new employees in the town of Wuppertal. The goal with the evening is to create contacts with other new employees as well as getting to know Aptiv and the town.

5.4.2 EGM

The EGM is asked to send an email to the new employee before their first day. Then he or she is responsible for a training plan for the new employee called the Induction plan. This plan is given from HR and the assigned trainings on it depend on the type of role the new employee will work in, for engineers or non-engineers. The EGM is then responsible for making the new employee take all those mandatory trainings and sign the Induction plan. When it is done the plan is given to HR. Some of the trainings are face-to-face trainings and some are done through a web system called Aptiv Academy.

The EGM also pair the new employee up with a more experienced colleague.

5.4.3 Mentor

The mentor is a more experienced colleague who is responsible for introducing the new employee to their work. The mentor can answer daily questions and show how different tools work, for example. Often but not always, the new employee is supposed to take over some responsibility from the mentor after being onboarded. The mentor must also put his or her name on the Induction plan.

5.4.4 Training

There is a training team at the HR-department in Wuppertal. They are responsible for providing the training sessions in the Induction plan. Some of the trainings on the Induction plan are face-to-face trainings and some are e-learnings. The training team put together all of those trainings. For engineers there are also more mandatory trainings in Aptiv Academy than is specified in the Induction plan. There are 30-, 60-, and 90-day limits for those trainings in Aptiv Academy for new hires. The training team follow up on this and automatic messages are sent from the system if trainings are not done in time. Beside mandatory trainings there are other trainings in the Aptiv Academy that the employee can sign up for themselves. There are some pre-made packages of trainings designed for different projects.

5.5 Discussion about similarities and differences

In this section the key similarities and differences among the onboarding process at each site will be discussed. The discussion will be divided into the previous responsibilities, EGM, HR, mentor and training.

One similarity that is more general regarding the onboarding of SFOs is the training week for SFOs in Gothenburg. Here the SFOs from all of the sites get the possibility to join.

Another similarity is that the same roles are present at every site. One difference regarding this is thus the training responsibility, which is under the EGMs in Gothenburg and connected to HR at the other sites.

5.5.1 EGM

The key similarity of the EGM responsibility is that the EGM is the person who has the utmost responsibility of the whole onboarding process for a new employee. This does not mean that they have to do it all by themselves though, they just have the formal responsibility. They often delegate the daily contact and much of the responsibility to the mentor. The EGM tasks are more to follow up that the new employee go to the right trainings, make sure practicalities are set in place, and such things.

Three key differences have been identified. These are: the number of employees to each EGM, collaboration and control from HR, and a template of skills for SFOs.

The first key difference is the number of employees that each EGM is responsible for. This can be seen in table 3.1. In Wuppertal the EGM have all German SFOs in a fairly small team of 15 people which makes it easier to have more personal contact with a new employee. In Krakow the number is 30 which is double the EGM in

Wuppertal. At the same time the EGM in Gothenburg have four times as many employees as the EGM in Wuppertal. This gives them different starting points when it comes to the time available to put on the onboarding of each new employee. With different prerequisites it would not be surprising if the result would be different.

The second key difference is that the HR department support the EGM in different ways. In Krakow and Wuppertal there are control-points sent out from HR to see if the processes are followed by the EGM. The same system exists also in Gothenburg but there it does not seem to be followed to such an extent.

The third and minor difference is that the EGM in Krakow has a skill matrix of trainings set in place for their employees, this was not the case in Gothenburg and Wuppertal.

5.5.2 HR

The key similarity regarding the HR role and responsibility was that the HR department was involved in the onboarding process. Beside from that it was mostly differences. These and some of the reasons behind them will be presented below.

With increased size of the site, HR personnel and their responsibilities seem to increase as well. In Gothenburg the HR are responsible for a few hours. Then in Wuppertal they are also responsible for a follow-up meeting and some trainings. In Krakow the HR department take full responsibility over the whole first day of introduction and training, a follow-up meeting and some additional e-learning training. Generally the HR-department manages standardized parts of the onboarding that are the same for every new employee.

One reason for the variation of HR responsibility with site-size might be that the volume of new employees at each site influences the demand of structure (Jones, 1986). When there are 100 new employees per month, as in Krakow, it is nearly impossible to have time to treat everyone with an individual plan. At the other end of the spectrum in Gothenburg there are around three new employees per month which makes it hard to standardize everything because there is a possibility to individualize and take things as they come. The ratio of HR personnel per employee working with the onboarding is also about double in Krakow and Wuppertal compared with Gothenburg. It is hard to maintain the same resources in Gothenburg where there is a single HR person for all employees working with the process compared to the other sites. The reason that we know that not all HR persons in Gothenburg work with the onboarding is that we were there and could ask and see for ourselves what their responsibilities were. This was not possible for us at the other sites and we did not ask explicitly about how many of the HR personnel worked with onboarding versus other areas, like recruitment. The numbers in themselves are so different though that we can conclude that the resources available in Krakow and Wuppertal are bigger than in Gothenburg. We also talked to different HR persons at both Krakow and Wuppertal describing different roles such as onboarding and training and describing some of the work of colleagues so we are sure that the HR departments there have more time to put into onboarding.

When having more colleagues and more new employees it creates a bigger incitement to standardize the process. The need of collaboration between colleagues is bigger to make sure that they follow the same routines.

One aspect that was different in Krakow compared to Gothenburg and Wuppertal was that in Gothenburg and Wuppertal the process and educations were in English as soon as somebody wanted them in English. In Krakow they collected all only English speakers instead of having it all in English for everyone. This could create more difficulties for the non-Polish speakers to get to know people since they were introduced with a handful of people instead of 100 possible new colleagues.

5.5.3 Mentor

The mentor role was something that was similar among the sites. All EGMs assign the new employee to a mentor and the mentors have similar responsibilities. In the official guidelines presented in appendix A it tells about a "buddy" which is another name for the mentor. Despite the checklists, the role does not seem to be very well-defined in terms of length and responsibility at any site.

5.5.4 Training

As regarding the HR involvement in the onboarding, the similarity between the sites is that they all have some set of trainings. They also share the SFO-week in Gothenburg. SFOs from other sites in Europe visit this week, but not necessarily as a part of their onboarding but more like an education for their role even if they have been working for a while.

The system set in place for training differs among the three sites. At the two biggest ones, Krakow and Wuppertal, there are mandatory trainings for all new employees. In Gothenburg there are no mandatory introductory trainings. In Wuppertal some of these depend on whether the employee is supposed to work in engineering or not. In Krakow they are the same for everyone since they are mandatory by law.

The responsibility for training also differs. In Gothenburg the responsibility falls on the EGMs who are also the training team. In Wuppertal the training team belong to the HR department. In Krakow there are two different types of training programs. One comes from HR training and one comes from the engineers themselves.

In Krakow they also have the TAK-system set in place especially for new SFOs. For some projects in Wuppertal they have project-specific e-learnings at Aptiv Academy but nothing really corresponding. In Gothenburg they have a kind of similar system to TAK but it is not exclusively for SFOs but all SYS-engineers, this is the set of trainings.

The TAK initiative, which is a series of training sessions from the engineers themselves, can be seen as a community of practice when it is not part of the onboarding.

TAK has two different tracks, one as onboarding and one as continuous education. The continuous education track has a domain, a community and a practice and can therefore be classified as a community of practice (Wenger et al., 2002).

What is interesting is also the types of compulsory trainings at the different sites. When talking to HR training in Krakow and Wuppertal they thought that the compulsory trainings assigned in Aptiv Academy were the same in all of Europe. When talking to HR and EGM in Gothenburg we did not hear anything about it. This creates a feeling that the overall global guidelines are not very well anchored in the whole organization. Some of the information we got from HR in Wuppertal regarding such guidelines were completely unknown at the other sites.

5.6 Discussion of reliability

We can not be 100% sure that the found onboarding processes at each site are followed but the incitements for doing so are bigger when there are also control systems set in place for follow-up. This is the case at all three sites but there are fewer of them in Gothenburg, some of this depends on lack of resources. Many things have fixed time-frames when they should be done, but some have not. So even if a new employee gets the same training, it does not mean that they do them in exactly the same order or after the same length of employment.

Something found in Gothenburg that was not possible to find at the other sites was that what the people told us should be done in the onboarding process was not always done. This was mainly that all of the training experts did not hold their training session according to plan. It is hard to tell if this was because of the corona situation or if the follow-up from EGMs did not happen.

6

Results and discussion - Phase 2

Below the results from phase 2 are presented. The results are divided according to found categories and themes from the coding process described in section 4.3. The focus for phase 2 is RQ2: *Exemplify informal aspects connected to the onboarding of new SFOs.* At first the themes, with sub themes, are presented and then a small discussion follows where the different views are compared.

In this section examples from the Aptiv perspective will be presented as the sections organizational structure, SFO-role and mentorship. All examples presented in this section are the opinions of individuals.

Some of the following citations are freely translated from Swedish. To secure anonymity it will not be shown which ones are translated and which ones are originally in English. Instead of telling exactly which EGM or mentor who is from each site they have been given randomized numbers from 1 to 3.

6.1 Organizational structure

One aspect that became increasingly important was the division between formal and informal actions and expectations. There are unwritten things to learn for a new employee to be able to go from an organizational outsider to insider. Since they are unwritten a new person needs guidance and personal contacts to be able to find those. Communication and contacts are therefore key.

The subsections in this chapter are examples of ways to describe the Aptiv organization, they are not static and some of them overlap with each other.

6.1.1 Expectations

The Aptiv organization described by the interviewees gave the perspective that the expectations on the people working at Aptiv are not always explicitly formulated and written down. People are expected to do and know many things but there are no checklists and guidelines to follow to learn everything about the responsibilities. Many things are just learning by doing in more informal settings. There is a lot of tacit knowledge to learn for a new person. An example of this is the following quote.

"... people with more experience usually have in their heads a lot of lessons learned [...] this knowledge is very often not written anywhere it's just knowledge and this new person should also catch as much of this knowledge as possible." - EGM 1

In this area of Aptiv, Active Safety, the roles are complex and people often have a background in studying engineering. Because of this complexity, an onboarding here is a process that takes a long time to go through. One goal with onboarding expressed in the interviews was that a new employee should be able to ask the right persons about what they did not understand, since it was not possible to learn everything they need during an onboarding. Another expectation was that they should know their responsibilities after onboarding. These two expectations were expressed the following way by one EGM.

"The expectations are that they know their place and who to ask when they have a problem with the project, for help with technical matters." - EGM 2

The EGMs did express their expectations with a broader perspective, that the new employee should learn about their responsibilities. The mentors tried to specify exactly what those expectations were for a SFO.

"...you will be responsible for a specific function [...]. That means that you should know exactly your function, your responsibility and you should know how it works so how the function should work and what the supplier provides to us, what the customer is expecting and stuff like this" - Mentor 1

Something else that might be the consequence of having many unwritten expectations on employees is that they all interpret those expectations into the higher end of a spectra. These high demands people have on themselves were seen as something problematic by one of the mentors.

"...Then maybe there is a quite high work ethic among all which may be a little bit problematic in some cases. [...], we have a high workload in every project, and it is often projects burning..." - Mentor 3

6.1.2 Informal organization

Some parts of Aptiv, such as the SFO-teams and the Technical Academy Krakow can be seen as communities of practice, see section 2.3.1. The indications for this are that there is a domain, a creation of somewhere to exchange ideas, a community, people to share it with, and a practice, some common rules. These communities of practice are not very well-defined at every site since the training-systems do not work the same way. Despite this, there seems to be a need of those communities in the organization. One EGM express that the SFOs need to meet SFOs they collaborate with at other sites sometimes.

"...there were always occasions where there had been need for workflows and that's where they all come together, also different competencies and they meet." - EGM 3

There is an Aptiv-culture that is present at all the sites, this includes having high expectations on yourself and your co-workers. People are supposed to take the initiative and work independently, and at the same time collaborate very much with others. What you have to learn as a new employee is where you fit into the organization and what your responsibilities are. Since there are no guidelines that you can read and very little introduction given about this, you are dependent on others to ask for guidance. The system put in place for this guidance is a mentorship, a more experienced colleague who will introduce you to your work. When you get that support, you should without many further guidelines magically learn how to work. This is expressed as "learning by doing", with the guidance of the mentor.

"Then to know who to talk to in the project, that's just learn by doing. So key is to have someone in the project like this mentor or someone who shows you what to do, someone who's just been onboarded to know in your [...] team who's who and the rest comes with time. So they should focus on the team they're working with and the rest will happen" - EGM 3

The system with mentors do not seem to always work well since a common misunderstanding from new employees is that they do not understand the division of power and such responsibilities in the company.

"But there are most often those misunderstandings about who are in charge of which decisions." - EGM 2

The mentor system is also not very structured and lack guidelines. There is according to one EGM a reason for this, and that is that they can not be prepared for every possible question.

"They [the mentors] should be approachable for any things that we didn't think of so that's why you cannot make a list of what they [the mentors] are supposed to be mentoring about." - EGM 3

A general informal structure is the friendly atmosphere at Aptiv. The description is that everyone is helpful and people are approachable.

"... because for me the most important is that all employees respect each other and is ready to help each other and we definitely have it [...], so everyone is ready to take time for other employees or other teams. And they are ready to guide to the task..." - Mentor 1

6.1.3 Leadership

When it comes to the leadership in this organization, it depends on the level of management. The company is global and as such, your nearest manager may be sitting in another country. On the lowest level of management for engineers, which is the one in focus for these interviews, there is a common vision. The EGMs are advising and guiding their employees instead of deciding things for them without their input. People are supposed to come with solutions to their own problems to their manager to decide about, rather than to expect their manager to have the solution to their problems. The role of a SFO is also special because you are the owner of your function and should take the responsibility as such. Since it is a matrix organization there are leaders at different levels, beside managers there is another system called leads in the projects.

All the EGMs talk about a "softer" leadership culture where the leaders advise, guide and take input from employees in decision-making processes rather than making demands and taking decisions without input.

"Everything is actually built on it, that it is the individuals of ours that drive us forward, not the boss. It is really not one big site-lead who has all the attitude that people run for. But it is the many leads and everyone that have the possibility to have an impact on which way we are heading." - EGM 2

Leadership culture in a broader perspective and the views from the mentors are interesting. What the leader thinks about the leadership style might differ from the view of the employees but everyone express similar thoughts.

"Depends on the level, at EGM-level [...] I think all my managers tried to use a very Swedish approach, so that the manager is not your per se boss who tells you what to do but a more experienced colleague who can guide you and he's there to help you. I think generally within the teams we work most with it's such an approach..." - Mentor 2

Beside the EGM, who might be in charge of several teams, each team also has a team-lead. This person seem to have the same leadership style as the EGMs according to a mentor.

"...then we have our team lead, he's guiding us in our function and our project-specific [...]. On management level it's hard [...] to make decisions but since you're responsible for your function [...] if there is some problem they will come to you, and that means you are able and you should be able to make decisions when it comes to your function..." - Mentor 1

6.1.4 Formal organization regarding onboarding

Although many things seem to happen spontaneously without planning, there are structures set in place as well. Especially from EGM side they have goals of formalizing things. They also have strategies for formalising their contact and the socialization with newcomers. The opinions about how to learn things in the best way may not be the same for every manager.

One thing that the managers have thought of as means to get a smoother onboarding is for example to mix the new employees with the more experienced ones.

"I try to mix new employees with the existing team and place them close to the people who are in the same project at least." - EGM 1

Some common needs for new employees have also been identified.

"But one need a base-level that is the same for everyone so that everyone get a domain-knowledge, an idea about the culture and an idea of what Aptiv is."
- EGM 2

What is already set in place at most sites and also needed is the planned and organized onboarding from HR that deals with practicalities.

"Well onboarding means [...] people in the company giving directions, at least show them who everybody is and what are they working on. How to do everything that's Aptiv specific like number bureaucracy, time keeping, all this stuff from HR."
- EGM 3

Most EGMs can not answer all questions from the new employee, both due to lack of time and because they are not working in the projects. Therefore it is key for the new employees to learn who to talk to regarding specific topics. One EGM solve this issue by delegating the new employees to the right persons or informing about who to talk to regarding certain topics.

"I also always inform people who can they ask for different things." - EGM 1

Beside getting to know the right people to ask, new employees also need training in technical matters so they do not have to ask about everything.

"But the most important thing [...] is that they get a feeling of that they have access to the information and education [...], so that they don't have to waste a lot of their own time to search, but that they instead get it early and that we keep it continuous."
- EGM 2

At least one mentor do also believe that trainings are a good way to learn. The described way of learning by this person is similar to a community of practice.

"...on organizational level there is very good idea [...], a formalized set of trainings for new employees that covers the topics from testing, SFO, everything, purely peer based so more experienced colleagues prepare presentations for other colleagues [...] engineers from completely different teams come to our trainings and we go to their trainings and basically learn together" - Mentor 2

What stands out is that one of the EGMs do not believe in training but instead learning by doing.

"If it's really needed in the project to achieve a task they learn by doing it. That's better than sending them off to a 2 weeks training about a tool and not applying it to the real thing" - EGM 3

6.1.5 Working in (big) projects

One thing that was said a lot during the interviews was “it depends”. It was hard to define, for example in terms of what a new SFO needed to know and how things usually worked because it depended. The factors it depended upon were for example the personality and previous experience of the new employee, what project they were working on and the stage of the current project.

“When they are here they see a project at one particular small time [...] and they should get the whole picture from end to end [...]. They don’t apply it in the same way in all projects.” - EGM 3

Many of the new employees in the SYS-engineering area at Aptiv are also newly graduated and that has an impact on the onboarding needed.

“A perfect onboarding is very individual because everyone is different, but if you take someone directly from school they need belonging, then some kind of plan and then some kind of defined working area that they feel more and more capable in” - EGM 2

When explaining the recruitment base of new employees another EGM also express that it is common to recruit new employees early in their career.

“Yeah it’s between school and few years of work experience like 1-2 years or so.” - EGM 3

6.2 The SFO-role

The interviews showed a homogeneous view of the SFO-role, it was described by all interviewees as complex and diverse. There are two big parts of the role SFO, technical and communicative. You have to be a good system engineer with the ability to analyse technical issues and understand where your function fits in the whole system. When problems arise the SFO needs to be able to quickly understand the problem and its roots. At the same time the communication skills are crucial to succeed. As the owner of a specific function it is your job to ensure that the function is delivered in time. This demands a lot of pro-activity and a good understanding of the structure of the project to be able to check up on and delegate tasks to the right people.

“Knowledge and skills, like the perfect SFO would be like a universal genius and all so there’s communicative and socially adapt to talk to the customer, to talk internally, to talk to all kinds of diverse people in different locations” - EGM 3

Due to the complexity of the role there is much to learn for a new SFO. Many of the new SFOs are newly graduated and therefore need to learn both how to work in general as well as the specific role. According to the interviewed mentors the most important trait of a new SFO is to be curious and not afraid to ask a lot of questions.

The focus is on being interested and motivated, technical skills can always be learnt.

"I think you have to be curious and ask a lot of questions in the beginning and not be afraid" - Mentor 3

"A new employee is someone who is always ready to ask questions and ready to ask the right questions, this is the more important point" - Mentor 1

6.3 Mentorship

At all sites new employees are paired with a more experienced colleague, called a mentor. In appendix A the general buddy checklist is mentioned, but none of the interviewees use this checklist in any way. According to the interviews, some of the EGMs are aware it exists but are not utilizing it. Generally, the mentorship is handled in an unofficial way. When a new person starts, a mentor is chosen by the EGM who then tells, usually face-to-face, this person that he or she will function as a mentor for the new employee.

6.3.1 Goal with mentorship

There are some official goals from Aptiv regarding mentorship but since the checklist is not used by the EGMs and mentors the goal becomes more unofficial and personal to every person. The EGMs focus a lot on learning the role and the tasks connected to it.

"The role of the mentor is to introduce the person to the technical parts of the tasks" - EGM 2

"First of all it's the best type of training [to have a mentor] that someone help you with the daily task and the best way to build up competencies" - EGM 1

The mentor is supposed to teach the new person how to perform the job, something that includes both technical matters and conveying contacts to the right people. In Gothenburg the mentor should also help the new employee to choose important and necessary trainings. If the team size is big it is also important that the mentor is present to answer all kinds of odd questions.

"That they always have someone to turn to that know precisely that no matter the question it's this person [the mentor]" - EGM 2

The mentors have a more divided view of what is most important with the mentorship. According to one of the mentors the most important part is that the new employee gets a friend or a buddy, someone they can confide in and talk to about all aspects of the work. Another mentor thinks that the knowledge is the most important part that should be focused on.

"It's to get this buddy, the one you can talk to unprejudiced without thinking about

performance, to raise questions that you think are tough." - Mentor 3

"The main goal is to show the new employee the bigger picture of the company and of the function or the work that he will do." - Mentor 1

6.3.2 Benefits for the mentor

Two of the three interviewed EGMs see the mentorship as something beneficial to the person being a mentor, a way of self development. They see the mentorship as an opportunity for the mentors to strengthen their own knowledge as well as learning some new aspects that they might have not thought about before. They also see the possible benefit of getting to know the new employee and establish a close relationship with that person.

"Since everything is based on cooperation they have a golden opportunity to both learn to teach and also you usually are able to reflect on things that you don't, you might just do it, you haven't reflected on how you do it and stuff like that. Usually get deeper into things and better when you're a mentor" - EGM 2

All the mentors felt that the mentorship role was something beneficial for them in the long run. To be able to explain something in a good way you have to know the topic really well, something all mentors mentioned. They also brought up the building of relationship with this new person.

"You get so much back from it actually. In the beginning it's a big investment of time where you have to put aside other things to be able to train [the new employee] but in the long run I still have daily contact with the ones I helped when they started and we have an exchange today where it's not just one way, it goes both ways" - Mentor 3

"The most obvious one is knowledge so when you start teaching people you get a much deeper understanding of the topic because you start thinking about it from a new angle and understand them completely, this is the biggest benefit on the technical level. On purely emotional level I always got a big confidence boost and happiness from the fact that someone that I taught understand certain topics and they can work on their own in the future" - Mentor 2

6.4 Comparison of views

As seen in the many citations, there is not one cohesive view on every topic. There are however not six different views either. In this section the opinions from the interviews will be compared.

6.4.1 Organizational structure

Although there are three offices with their own characteristics, as described in chapter 3, there are similarities between them. The workforce at the offices are all working with complex systems with many people involved.

Both EGMs and mentors express that there are high expectations on co-workers at Aptiv. You are supposed to take initiative and go and ask when you do not understand something. It is unclear if these expectations are mediated clearly to new employees. For example the power distribution and decision making processes in the company seem unclear.

All the three EGMs seem to have a cohesive idea about how they behave as leaders. According to them, they prefer guiding and advising their employees rather than demanding them to do things. Their employees seemed to feel the same way, it is possible to come with propositions and solutions. The SFO-role with the ownership is a role with responsibility. At the other levels of managers and leaders in the company the leadership style may vary and personal differences may also occur.

EGM 1 and 2 want more structured processes set in place for onboarding of new employees. EGM 3 does not think sending people off for trainings is necessary for learning, the proposal is instead learning by doing. EGM 1 has tools for the new employees to get to know the others in the team. EGM 1 also believes that it is crucial to learn about the organizational structure. EGM 2 wants a structure for the new employees to feel welcome and some basic knowledge.

All of the managers talked about how things are hard to define because it depends. They did however have slightly different views on how it should depend. EGM 3 was clear that everything always depended so it was really not necessary to define guidelines because they could not be used in every case anyway. EGM 1 and 2 also said that things depend but they wanted to try to make structures and guidelines to follow anyway. They thought that it is possible to give a more similar introduction to all new employees and that it would be better to organize it that way.

6.4.2 The SFO-role

The interviews showed a homogeneous view of the SFO-role. All interviewees mentioned the duality of the role, the need for both technical and social competency. The role also demands the ability to keep many things rolling at the same time.

6.4.3 Mentorship

The mentorship for new SFOs is something that can be found at all the three sites in this study. Everyone seems to agree that it is crucial to pair the new employee with someone experienced, but the reasons why differ somewhat. The EGMs all stress the point that the mentor is necessary to relay important information the new employee needs to be able to learn his or her job. One EGM also wants the mentors to be there for all kinds of odd questions that the new employee will have, as a way to make sure the EGM do not drown in “irrelevant” questions.

The mentors have a more divided view of the reason for mentorship where one of the mentors put a lot of emphasis on the emotional part of getting a *friend* at the workplace. The two other mentors mention knowledge as the most important point of mentorship but both talk about the emotional boost from helping someone develop.

When it comes to benefits and drawbacks for mentors, everyone agreed that the time is a drawback, that it can be stressful to be a good mentor at the same time as doing their normal work. This might be hard to do as there is usually a high workload since that is the reason for hiring someone new. All but one EGM saw that there were benefits from acting as mentor. Both knowledge but also the building of a relationship were mentioned as positive outcomes from being mentor.

Two of the three EGMs were aware of central guidelines existing from Aptiv but are not using them in any way as of today. None of the mentors has received any kind of guidelines for the mentorship but all had a sense of what is “expected” from a mentor. Both EGMs and mentors responded positively on having guidelines.

6.5 Discussion of reliability

Potential issues affecting the reliability of the interview answers were pre-reading of the interview questions and interpretation of the questions. For example EGM 3 did not read the questions beforehand and those answers were in general shorter than the answers from the others who had read the questions beforehand.

Since the formulation of the questions were quite open they were open for interpretation. The trial interview with a mentor indicated this and those questions could therefore be changed. For EGMs this step was not possible to do which may reflect on more questions, during those interviews, about clarification.

7

Discussion: organizational outsider to insider

In this chapter RQ 3 will be answered by a discussion of the results from RQ 1 and 2, together with the theoretical framework. The section is structured by starting with the way into an organization, what the goals are, and how the onboarding at Aptiv works in relation to this. To be able to answer RQ3: "*Analyse how the results from RQ1 and RQ2 facilitate the journey from organizational outsider to insider for a new SFO*" both theories and results are needed.

7.1 Onboarding tactics

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) developed six categories of tactics, see table 2.2. Looking at all three sites of Aptiv some patterns can be found. The onboarding experiences at all sites are serial (since all new SFOs get a mentor) and investiture (the new employees are not forced into strict standards of behaviours). For the rest of the categories it is more depending on site. As seen in chapter 3 Krakow is by far the biggest of these three sites, both in employees working and employees recruited, with Wuppertal as second biggest and Gothenburg as smallest. Krakow is also the site that has an onboarding that is mostly using the tactics formal, collective, standard set of experiences and fixed time frame, if compared to the other sites. The onboarding in Krakow is then more institutionalized, while the onboardings at Gothenburg and Wuppertal respectively are more individualized, according to the definition provided by Jones (1986). This coincides with Mintzberg (1979) who stated that the bigger and older an organization is, the more bureaucratic it is. According to Jones (1986) this would mean that the new employees at Krakow generally would experience more positive job attitudes and better fit to the job thanks to the institutionalized tactics, while the employees in Gothenburg and Wuppertal would be more open to the role innovation-response. Since Aptiv is an engineering company it is very important that their employees are innovative, but it is at the same time important to keep skilled employees in the company. Further studies are needed to determine what way of organizing gives the best result for Aptiv.

7.2 Organization, role and relationship

The model from Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019) of what is needed in an onboarding consists of three parts, organization, role and relationship. The themes found in chapter 6, organizational structure, SFO-role and mentorship correlates to these parts. The organizational structure is about things to be learnt about the organization, the SFO-role about the specific role, and mentorship is one way to build relationships in the new organization. To see whether an onboarding is successful or not, i.e. if the new employee has reached an inner circle and can be seen as an insider (Wenger et al., 2002), one can ask five questions about each part (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2019), see table 2.3. One question about the organization is “I am familiar with the unwritten rules of how things are done at this organization”. It was found that there were many unwritten rules and expectations at Aptiv and there were often confusions about them. The interviewees could name many of those expectations and that the onboarding and learning to work takes a long time. There were also initiatives from two of the EGMs to change the onboarding into a more formalized one with more training and guiding because the current one lack some of these parts. When asked about what they wanted to change with the current process the following came up.

“The second thing is all information, all supporting materials that help people understand where we are in our organization, what is our mission, who is my boss, who is boss of my boss, what are the product line, how Aptiv is organized, all stuff like that is something that is missing.” - EGM 1

Since one common misunderstanding is regarding the responsibilities of decision making, the organizational part regarding the onboarding at Aptiv can not be seen as complete, as it is right now. Regarding the question about the most common mistake for new SFOs, as cited before:

“But there are most often those misunderstandings about who is in charge of which decisions” - EGM 2

Regarding the role, for example the questions “I understand how to perform the tasks that make up my job” and “I understand what all the duties of my job entail” can be asked as can be seen in table 2.3. These connects to the misunderstanding about the role since it is included in the role to keep track of responsibilities. The SFO-role is a complex role consisting of various tasks using many different skills. When the responsibility that fall under these tasks is unclear, the role-part of the onboarding cannot be seen as complete according to Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019).

When it comes to relationship the following question can be used as a guide to whether this part of the onboarding is sufficient or not, “My coworkers are usually willing to offer their assistance or advice ”. The office culture described in section 6.1.2 seems to deal really well with this. Everyone in the interviewees talked about friendliness, kindness and helpfulness as typical behaviour of Aptiv employees. Despite not being very formal about building relationships, there are some structures.

For example the following one, as cited before:

"I try to mix new employees with the existing team and place them close to the people who are in the same project at least." - EGM 1

The fact that everyone described the "office culture" as friendly make it clear that the relationship criteria of Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019) is fulfilled with the existing onboarding at each site.

7.3 Community of practice

The purpose of an onboarding is to make the journey from organizational outsider to insider easier for new employees (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). In the previous sections the onboarding at the Aptiv sites has been discussed both from the perspective of the tactics of Van Maanen and Schein and the categories of Cooper-Thomas et al. Another perspective for analysis of onboarding is to see the SFOs at Aptiv as a community of practice that is to be joined by the new SFO. A community of practice is defined by its domain, the community and shared practices (Wenger et al., 2002). These factors are also what determines if someone is an organizational insider or not. This framework can be merged with the categories organization, role and relationship developed by Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019), see figure 7.1. To be considered an insider you then have to grasp the organization of all Aptiv, the role you play within the company, and have a relationship to others working at Aptiv. To then be considered an insider within the SFO-community you have to join their community of practice by learning the specific domain for SFOs, learn the specific tasks connected to the role, and get to know the other SFOs within the community.

Figure 7.1: The role of SFO can be seen as a community of practice within Aptiv.

All sites studied in this thesis have some onboarding processes in place to help with this journey from outsider to insider, trying to give the new SFO the knowledge needed to move to the inner circles of the community of practice, see figure 2.2. The knowledge needed can be divided into explicit (easy to formulate and communicate) and tacit (intrinsic, hard to articulate), see section 2.3.1. The formal part of the onboarding at Aptiv consists of a series of planned trainings. These trainings are mainly about sharing the explicit knowledge needed for the role of SFO, the technical knowledge, as pointed out by one EGM.

"We should send the employees to the proper trainings if we identify the competence gap" - EGM 1

These trainings help the new SFOs to build an understanding for both the domain of the role as well as parts of the practice. The trainings also help building the community by creating a space for people within the organization to meet and talk, even though this is done unintentionally. A mentor expressed that the initiative of having training sessions together with others and giving the opportunity to learn together was something positive. As quoted earlier:

"... engineers from completely different teams come to our trainings and we go to their trainings and basically learn together ..." - Mentor 2

The trainings are then mostly about the transfer of explicit knowledge even though they also give the opportunity for building of relationships and the possibility for some tacit knowledge of how to interact within the role. This initiative can help both newcomers and others to learn and becoming more active and getting to the inner circles of the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This will not be enough though as the SFO-role is complex and relies on a lot of tacit knowledge, as shown in section 6.2. This opens up the need for more informal knowledge sharing outside of formal trainings. This is in line with legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where you need to actively work with something and learn it by doing it. The mentorship that is used at all sites is a way to deal with all the tacit knowledge needed for the role. The mentors also transfer explicit knowledge to the new employee, but it is the tacit knowledge that must be transferred by interactions between the mentor and the new employee. One EGM expresses the need for experienced people to transfer all their knowledge to new SFOs, as quoted earlier:

"... people with more experience usually have in their heads a lot of lessons learned [...] this knowledge is very often not written anywhere it's just knowledge and this new person should also catch as much of this knowledge as possible." - EGM 1

The legitimate peripheral participation resembles the old system of apprenticeship that was the standard form of learning a profession in old times. One mentor drew the connection between their role and this form of informal teaching.

"For me the perfect example is the old model of an apprentice and a master, the very traditional artisan way. You went for an apprenticeship and you learned everything on the job, to me our trade is a bit like that, you can go to uni and get the basics but you are unable to learn anything about what we really do day-to-day without being

in the industry" - Mentor 2

On-the-job training is a phrase that came back over and over in all interviews in phase 2. This strongly connects to the thoughts about legitimate peripheral participation where outsiders on their way into a community participate in the daily work of that community. The newcomer must take part in the tasks that define the role, but it is important that these tasks are presented in a good order. For someone new, peripheral, less intense, and less vital tasks are a good way to start, even though this might not be in the order of the production process (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This sentiment is shared with the interviewed mentors who all mentioned the need to give new SFOs small, well defined tasks not vital to the continuation of the project.

"The first thing you do is usually to analyze a log file, often where there has been a problem, preferably already solved too, so that there is no pressure" - Mentor 3

Since mentorship is such an important part to facilitate the journey from outsider to insider, it is surprising that there are no guidelines and no time allocated for the assignment. One mentor did not have a mentor when starting at Aptiv and described the difficulties that it created.

"I did not have a mentor when I started so it was hard, really hard to know who I should approach for different questions..." - Mentor 3

This is problematic. If the mentorship were to fail at Aptiv as it is now, there is no guaranteed fall-back. Even if a mentor is appointed there is no guarantee that the person have enough time for the role, and if the mentor is not interested in the mentorship it will not matter if he or she has time, they will still prioritize other things before guiding the new SFO. If a newcomer gets a mentor that does not have the time, experience or motivation to be a mentor it seems hard to become an insider. This problem have been brought up by an EGM.

"The new one has an open calendar so they [new employee and mentor] meet up and talk to each other [...]. And if that's not happening then I notice when the new guy isn't brought up to speed or is idle somewhere." - EGM 3

One EGM recounted that their newest employee was given a fairly new employee as mentor. This was identified as a problem since the newly appointed mentor did not know enough to be a mentor, as the person was still being mentored themself. This more experienced mentor was then going to support both new employees. As described in section 2.3.1 one can be on the way into a community and have more knowledge than a complete outsider, but still not be knowledgeable enough to be part of the "core". If the mentor is in this position they can of course give some guidance but not as efficient and clear as a core-member. So it really is a problem to have a mentor who themselves is just on the verge of the community. The main point in the theory of legitimate peripheral practice is that there is someone within the community who can guide you on your journey to become an insider (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Without this, the journey will be harder and take more time.

Even though the EGMs always assign a mentor, they do it in an informal way, often orally during a coffee break. It also varies if they have time to follow-up if this person do what is assigned. Since there are no guidelines the measurement of if the mentor is good enough or not is whether the new employee seem to be brought up to speed or not.

What seem to be missing to facilitate the onboarding into supporting newcomers' journey to a greater extent is guidelines, routines and control-systems for follow-up. Depending on the disposition of the new SFO they might work it out themselves if the mentorship falls through, but in the worst case scenario they might feel lost enough to quit, something that negates the whole idea of onboarding.

8
Conclusion

In this chapter the conclusions to the research questions will be formulated. The chapter continues with recommendations for Aptiv on how to further facilitate the onboarding of new SFOs and proposes ways to further investigate the topic of this report. The chapter ends with a generalization of the findings.

8.1 Research question 1

Map and discuss the onboarding process a new SFO undergoes at the offices in Gothenburg, Wuppertal and Krakow respectively.

The onboarding process for a new SFO at the three sites respectively can be seen in figure 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3. The responsibility of the onboarding is divided between HR-department, EGM, mentor and training organisers. Even if there are similarities in organizing structure among the sites, the execution and content differs. New SFOs starting at the different sites do not receive the same amount of onboarding activities.

8.2 Research question 2

Exemplify informal aspects connected to the onboarding of new SFOs.

The found themes when analysing the interviews in phase 2 were organizational structure, SFO-role and mentorship. These themes showed that there are many unwritten expectations on informal parts of the organization. Both the role of the mentor and the SFO contain unwritten guidelines. Examples of other aspects on this topic are what the leadership looks like and what the EGMs and mentors find most important in an onboarding. It seemed hard to create an onboarding suitable for every new employee since many factors depended, for example the current project status, individual characteristics of the new employee and the interest and motivation from the mentor.

8.3 Research question 3

Analyse how the results from RQ1 and RQ2 facilitates the journey from organizational outsider to insider for a new SFO.

Aptiv's current onboarding processes use different tactics from Van Maanen and Schein (1979). The most notable difference between the sites is the higher formality and collectiveness of the onboarding at the Krakow site compared to the others.

Compared to the Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019) model of organization, role and relationship, Aptiv do enough to facilitate the relationship part of the onboarding. The organizational part and the role part need more to be fulfilled according to those criteria since the answers to all of the questions were not enough.

When analysed from the perspective of communities of practice it was found that the mentors play a big part of a new SFO's onboarding. The journey to become an inner circle member for a new employee is very affected by the mentor's time, expertise and motivation.

There are more things to be done at Aptiv to further facilitate a new employee's journey from organizational outsider to insider which will be presented in the next section.

8.4 Recommendations and further research

We do not believe that "the perfect onboarding" exists. It is not possible to take away all aspects of being new to a workplace, starting a new job will always create feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. As many told us in the interviews there are things that will always vary such as previous experience of the new employee, project specifics, and project phase. With that in mind, we still think that Aptiv could improve their onboarding to facilitate the journey from outsider to insider. We will present some tools that could be used, it does not mean that they all should be used, they are only proposals. The recommendations are from the perspective of the onboarding of SFOs, but there are parts that overlap with the general onboarding.

We have identified three main areas to focus on: expressing expectations; syncing the onboarding between and within sites; and increasing the support for mentors.

The first thing that could be done is expressing their expectations more clearly to new employees. One big problem is that some EGMs have too many employees to be able to meet and talk with every one of them often enough. Since the SFO-role is broad and complex a role description might be hard to write down. This creates a need for the role to be discussed between the new employee and the EGM, something that should not fall exclusively on the mentor.

The second thing is to sync the onboarding between the sites. This can be done by for example giving this report to the people involved to read chapter 5 to get an overview of what is done. Another part of this is learning from the Technical Academy Krakow initiative at the other sites since this seems to be well-functioning and appreciated. The responsible persons from each of the earlier listed categories could arrange meetings to share their best practices among each area. The trainings that are offered and mandatory at each site would be good to have a look at in such a community. Within each site the responsible parts should also be synchronised to see if the control systems set in place are sufficient to minimize the risk of something being forgotten or done twice.

The third aspect to focus on is the support for mentors. This could be done by giving them updated and synced guidelines for their mission. Another proposal is to have mentor sessions where they can get information about guidelines, a place to share lessons learned and help each other to define the role. A third proposal to strengthen the mentors is to allocate time to the mentoring. Last but not least a proposal is to evaluate or follow-up the mentoring, either by HR or EGMs. This could be by a survey, a conversation or in other ways.

As stated above, these are all proposals and do not necessarily need to be implemented. The lack of protection system if the mentorship fails is however a risky business. Possible positive outcomes of doing some well-advised changes to the current onboarding process is new employees getting up to speed quicker, people being more satisfied with their work-tasks and reducing uncertainties.

Possible future research regarding the onboarding is presented below. These proposals are related to the view of the newcomer, which has not been examined in this thesis.

Something very interesting that could be explored is the new employees' perception of the onboarding done to see if they have the same perception about the activities during the onboarding.

Another possible area of research is a quantitative study into the experience of new employees across the sites. This has been done on a small scale by the HR department in Krakow who gave the new employees a small survey in the end of the onboarding. The same happened in the end of the graduation scheme in TAK. If the new employees are going to have the same role across the sites it is a good idea to give them the same survey about their experience and then compare. That would give more insight in the topic.

8.5 Generalizations

The topic of onboarding is very important for many companies. Even though the area studied in this thesis is restricted to the onboarding of SFOs in the area of AS in Aptiv, the recommendations proposed, and the theoretical framework could be used as a guide for all of Aptiv when planning the onboarding for many different roles.

Other companies could benefit from creating a mentorship program if this is not already set in place. Using the questions in table 2.3 from Cooper-Thomas et al. (2019) is a way to measure the effectiveness and success of onboarding in any company.

Bibliography

Aptiv. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.aptiv.com/careers

Ashford, S. J., & Black, J. S. (1996). Proactivity during organizational entry: The role of desire for control. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *81*(2), 199–214. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.81.2.199

Bauer, T. N., & Erdogan, B. (2011). Organizational socialization: The effective onboarding of new employees. In S. Zedeck (Ed.), *APA handbook of industrial and organizational psychology, Vol 3: Maintaining, expanding, and contracting the organization.* (pp. 51–64). doi:10.1037/12171-002

Bauer, T. N., & Erdogan, B. (2014). Delineating and Reviewing the Role of Newcomer Capital in Organizational Socialization. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *1*(1), 439–457. doi:10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091251

By, R. T. (2005). Organisational change management: A critical review. *Journal of Change Management*, *5*(4), 369–380. doi:10.1080/14697010500359250

Cambridge University Press. (n.d.). Onboarding. *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus.* Retrieved from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/onboarding

Chao, G. T., O'Leary-Kelly, A. M., Wolf, S., Klein, H. J., & Gardner, P. D. (1994). Organizational socialization: Its content and consequences. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *79*(5), 730–743. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.79.5.730

Cooper-Thomas, H. D., Stadler, M., Park, J. H., Chen, J., Au, A. K. C., Tan, K. W. T., … Tansley, S. (2019). The Newcomer Understanding and Integration Scale: Psychometric Evidence Across Six Samples. *Journal of Business and Psychology.* doi:10.1007/s10869-019-09636-9

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed). OCLC: ocn192045753. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

Davila, N., & Piña-Ramírez, W. (2018). *Effective onboarding.* What works in talent development. Alexandria, VA: ATD Press.

Esaiasson, P., Gilljam, M., Oscarsson, H., Towns, A., & Wängerud, L. (2017). *Metodpraktikan: Konsten att studera samhälle, individ och marknad* (5th ed.). Wolters Kluwer Sverige AB, 106 47 Stockholm: Wolters Kluwer.

Gupta, P. D., Bhattacharya, S., Sheorey, P., & Coelho, P. (2018). Relationship between onboarding experience and turnover intention: Intervening role of locus of control and self-efficacy. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, *50*(2), 61–80. doi:10.1108/ICT-03-2017-0023

Haueter, J. A., Macan, T. H., & Winter, J. (2003). Measurement of newcomer socialization: Construct validation of a multidimensional scale. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *63*(1), 20–39. doi:10.1016/S0001-8791(02)00017-9

Jones, G. R. (1986). Socialization tactics, Self-Efficacy and Newcomers' Adjustment to Organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, *29*(2), 262–279. doi:10.2307/256188

Klein, H. J., Polin, B., & Leigh Sutton, K. (2015). Specific Onboarding Practices for the Socialization of New Employees: Onboarding Practices. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *23*(3), 263–283. doi:10.1111/ijsa.12113

Korte, R., Brunhaver, S., & Sheppard, S. (2015). (Mis)Interpretations of Organizational Socialization: The Expectations and Experiences of Newcomers and Managers. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *26*(2), 185–208. doi:10.1002/hrdq.21206

Kram, K. E., & Isabella, L. A. (1985). Mentoring Alternatives: The Role of Peer Relationships in Career Development. *Academy of Management Journal*, *28*(1), 110–132. doi:10.5465/256064

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2014). *Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun*. OCLC: 941605605. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Learning in doing. Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mintzberg, H. (1979). *The structuring of organizations: A synthesis of the research*. His Theory of management policy series. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall.

Nonaka, I. (1994). A Dynamic Theory of Organizational Knowledge Creation. *Organization Science*, *5*(1), 14–37. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/2635068?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Saks, A. M., & Ashforth, B. E. (1997). Organizational Socialization: Making Sense of the Past and Present as a Prologue for the Future. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *51*(2), 234–279. doi:10.1006/jvbe.1997.1614

Saks, A. M., Uggerslev, K. L., & Fassina, N. E. (2007). Socialization tactics and newcomer adjustment: A meta-analytic review and test of a model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *70*(3), 413–446. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2006.12.004

Sluss, D. M., & Thompson, B. S. (2012). Socializing the newcomer: The mediating role of leader–member exchange. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *119*(1), 114–125. doi:10.1016/j.obhdp.2012.05.005

Stein, M. A., & Christiansen, L. (2011). *Successful onboarding: A strategy to unlock hidden value within your organization*. OCLC: 966601967.

Swedish Ethical Review Authority. (n.d.). Vanliga frågor. *Etikprövningsmyndigheten*. Retrieved from https://etikprovningsmyndigheten.se/vanliga-fragor/

Taormina, R. (1997). Organizational Socialization: A Multidomain, Continuous Process Model. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *5*(1), 29–47. doi:10.1111/1468-2389.00043

Van Maanen, J., & Schein, E. (1979). Toward a theory of organizational socialization. In *Research in organizational behaviour* (B. M. Shaw, Vol. 1, pp. 209–264). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R. A., & Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge*. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press.

Yin, R. K. (2016). *Qualitative research from start to finish* (Second edition). OCLC: 935783468. New York London: The Guilford Press.

A

Global Buddy Guidelines

• APTIV •

Manager's Guideline: How to choose a good buddy?

Who is a Buddy?

A buddy is a team member who partners with the new employee and offers information and support within the first few months of employment. While primarily responsible for offering advice and guidance regarding the day-to-day aspects of working at Aptiv, the buddy may also offer encouragement and knowledge resources, as they help introduce the new employee to Aptiv's culture.

Why to Have a Buddy?

- To help welcome employees and reaffirm their decision to join Aptiv
- To provide new employees with a reliable, motivated, single point-of-contact for their basic questions
- To establish orientation as a process, rather than a single induction event

Buddy Responsibilities

- To answer general questions or refer to the resources where information can be found
- To socialize the new employee on company's culture, norms and unwritten guidelines

The Buddy Checklist outlines more detailed information about the activities to be performed.

What a Buddy is NOT?

- A buddy is **not a mentor** who supports the career development of the new employee
- A buddy is **not a coach** who works on the abilities of the new employee
- A buddy does **not** replace the role of **the manager** and is not responsible for the new employee's job performance

Buddy Selection Criteria

Selections should be based on the following characteristics. A good buddy is an employee who:

- Is willing to be a buddy
- Has been an Aptiv employee for at least one year
- Is familiar with the new employee's role and work unit
- Exemplifies Aptiv's culture & values
- Has the time to be accessible and available to the new employee
- Possesses strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Shows patience and empathy
- Is well regarded and accepted by current employees

B

Guide: Questions Phase 1

To be able to map the onboarding process a battery of questions were created:

- What is planned during the onboarding?
  - Are there any trainings? What are they about? Who holds them?
  - Is there a mentorship-program? How does it work?
  - Are there other planned activities? What and why?
  - In what order are things done?
  - What is mandatory and what is optional?
- Who is responsible for what?
- What is the goal of the onboarding process?
  - What skills do they need to have?
  - How should they be?
- What languages are used and when?

C

Guide: Questions Phase 2

C.1 Questions to EGMs

- Perspective of onboarding
  - What does onboarding mean to you? What do you associate with the word onboarding?
    - *Which parts are crucial from a manager perspective?*
  - What characterizes a “perfect” onboarding for you from a manager perspective?
  - If you could only keep 3 things from the onboarding for your employees as it is right now, what would you keep?
  - If you could change anything with the existing onboarding, what would you change? Take away?
- Cooperation with HR
  - How often do you usually recruit new SFO:s?
  - How’s your cooperation with HR?
  - Do you think that your new employees get what they need from HR?
    - *If no, have you addressed this issue yet?*
- Goals of onboarding for SFOs
  - What kind of knowledge and skills are needed for the job of SFOs?
  - What of this is most important to succeed as an SFO?
  - What of this can be taught? (What can not be taught?)
  - How can this be taught?

  - How would you describe the expectations of responsibility of a new SFO after they have been to the SFO-week training?
  - How much personal contact do you have with a new SFO as their EGM? First 3 months.

- Office culture
  - How would you describe the culture at your office?
    - *How would you describe the Aptiv GOT/WUP/TCK culture to a new employee?*
  - How would you describe your leadership style?
    - *Leadership culture at Aptiv?*
  - Can you describe a common challenge for new SFO:s and how you would handle it?
  - Have you ever "lost" a new employee? If yes, why do you think?
- The role of the mentor
  - Do you pair the new employee with a more experienced employee? (Mentor for example) If yes:
    - *What is the purpose of the mentor?*
    - *What kind of guidelines do these mentors receive from you?*
    - *How do they receive these guidelines?*
    - *Is there time allocated for being a mentor? How much?*
    - *Is the mentorship-role beneficial in your employees learning?*
  - Which activities with the new employee would fit into the term on-the-job training and are not included in the mentorship?
- Anything else
  - Do you have anything else to add regarding these topics?

C.2 Questions to mentors

- Initial views on being a more experienced colleague
  - We have heard that you have been responsible for guiding new employees, do you have a term for this at your office?
  - What is included in that role, how would you define it?
  - What characterizes a good mentor according to you?
  - What would you say characterizes a good new employee?
- Goals
  - What do you believe is the goal of giving a mentor to a new employee?
  - What are the main crucial things for a new SFO to learn during the first three months of employment?
  - What does a new employee mostly need to get support with?
    - *Common questions?*
- Mentorship guidelines
  - How did you know that you were going to be a mentor?
  - What guidelines have you got regarding the mentorship? How did you get these?
    - *Written, orally etc.*
    - *Any guidelines regarding time or time-reporting?*
  - Which parts of the training/guiding of a new employee is not included in the mentoring?
  - Who choses suitable task assignments for the new employee?
  - Describe what characterizes a suitable task for a new SFO?
  - For how long did you experience that the person having a mentor was in need of/wanted support from you as a mentor?
  - How much personal contact do you have with a new SFO that you are mentoring?
    - *From first week - 6 months, 1 year*

- Comprehension of role
  - Do you feel confident in your role as a mentor? If not, what is missing to get you to feel confident?
  - What are the benefits for you regarding being a mentor?
  - Are there any drawbacks for you regarding being a mentor?
  - Describe a situation where you learned something from being a mentor.
  - What would you do better or differently if you were to be a mentor again?
- Office culture
  - How would you describe the culture at your office?
    - *How would you describe the Aptiv GOT/WUP/TCK culture to a new employee?*
  - How would you describe the leadership culture at your office?
    - *Formal/Informal leaders?*
    - *Decision making?*
- Anything else
  - Do you have anything else to add regarding these topics? (mentor/buddy)

D

Consent form

Interview Consent Form

Research investigator: Julia Darvelid, Nicolina Eklund

Research Participants name:

Voluntary Consent Form for Master thesis project "Onboarding in an International Company: A case study from Sweden, Germany and Poland"

Description of project: This study aims to map the onboarding at three different Aptiv sites located in Gothenburg, Wuppertal and Krakow. The onboarding in focus is both the general onboarding for all new hires withing AS as well as the planned activities for the role SFO. The findings from this study will be presented in a Master thesis at Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg.

My participation in this research study is voluntary and I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time.

I understand the purpose of this study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I know that I can always refuse to answer any question.

I agree that the interview will be audio-recorded and I understand and agree that parts of the interview may be quoted in the research report.

I understand that if there is any changes to the handling of this data the researchers will contact me to inform so that I can accept or reject them.

All the recordings will be deleted after completion of this thesis.

We are glad to answer your questions about this study, you can contact us by email.

Julia Darvelid (julia.darvelid@gmail.com) and Nicolina Eklund (nicolina.eklund@outlook.com)

Signature of research participant

Approved: ____
Signature of participant & Date