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Research Project Plan

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Title of the Project:

Identifying communication gaps in current business processes and analyzing the interconnections between departments to ensure customer engagement and satisfaction.

Abstract:

This research project report addresses the communication gaps that can be found in the interconnection between departments and the processes they use to share information. Customer satisfaction can be increased with a focus on improvement of internal processes. Employee training can further enhance this effect and make the future of an organization bright and long.This research was conducted in Avery Dennison's environment, a company that is now a global leader in the manufacturing of labeling technologies and providing tailor-made solutions. The company operates in multiple industries like Automotive, Food and Beverages, Pharmaceuticals and Wine and Spirits. Interviews with employees were performed to understand business practices and get insights on the Pharmaceutical Industry and its customers, to improve the products and services the company provides to them. This research project provides initially an investigation of the market and the motives behind the need for further research for this industry. Interviews with internal stakeholders identified three areas of possible improvements. The first one addresses the need for training of the sales colleagues and the idea of providing them with extra tools and knowledge. The second one being that communication flow may be slow and requests might take longer times to reach the expert. The last point of research was the differences between regions that could provide incentives for improvement.

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Introduction:

The Product Stewardship team is responsible for supporting the company's evolving business needs from a regulatory perspective. Regulations that apply to end-usage applications are becoming increasingly more strict and create the need for better support to sales representatives of the company, customers and end-users. With the latter also being more informed over the increased regulatory requirements, the requested support from Avery Dennison has become a service and a need. This in turn assumes higher responsibility and possibly higher expenses for the company. The Pharmaceutical Industry is one of the high value business sectors that makes up for ten percent of the total customer portfolio. Conducting research on this sector and the involved industry has a great impact on the ability of the company to secure business growth. Higher customer satisfaction can be achieved through optimized processes and effective communication. A clear understanding of the sales process and methods that sales representatives use to promote pharmaceutical products and services to customers is a necessity for success. It is of high value to investigate whether there is a miscommunication that exists between the Product Stewardship team, the Pharmaceutical Marketing team and the different Sales Specialists, to be able to optimize or alter current processes and acquire a better fit to the customers' needs. The Pharmaceutical Portfolio contains services that revolve around the products in order to create the best option for the customers and therefore enhance trust in the company. Avery Dennison highly prioritizes providing only the best products to its customers. Part of the services provided are tailor-made products under request from customers. Tailoring these products to comply with regulations requires a united effort from all three departments and of course the end-user. The company understands that good coordination and cooperation is required to provide this service and has managed to excel at providing it to the customers. Since sales representatives are in direct communication with customers, collecting input from them means listening to their needs and ideas directly. Therefore, the input they provide is going to act as a driver for improved internal communications. It is important for the customers and the company to collaborate and communicate to prevent problems and misunderstandings that involve compliance of the products. This research project aims to analyze the interconnection between the departments of the company and propose a viable solution that could be integrated internally. The interaction between sales specialists and customers will be a topic discussed and researched to provide data and assist in creating a complete solution that could be implemented in the company's practices or become the driver for further research from the company's side.

Research Question:

In modern businesses with the fast-changing landscape, the challenge of miscommunication has a high impact on customer satisfaction. To address this challenge the following research question can be raised:

How to optimize current business processes in order to tackle miscommunication and increase customer satisfaction?

Investigating the employee training methodologies and current communication technologies as well as daily workflow can provide multiple solutions. The ultimate goal of answering that question will be to foster operational efficiency and increase the overall customer satisfaction, by optimizing the internal communication flow of the company and promoting the personal growth of employees through specialized training.

Research Design and Methodology:

Research Type:

The first step of the research project was a clear identification of the current business practices of Avery Dennison. Identifying those processes is needed to propose optimizations and improvements. A qualitative research approach was used to create a compact understanding of the sales process, training process of sales representatives, communication flows inside the company and differences in markets. With the use of descriptive research to explain the points mentioned above, this project aims to collect original data from the involved departments and present the data in a way to showcase possible changes or improvements on these processes.

Research Methodology:

Collecting the qualitative data is mostly done through interviews. For this project semi-structured interviews were used due to differences in the interviewees. Interviewees were either Field Sales Representatives or Technical Sales Specialists. Since Technical Sales Specialists have higher technical knowledge on chemical and regulatory background, questions were adapted to their level. Interviewees were operating in different countries as well. Employees from Germany, France, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom and other countries all over Europe were interviewed. This demographic helped create a comparison between markets but also meant that some questions needed differentiation between interviews. Those countries were also chosen due to the highest revenues coming from those countries regarding Pharmaceutical products. A predetermined set of questions were used as a tool to start the interview and then follow up questions were used to provide incentives for the participants to discuss and keep their responses genuine. The reliability and validity of responses was controlled through a few questions that would involve processes that need to be handled in the same way from all of the participants. All of the interviews were transcribed with tools provided by the company and through a coding system, results were created. During the interviewing sessions the topic of each question was kept the same but questions sometimes would change order or wording to follow each participant's background and previous input. The questions provided in the results are questions that were formulated during the first interview and they were altered during the course of the project, without their original scope changing but rather the wording and their connection to the company. After the initial interview questions were reviewed to determine if they were stirring towards the required direction for the research purposes. The questions were revised with the supervisor to follow the scope of the project. During the interviews the focus was to understand the training provided to sales representatives and if they have extra needs. Creating a more clear picture of the communication flow between customer requests and customer satisfaction was the second focus and finally understanding the impact of regional regulations and markets was researched with interviews being conducted with sales representatives from different countries all over Europe and the United Kingdom.

Practicalities:
Accessing the population was done through emailing and planning meetings with them that would have the format of an interview. The questions were not given in advance in order to receive genuine responses and understand the reasoning behind those responses. During this process the supervisor was providing assistance with company related questions and problems that would arise from the participants. During the research project a total of 14 people were approached of which 12 interviews were conducted. A total of 85% of colleagues were open to provide their input.

Contribution to Knowledge:
This study aims to understand and provide improvement opportunities of the current practices used by the company and to further improve the products and services offered to customers. While improvement is the ultimate goal, creating a visual presentation of the communication pathways between the Product Stewardship team, Pharmaceutical Marketing team and Sales representatives is the most critical role in the process. Determining the correlation between the Product Stewardship team, the Sales Specialists and the Pharmaceutical Marketing team can prove promising for research on the relationships between the teams and can educate those responsible for internal policy making decisions for example the heads of departments. Knowledge gained through this project can be used as primary data and as a basis for future research and improvement inside the company's processes. Managing to create higher value for the company that starts from the Product Stewardship team can be beneficial for relationships between other departments, generating the possibility for similar research on the interconnections inside the company. The ultimate contribution of this research is to create knowledge for the company that translates in a better experience for the customers, employees and stakeholders and thus ultimately provide additional value to the company.

Presenting the Results:
The data collected from the interviews will be processed into several ways of presenting information. This includes creating a unique storyline, creating graphs with the current practices and showcasing where delays might occur. Multiple presentation tools can be used to create a better understanding of the processes for the members of the departments and help them identify miscommunications in the pathways and their working practices. A discussion for feedback and

questions that arose during the presentation will give space and time for the members to express their opinions and think of other possible suggestions. Ideally the results should be presented as university research as well but there can be changes in the content that is presented in order to protect confidential and sensitive information that can be damaging for the company if shared publicly.

Company Introduction

Avery Dennison specializes in designing and manufacturing a wide range of labels and other chemical and functional materials. The company provides products, services and solutions across multiple industries, like Food and Beverages, Automotive and Pharmaceutical-Medical products. New technologies are also part of the company's strong focuses, following its sustainability and innovation goals and its customer-centric approach. Avery Dennison operates across 50 countries all over the world with focus on providing solutions and tailor made products to customers across the globe. The company was founded in 1935 by Ray Stanton Avery, who is also the inventor of the first self-adhesive label. In 1990, the company merged with Dennison Manufacturing to form what is now Avery Dennison. The company has approximately two hundred operating locations all over the world and employs around 36.000 people. Avery Dennison operates under a flexible horizontal company structure approach where a few managers work with multiple employees and they give the opportunity to them to make decisions and work on their own projects, with low supervision. This horizontal approach is really flexible and inside the company's office this hierarchy is not translated into a difficulty to approach higher-ups. The company is team oriented and with a strong focus to make everyone feel like they are working in an environment where they can showcase and develop their skills and talents to the maximum, while learning from experts and specialists in the field.

The international environment that Avery Dennison promotes is the perfect place for new employees and interns to get experience and hone their skills. The company offers a flexible environment for both professional growth and development, but also an opportunity to live life in different ways, while your job is not affected and still enjoy a friendly atmosphere in the company. The company also provides special incentives for interns and people who do not feel ready yet to choose a career and want to experience different possibilities within the company. Lots of training sessions are being provided during internships but also to all of the departments separately to enhance employees' growth and promote professional development.

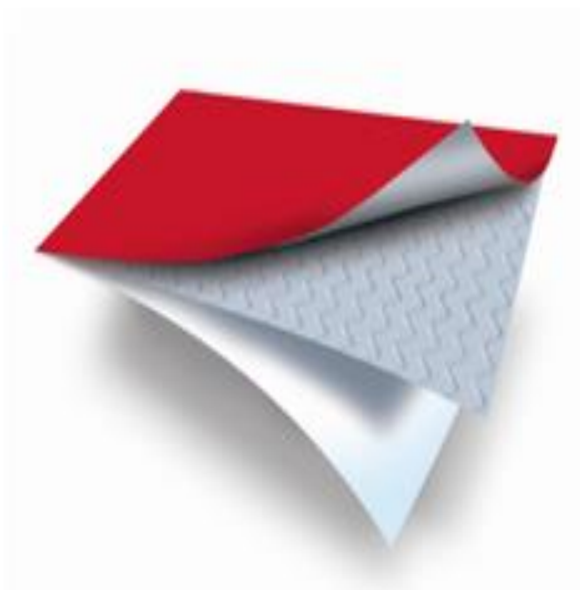
Overall, Avery Dennison offers flexibility in a professional and personal level which can be translated to happy employees inside a healthy company. Of course those incentives help the company become more efficient and the employees more productive, resulting in happy and satisfied customers as well.

In the graph provided below a basic construction of a label is shown. Avery Dennison produces the labels which are then sold to customers in big rolls. Those big rolls are transferred to customers who are most of the time converters or printers for those labels, where the labels get cut into smaller pieces and printed in order to be sold to end-users. A basic label has three layers with the top layer being called a face stock. The face stock is where the end-user provides the consumer facing information, for example through printing. Most of the time the face stock is made out of paper or plastic. The face stock is depicted in the construction below as the red layer of the label.

The second layer depicted as a gray layer in the following construction, is the adhesive layer. The adhesive is the means with which the label sticks on customers' products.The adhesive layer can have different formulations to cover different requirements depending on the product. For example if the product is going to be used for contact with food or other foodstuffs then both the adhesive layer and the face stock need to be suitable for food contact. Avery Dennison, as will be described further below, produces its own adhesives and rarely buys adhesive products from suppliers. Together with the highly innovative Research and Development Department that the company employs, new adhesive formulations and product technologies can be produced to cover every customer's needs. The production of adhesives is one of the many competitive advantages the company has.

The third layer is called the release liner. The release liner is the protective layer of the label, protecting from adhering with unwanted surfaces, while also making storing and transfer easier. The release liner is producing the most waste because this part of the label is removed before adhering the label on the product. The release liner is depicted as the white layer in the construction below. A lot of efforts are being made by Avery Dennison to reduce the amount of liner being used and thrown away or recycled, to reduce the amount of waste generated. Avery Dennison operates in a highly sustainable manner with the Reduce, Recycle, Reuse program that is taking place and wants to create a more sustainable future for the company. Sustainability of labels is really important since the amount of labels used is way bigger than the amount of products going in the market.

Image 1: Basic Label Construction



Description: The basic label construction presents the three layers of a basic label. The red layer is the face stock, the gray layer is the adhesive layer and the white/silver layer is the release liner

Market Analysis

Avery Dennison is a manufacturer of labeling materials. A lot of suppliers provide raw materials and chemicals to the company in order to produce its own adhesives and labels. Avery Dennison operates only in a Business to Business level (B2B) and does not sell directly to end-users. Due to the nature of the manufactured products, selling B2C would not be useful. The final product must be printed or sliced into smaller pieces to be ready for the end-users. Avery Dennison therefore operates mostly with converters/printers that request label materials without providing the final product application. The end users can be retail companies that operate in the food and beverage industry, automotive industry, pharmaceutical industry and many other segments. The converters that buy Avery Dennison products are also buying products from competitors and in constant communications with their customers they choose which of those products they will be providing to them. It is often that the end-users themselves would request a specific company to provide the materials for their products. The industry is really competitive and since Avery Dennison does not know the final application, providing the best services that support the final products of the customers can prove really crucial.

A lot of competitors can be recognized in the industries Avery Dennison is operating in, with the main biggest competitors being UPM Raflatac, Fedrigoni, Herma as well as 3M. Those competitors have been in part of the industry for a long time and they all provide products that have similar applications to products Avery Dennison manufactures.

A Porter's 5 Forces Analysis can also improve the insights gained for the company and the label industry. This industry analysis helps understand the competitive intensity and the attractiveness of the industry.

Bargaining power of Suppliers: Moderate

The suppliers of Avery Dennison can bargain prices of chemicals provided to the company to make the adhesives and the face stocks. Since these are the main materials used to produce labels the bargaining power of suppliers can affect the prices. The bulk purchasing done by Avery Dennison can lower this bargaining power and give the opportunity for negotiations.

Competitive Rivalry: High

As it is discussed previously the industry is really competitive and lots of companies are producing similar products with Avery Dennison. The constant competition drives new innovations and companies that have been working on these applications for years now compete on the top level against each other. Avery Dennison has shown that their self produced adhesives and the strong Research and Development Departments is successfully granting the title of market leader to the company in many industries.

Threat of Substitutes and Alternatives: Low - Moderate
The threat of substitutes cannot be high. Labeling materials are important for products that go in every market. Every industry is currently in need of labeling and alternatives are not yet created. Innovation that is also driven by Avery Dennison enables the company to grow further with multiple new applications and products.

Bargaining Power of Customers: Moderate-High
Since the company does not sell directly to end users and the customers get to choose between multiple competitors, their bargaining power is increased. Avery Dennison has been working closely with customers to be able to cover needs and provide services that help achieve better relationships. Especially, in the Pharmaceutical industry end-users care a lot about the reliability of supply and services provided with the product. This makes the bargaining power of customers stronger.

Threat of new entrants: Low
The threat of new entrants in the industry is low. This entrance requires high investments from an early point and companies that do not have an established brand cannot compete with big leaders such as Avery Dennison. Creating an economy of scale to compete in price with the leaders requires huge investments as well, making new entrants face multiple challenges. Competing against the already matured companies in this highly competitive market makes it extremely difficult for new entrants to survive and become profitable in the industry.

Based on Porter's 5 Forces Analysis, the industry mostly contains mature competitors that are already quite established and cover multiple segments. Competition is becoming more and more tough. The strong brand that Avery Dennison has achieved to create over the years and the efforts of many departments and individuals, together with the focus on innovation and sustainability, are the main advantages that lead to Avery Dennison being a successful company.

A SWOT analysis can create higher self-awareness of the company's environment and industries while making clear the competitive advantages the company holds over its competitors. Mitigating threats with strategic planning and decision making can boost the presence of the company in the market and help employees identify opportunities that support the longevity of the company..A SWOT analysis has been performed to better understand the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the company in order to dive deeper in the need for higher customer satisfaction and engagement and position the company in the market.

Avery Dennison has a strong market position. Being one of the biggest leaders worldwide with presence in almost every continent with over 200 operation locations in more than 50 countries, the company has managed to translate its presence into a core strength. In combination with the production of its own adhesives, those strengths give a clear advantage to the company. This allows for higher price control compared to its competitors, while also allowing more flexibility in the performance of the adhesive. Another strength that the company counts on to support its longevity is the diversified portfolio it offers with products and services provided in a lot of different markets. The company has a portfolio of products that are sold to the automotive industry, food and beverages retailers and pharmaceutical companies. The product portfolio is supported by tailor made products manufactured for specific applications in each one of the mentioned industries. The diverse portfolio is also supported by the high focus on innovation together with the strong name that the company has built for themselves promoting quality, quick support and continuous improvement for its stakeholders. The main focus of the company is to provide excellent products that are accompanied by excellent support and communication to its customers.

The strong profile of the company can be affected easily by many industry factors. Part of the weaknesses of the company is the high costs of raw materials that come for multiple different industries that Avery Dennison needs to cover but also the difficulty to pivot fast in newly upcoming technologies. Competitors focus on different applications and catching up to their technologies can prove slow with the size of the company.

A large number of opportunities arises when a multinational company like Avery Dennison operates in multiple markets and industries. The most important one is the ability to expand fast and cover emerging markets with the high experience and knowledge the company has accumulated throughout the years. The high needs in labeling and packaging materials creates new opportunities all around the globe for the company to focus on. Technological advancements will also prove useful and create big opportunities for Avery Dennison in the long term. A clear example of those technological advancements is the use of linerless labels, which as described by the name do not use any liner during their production, storing or application processes.

Part of the threat is a strong competition that is constantly growing and can lower the company’s presence in various industries. The technological advancements of competitors can threaten the customer satisfaction the company provides. As discussed in the weaknesses, the large size of the company makes it difficult to catch up with other companies in the advancements of technologies and applications. It is also easier for information to leak outside of the company and for competitors to be able to analyze the company’s technological advancements quicker.

Financial Review:

A financial review of the company is also performed to understand the company’s ability to be a global leader even in such a difficult environment.

The liquidity of a company is measured with the current ratio and the quick ratio. For the end year of 2022 Avery Dennison had a current ratio of 0.99 and a quick ratio of 0.63. Those ratios are considered best when they are closer or above 1. The year 2022 has been difficult for all of the companies in the label industry and that is why lower liquidity ratios were measured. Over the last few years those ratios have been stable and do not have big deviations.
The total assets of the company have been growing for the last few years and even though the industry was having a small downfall Avery Dennison managed to stay on top of it.

The net sales of the company in 2022 were measured at 9.0 billion dollars growing by almost 1.0 billion dollars compared to 2021. The gross profit margin of the company is stable over the past few years at around 27%. Avery Dennison's total liabilities are reducing every year with the assets and the shareholders equity increasing making it a company worth investing in.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned financial ratios and also the position the company holds in the market it is to say that the company holds the position of a global leader in the label packaging industry and is one of the strongest competitors. As it is discussed between industry experts, the label packaging industry is going to turn back to more normal numbers with net sales expecting to rise even more for the few years to come.

During this project the position of the company as a global leader was also shown through its presence at the LabelExpo in Brussels, Belgium. Avery Dennison was a big part of the LabelExpo where lots of customers, printers and end-users came together to present new applications, products and formulations that they offer to the market but also show their innovative mindsets and promote their companies. As part of the Marketing team, the Product Compliance team attended the expo to support the other departments and get insights on the market and the industry.

Team Description and Involved Departments:

A deeper understanding of the responsibilities of each department is required to properly assess the communication between the three involved departments of this study.This research project was initiated by the Product Stewardship department and therefore this will be the first team to describe.

The Product Stewardship title could be connected to Product Compliance for the purposes of this report. Regulatory Compliance of products means controlling the products in adhering to the laws and regulations that are in applicable to them. Avery Dennison as a company is operating in multiple industries and that means that many regulations apply to the company's products. Among these regulations determining the suitability for contact with food for the products the company sells is the most requested topic for the department. Products must adhere to specific laws and regulations that include the final application of the product but also the manufacturing process and country specific regulations for countries where the products are sold to. The Product Compliance team needs to stay on top of such regulations and proactively protect the company's products and support the different departments. Aside from proactively handling legislations, the Compliance team is in constant communication with sales representatives of the company in order to respond to product inquiries that are raised from customers. A system to handle those requests is being utilized to quickly reach the Compliance team and provide a quick and accurate response. The Compliance team has been working on providing clear responses that help the customer understand the correct application of the product and support them with their needs.

The Pharmaceutical Marketing team was directly involved during the research project. Their team involves highly skilled product managers and technical knowledge specialists that handle product portfolios and promote new products or ensure business continuity to customers. The individuals in the department were interviewed during the research project in order to gather their input and help understand the current business processes. As they have a deep knowledge of the pharmaceutical industry their help was crucial to formulate a more clear view of how the industry works and what is requested from customers to Avery Dennison. Part of their responsibilities is to support sales representatives with their sales processes and provide information that can help them sell the Avery Dennison products in a highly regulated industry.

Sales representatives were the main population of the research project. Being the people responsible to come in contact with the customers, they need to be highly knowledgeable around products and services to be able to promote them to customers. There are different approaches and responsibilities between sales representatives based on knowledge they hold and also customer portfolios. The first level of sales representatives is the Customer Sales Representatives (CSR). They are experts in selling products and services but they have limited knowledge on chemicals and regulations. Part of their responsibilities is to provide support to customers that approach them with inquiries. The next level is Field Sales Representatives (FSR), their knowledge is quite similar to CSR but their customer portfolio is more specific and support bigger customers with their needs. The last position of sales representatives are the Technical Sales Specialists (TSS) who hold the highest amount of knowledge regarding product formulations and can understand better some industries. They are experts with a technological background and can support customers with more technical questions on products and applications. They also have the knowledge to support customers with problems that might occur and help with complaints during applications. All three positions require extensive knowledge on sales processes, but TSS can handle requests that involve formulation or application problems due to the duality of their knowledge and high experience.

Results:

For the semi structured interviews a series of questions were used. Those questions are listed below. The main focus of the questions is to understand whether sales representatives are satisfied with the amount of information and documentation the Product Stewardship team offers in collaboration with the Pharmaceutical Marketing team. The questions were altered slightly when asked to the Pharmaceutical Marketing team in order to get a better understanding of their perspective and of the current practices that are currently in place. A small explanation of the meaning behind the questions is given after each question. A summary of the responses after the transcription is also provided after each question.

Question 1: <u>Could you explain the process you go through when visiting a client? Could you shortly describe how the Pharmaceutical Industry works?</u>
Sales Representatives were asked this question as an opening question for the interview to make them feel more comfortable but also as a means to understand whether the same practices are used for every region. This question gave space and time to interviewees to discuss further how the industry operates and how requests formulated by customers reach the Technical Sales Representatives.

Summary: Sales representatives are the first point of contact with the customers. The Pharmaceutical Industry holds a small percentage of the total amount of customers each sales representative has to handle. In most cases customers are converters employed by Pharmaceutical companies that provide their products worldwide and therefore Avery Dennison is not aware of the end-user or the final application. Converters can choose between competitors when selecting which products they sell to the end-users. That means that questions arising from the end-user only reach the company after some amount of time and are requested by converters. Providing alternatives and handling complaints for the use are often requested as well and can be handled by Avery Dennison. If a new formulation is requested, the converter may connect end-users directly with Avery Dennison in order to be handled by professionals and create a new product that covers the needs of the market. During those processes sales representatives need to support customers and end-users with their requests and be knowledgeable in order to provide solutions to problems that arise, while also understanding which department to ask for support. Technical sales specialists are the most knowledgeable of the sales representatives and part of their responsibilities is to be in contact with the Product Stewardship team and Pharmaceutical Marketing team to provide the best products and services to Avery Dennison customers.

Question 2: Are there some specific guidelines (training) given to you by the Pharma Marketing team before you approach clients?
This question was used to understand how current training sessions are planned and whether the company is lacking in training of the sales representatives or if there are possibilities for improvement that are requested by the Sales representatives.

Summary: Currently, training is given to sales representatives of all positions every six months. This training is provided by the Pharmaceutical Marketing team. Sales representatives should acquire lots of knowledge through training in order to be able to provide better solutions and better promote the company's products. Avery Dennison offers a wide range of products and services and sales representatives need to be always informed about changes in products and new portfolios that are being developed. This fast changing environment relies on training of the sales representatives and clear communication between departments in order to achieve the required results. This training helps FSR and CSR representatives to improve their knowledge with the products but also informs the whole of the representatives, including TSS, about new alternatives and updates on portfolios. The way the training is structured currently is more useful for sales representatives with less experience and knowledge, making it less important for TSS to attend the training and get the value they provide. Considering the large customer portfolio of Technical Sales Representatives, the differences in time zones and the amount of planned meetings TSS have, it is sometimes impossible for them to join the training. A clear need for better planning of the training arises from understanding the training process sales representatives undergo regarding the Pharmaceutical Industry. Better communication between the departments can prove useful to increase the potential of the training currently provided.

Question 3: Do you think it is important to receive training about compliance of products with regulations? Do you have any compliance issues that you are more urgent to understand? Specific topics to get training around?

This question was raised as a follow-up question to the previous one. Sometimes the two questions were asked together to make the interviewee explain more and keep the conversation moving by avoiding pauses. In the following summary, the optimization of training sessions will be discussed as a result of the input received during interviews and input from the other departments.

Summary: Optimization of the training session can help sales representatives boost their personal growth, while also supporting the company. Higher customer satisfaction can be achieved from employees that are trained properly. The feedback received from TSS, FSR and CSR is the most accurate way to realize how sales representatives perceive the current situation and find the best way to improve it. The first clear optimization that can be made is that training should be more specific to different representatives. As presented in the graph, offering specialized training for TSS who already have deeper knowledge and higher expertise on multiple topics will help them step up their everyday tasks and satisfy customers better, quicker and therefore the company would receive fewer complaints. The training of CSR and FSR should focus on empowering them by increasing their ability to use the company's tools and provided documentation, in order to be able to handle some customer requests on their own and they will not need to reach Technical Sales for requests that are easy to respond to. As can be seen on the left side of the graph below, with a focus on knowledge on Food Contact Statements and using the PFAS tool as two examples of training, CSR and FSR can be trained to be able to support customers better. On the right side of the graph the focus is on competitor analysis and product opportunities for the Pharmaceutical product portfolio. Since, TSS have the technical expertise to understand formulations and impact of regulations in the company's products, a training that helps them understand new opportunities would prove useful.

Providing information on regulation updates during training should be the focus of training for all positions with more extensive knowledge provided to specialists with technical background. Information that covers product changes and regulation updates together with affected products and markets, can create a higher level of understanding of opportunities in the pharmaceutical market. Part of the training can be compared to other competitors in the market and explain the company's advantages in order to help representatives with their sales pitch and how to promote products and services.

The last optimization that can be proposed is for training to be handled by both the Product Stewardship team and Pharmaceutical Marketing team. This implementation can create a better experience for the sales representatives, while both departments can also present their ideas and their points of view to the sales people. This change would help sales representatives understand the tasks each team has to undertake and how they handle matters. A training session like this has been tried previously and had great results for the topics that were discussed then. Making this format the typical format of those training sessions will create a more holistic view for the sales representatives, around Pharmaceutical products and services.

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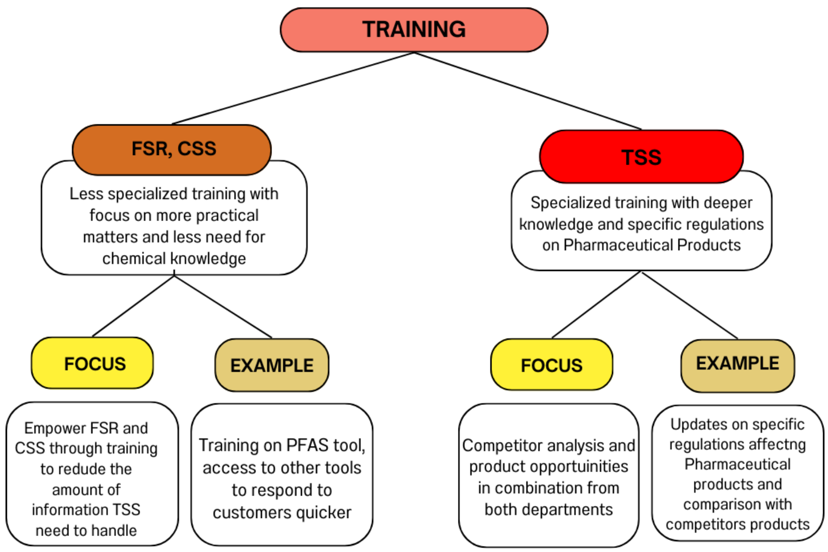
Graph 1: Optimization of training process



Description: In this graph an optimization of the training sessions is described. Specialized training is the first key point. The second key point is the focus of each of the training provided to different positions of sales representatives. Examples of training are also provided in the graph.

Question 4: Is there documentation provided during the sales meetings to customers? Do you feel like there should be something else provided? Do customers request regulations that are tailored to them?

This question is asked to sales representatives to understand if the company provides the appropriate documentation to customers or if there is something currently missing. Since the Pharmaceutical Industry is highly regulated this question can help understand if customers are in need of extra documentation before, during or after the sales process. Knowing what documentation, the company provides is also crucial to cover the miscommunication that might occur between the customer and the departments.

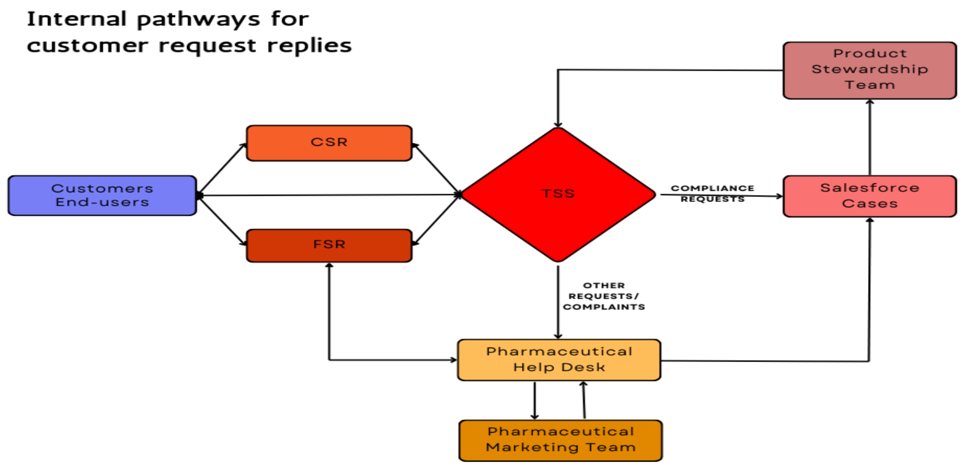
Summary: During the sales process customers do not ask for documentation. Every document that is required is requested to the company when the product is being used. This has to do with the fact that most Pharmaceutical products are highly regulated. Technical documentation is provided before the purchase and that means that customers do not need to request that after the final application. After the product is introduced to the customer requests may arise that regard the correct application of the product or regulations that affect their product. The customer then can request this information from sales representatives who then reach out to the product managers or the Product compliance team. Even though sales representatives have high access to a wide range of documentation, it is normal to miss out on some documentation, which will be provided in a later stage. Being able as a company to provide accurate information and documentation in a timely manner can prove a competitive advantage that can boost sales and increase market share. Lately, sustainability has been a topic requested by a higher number of clients. Documentation regarding sustainability is requested more and more and it has reached the point where it is now part of the description of a product and accompanies the selling process. The Sales Representatives mentioned the need for documentation that covers newly updated regulations and their requirements and can prove to be another competitive advantage for the company.

Question 5: Do you formulate pharmaceutical questions with the product managers, or do you reach out directly to Product Stewardship?
This question was raised to the Sales representatives to have a clear understanding of the path they follow when a request reaches them from customers and/or end-users. This is the main process where optimizations can be found and it is important to focus on stabilizing the process, so that every representative follows the same steps.

Summary: The responses collected by sales representatives show clearly that there are some opportunities for improvement with the way requests for pharmaceutical products are handled. More specifically, as can be seen by the graph above, requests made by customers reach CSR and FSR, who then forward the request to TSS. TSS then handles the requests based on their experience. If they think the request involves the Product Stewardship team then they raise a case through a tool called Salesforce. If TSS thinks the request should be handled by the Pharmaceutical Marketing team or if they are not sure of which department is the correct one to approach, then they will raise a case at the Pharmaceutical Help Desk. The Pharmaceutical Help Desk is operated by the Marketing Team and product managers and technical specialists are able to respond to requests from TSS. This process creates some problems in communication and is often time-consuming. Optimization can offer many advantages to both the company and customers. Reducing the time needed to respond to requests and also reducing the amount of time needed internally to find the right person to provide the response. Quick responses is a service that creates a feeling of security to customers and helps them trust the companies and its employees. Time management can reduce costs as well, since employees do not need to waste time on extra communication steps or clarifications. These are a few of the advantages that clear communication can provide to a company and boost its customer satisfaction.

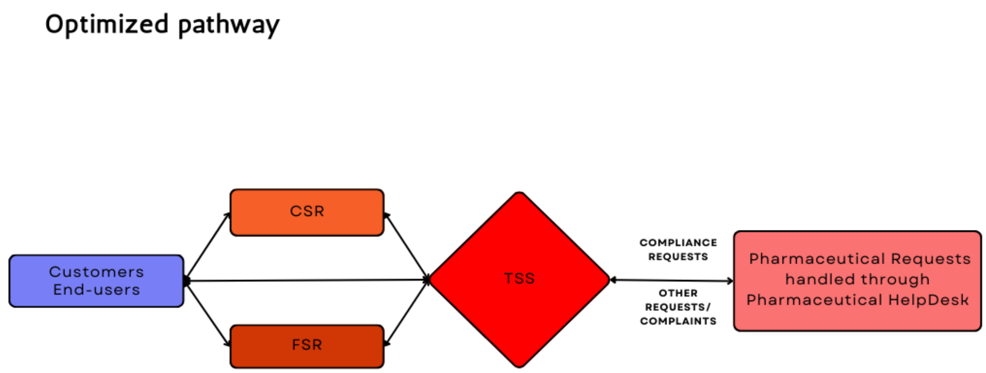
A more optimized communication flow can achieve the results mentioned above. Implementing a linear process can prove crucial for the company. The linear process as described in graph 3 involves FSR and CSR reaching out to the TSS with their requests directly, who in turn will contact the Pharmaceutical Help Desk. The person responsible for responding to requests regarding Pharmaceutical Products will be appointed by the Product Stewardship team, in coordination with the Pharmaceutical Marketing team. An advantage of a more linear process is that it makes it easier for TSS to have a person they can reach with all of their requests for Pharmaceutical products, while this person can gather information and data on requests. Creating a solid database where all of the requests are stored would help understand customer needs better and improve future communication with them, while responding quicker and more accurately to their requests.

Graph 2: Internal Pathways for customer request replies



Description: This graph shows the communication flow between customers and the company's representatives. A customer's request goes through multiple channels before it finally reaches the experts that can respond to the request. The complexity of the graph shows how time-consuming this process can be, from the request of the customer to the responsible employees and back.

Graph 3: Optimized pathway for customer request replies

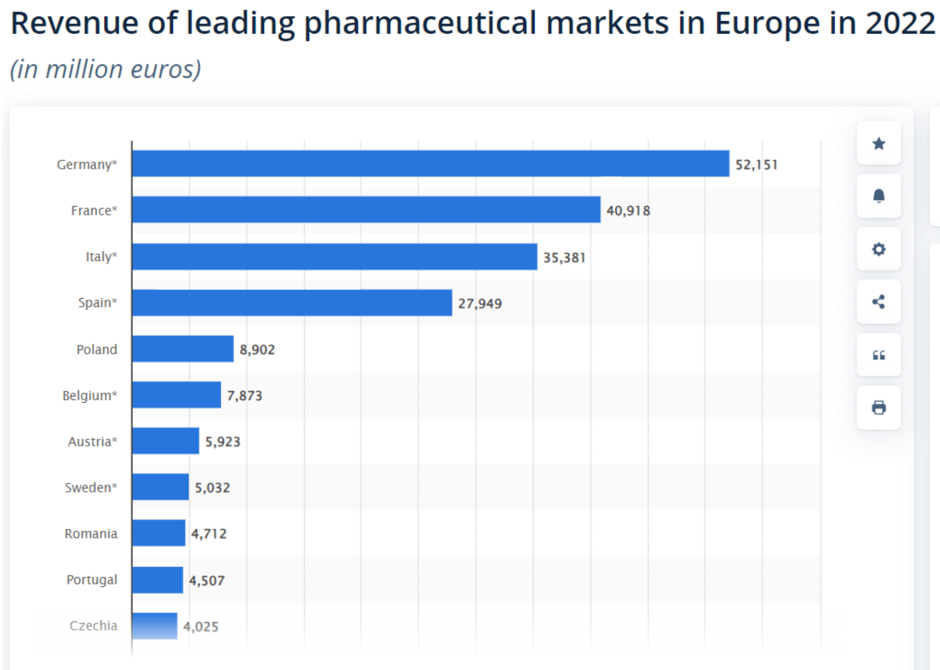


Description: This optimized graph shows how a linear process can reduce time consumption and increase customer satisfaction. The use of a single platform to connect technical sales specialists with the experts will help respond to requests quicker and store data more efficiently. The person responsible for responding to those requests will be able to handle complaints more efficiently.

Question 6: Is there a difference between markets or regions?
This question was raised to gather information about specific regional regulations that might be needed and can affect products. This would help the teams create better and more efficient documentation that would cover customer needs in those regions.

Summary: Understanding the regional regulatory requirements will provide the Pharmaceutical Marketing team and the Product Compliance team with the knowledge and tools to elevate services in the specific regions in order to get ahead of the competition and provide responses to multiple customer requests. Most customers comply with regulations covered by the European Union, while end-users sometimes ask for more country specific information due to a high amount of their products being sold in the country that is requested. Since requests reach the company from both of the previously mentioned channels, Avery Dennison needs to be ready to provide a response that can cover the needs in the most efficient way possible. For example, customers in countries like Germany and Austria request a high amount of Food Contact Statements due to the stricter local regulations. Germany is the leading market as it can be seen in graph 4 and therefore the country is highly regulated regionally. In Italy (third leading market in graph 4), there are specific regulations that apply for products sold in the country, but through extensive research the company has managed to find a way to cover those requests by providing documentation and statements that products comply with European regulations and therefore they would comply with the more regional Italian regulations. Switzerland also has the same regulations as EU regulations and therefore the company can provide a response that satisfies the customer. Following Brexit, the United Kingdom has also formed their own regulations but due to a combination of UK regulations lacking in specific topics and EU regulations raising high standards, most of the customers demand documentation on European regulations and not specifically for the UK. Another interesting result is that Eastern European countries have not issued regulations as strict as the ones from Western Europe yet. Products covering the needs of these markets have to comply with the same regulations as all products but requests regarding compliance of the products are less often and most of the times the end users are less aware of the regulations compared to the large multinational companies residing in western Europe. Avery Dennison is focusing its efforts on providing statements and documentation on the most relevant and most of the upcoming European regulations. The Product Stewardship team is making this possible by close coordination with the Pharmaceutical Marketing team. Input from Sales representatives and constant communication will boost the effectiveness of the efforts of the teams since there will be direct interaction between the representatives and the client, giving a competitive advantage to Avery Dennison compared to other companies. This process has already been used efficiently in some cases but making it a systematic process can enhance customer engagement and satisfaction.

Graph 4: Revenue of Leading Pharmaceutical Markets in Europe in 2022



[Pharmaceutical market revenue in Europe by country 2022 | Statista]

Description: This graph from Statista shows the revenues of pharmaceutical markets with Germany being the leading market, followed by France and Italy. This has an effect on how highly regulated specific regions are.

Question 7: Are you aware of the difference between US and EU standards? If yes, does this affect your sales process? Maybe if the converter wants to sell in Europe or the US would that change how products are promoted?

The scope of this question was to understand the need for documentation that might affect global sales and reach end-users to other continents.

Summary: As discussed previously in the report, a multinational company like Avery Dennison needs to be on top of regulations in order to provide the most accurate information possible to customers and end-users while also overcoming competition in the industry. A high number of customers sell their products into the United States. The regulatory landscape in the US differs from Europe and can therefore make products inappropriate for specific applications. Through the sales representatives input the company can measure the quantity of requests for FDA and other US or Canadian regulation. In the Pharmaceutical industry compliance with the FDA is required for products being sold in the US. Customers and end-users request this information in advance and Avery Dennison provides all of the needed information. Products in the Pharmaceutical portfolio are compliant with the US regulations, making it easy for customers to sell those products in the US as well as the European Markets. Sales Representatives are well aware of the Pharmaceutical product portfolio and promote these products to customers when the application is mentioned. In close coordination with the Pharmaceutical Marketing team they also provide services to support products being sold to the US as well as the EU. Those services involve testing of the products in the final product or application and sometimes even training provided to customers. With those services the company can create higher customer satisfaction and a feeling of trust.

Question 8: Are there any documents or regulations that you would like to see covered by the company and maybe be ahead of the competition? Any last comments that you would like to make or any points that might be important for the Product Stewardship team?
This last question gave time and space for the sales representatives to express their ideas and suggestions that might have been missed during previous meetings or training sessions. It also creates an opportunity for them to discuss parts of the interview that they did not like in order to help improve the quality of the following interviews. Giving the freedom to speak openly about the Product Stewardship team, also helps the team understand where their strengths and weaknesses are, providing feedback for further improvement and optimization of processes.

Summary: Through the interviews the representatives expressed their satisfaction with the speed that compliance requests are being handled and with the appropriate urgency given to cases that need to be taken care of immediately. Some of the sales representatives were happy with recent minor changes happening in the way we provide the information to customers. For example, some of them mentioned the effective addition of the letter generator that took place by the Product Stewardship team. With this tool all of the responses provided by the Product Stewardship team are written with the same format and formality while also making the documents more appealing to the customers. Many of the pharmaceutical champions mentioned new, upcoming regulations that the company can look up on and give responses in order to get ahead of the competition. The Product Stewardship team is paying attention to those requests and is trying to follow customers' needs as much as possible. Some regional regulations were requested regarding documentation that the company could further provide. Creating a statement for a regulation, that can be used as a response for requests of customers, is a task handled by many employees of the company and can be time consuming but most importantly expensive. With the input provided by sales representatives and the efforts of both the Product Stewardship team and the Pharmaceutical Marketing team, a clear planning on what regulations affect our products, can be proposed. Taking that into account, a clear communication between the three involved departments is needed to choose the best path for the future.
Sales Representatives are the link between customers and the Product Stewardship and Pharmaceutical Marketing teams. The input they provide can change how the company addresses some of the problems currently facing and also how the company communicates and satisfies its customers. During the interviews sales representatives had time to think about their effect on customer satisfaction and communication with other departments and understand more how their input and feedback is valuable for the company. At the end, some of the representatives requested results to be posted and shared with them through a presentation in order to compare with their colleagues' needs for further improvements.

Summarizing all of the questions that were mentioned above, the interviews with the sales representatives provided lots of crucial information to create a visual presentation of the current situation in Avery Dennison's processes. The pharmaceutical industry is about 10 percent of the total customer portfolio. Therefore, it is important to ensure a high customer satisfaction and engagement. Sales representatives are the main drivers of this success and it should therefore be a high priority of the company to support them with their daily activities and responsibilities. Training the representatives can prove crucial to the company's future and longevity, since training increases productivity and lowers response times. From the interviews conducted for this research report, the current training process used by the Pharmaceutical department was discussed together with the advantages of the training program. From the previous discussion the need for specialized training arised, with the representatives also mentioning the importance of an optimization of the current process. During the interviews it became clear that sales representatives value the training and want to achieve better knowledge. Suggestions on improvement were given by them, for example, selecting more favorable time slots and quicker communication on topics of training. A short-term goal that the company can achieve is the optimization of this process. A model will be proposed in order to create a more specialized training program that can enhance the productivity of sales representatives and become a driving force for customer satisfaction. Deeper knowledge for TSS and more practical support with the company's tools for FSR and CSR were the main suggestions provided for the training optimization.

The communication flow regarding customer requests was further researched for this project. A visual presentation of the current process was created that shows the complex pathways information follows from the moment the information is requested from the customer, until it reaches back to them. Since experts between departments need to communicate to provide a response, the involvement of two departments and multiple platforms that store information make it difficult for easy access and quick responses. Information storing can prove useful for training of newer employees, while giving the opportunity to access older information to respond to complaints or requests in an accurate manner. Optimizing this pathway can reduce response times and remove potential burden on colleagues. An optimization was proposed that can be implemented short-term to create a more linear pathway. One where all of the requests reach one single department where a person trained to be responsible to take care of these requests can handle them and store the information. A long-term investment can also be derived from this. Since that person might not always be part of the company, centralizing the information and knowledge with one person can be problematic. The company will have to investigate a personalized solution for this problem. This could either mean starting a specific department that would take care of the Pharmaceutical Product requests or by making guidelines for the specific position for current and future employees. As creating better communication inside the company would mean higher customer satisfaction, the impact of regional markets was discussed in this report to analyze potential opportunities the company has to investigate. As described the impact is not extensive since most of the countries follow European regulations and even regional regulations can be covered by European ones. This process is not static and changes happen quite often. That creates the need for the Product Stewardship team to work closely with the Pharmaceutical marketing team and the sales representatives of the company, in order to always be ahead of the regulatory requirements for the Pharmaceutical Product Portfolio.

Conclusion:

This project report creates a clear understanding of the current business processes and the interconnection between the three different departments. Optimizations on processes were proposed and suggestions were given. The company can review these optimizations and apply the most appropriate optimizations to satisfy its customers and achieve higher engagement. This report can form a basis for the company to address future problems and come up with recommendations to improve practices. It is important to mention that with the recommendations that were proposed the company can work on tackling internal miscommunication and create an environment where relationships with customers can thrive. All of the proposed optimizations and the future recommendations proposed below are trying to provide a clear incentive for employees to focus their attention on achieving that.

Future Research Recommendations:

Through the duration of the project multiple questions arose that due to time constraints were not investigated during this project but can be addressed and handled in the future. One of the recommendations that can be proposed is reaching out to customers directly. Since for this project the interconnections of the company's departments were researched, understanding the connection between customers and Avery Dennison would provide incentives for the employees, to ensure better communication with customers.

Another recommendation that can be given is comparing Big Pharmaceutical customers with smaller ones. As this report provided evidence of no differences between regions or countries, a report that would research the effect of size of a company and its departments would prove useful to handle requests from clients in a different manner.

The last recommendation that can be made is doing research on competitors and other Product Stewardship teams. Understanding what competitors do differently and how they approach the market would help the company become more flexible. Meetings with European regulatory policy makers and training sessions could also stir the company towards this direction and help proactively understand potential threats that might reduce customer satisfaction.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to express my gratitude to my daily supervisor Lesley Bos, who helped me complete this project with his daily support and his creative ideas. His feedback helped me grow in a personal and professional level and become a better individual, while also helping me understand how the company works during the six months of the Internship.

I would like to thank my daily supervisor from the University of Utrecht, Bart Verkade, who supported my project academically and proposed changes that would improve the quality of the research project.

I would like to thank Avery Dennison and its employees for the friendly and exciting environment they created for me, where I could hone my skills, while also getting new knowledge and completing my internship.

Self-Reflection:

During my Internship I was lucky enough to work with a great team and have a helpful and friendly supervisor. This experience helped me grow personally and professionally and I am grateful that I have also been provided with the opportunity to join the team full time after finishing my Internship. My Internship opportunity started when I was first approached by the Talent Acquisition intern of Avery Dennison. I had applied for a financial position in the company but the highly skilled and well trained individuals the company hires, immediately understood that my background and knowledge would be highly appreciated within another department, the Product Compliance team. The Interview process was a great experience for me. It was the first time going through a process like this and for my internship I had the opportunity to go through two of them for the position of Compliance Intern. The second interview was with my supervisor, Lesley Bos and I immediately understood that he was sure of what he was looking for in an intern and how I could fit as a part of the team. The dual knowledge that Science and Business Management provide together with my background in Chemistry filled all of the requirements a Product Compliance Intern needs for the position. My Chemistry background would make it easier to understand chemicals used in the company's adhesives and the regulations that we need to adhere to as a company. My business skills that helped a lot were mostly to understand the style that the company operates, who our customers are, how we approach them and also how to communicate with them.

The first steps of my Internship in a company like Avery Dennison were really interesting. The company offers multiple onboardings to understand how each department works and get accustomed to processes and of course people. The employees of Avery Dennison were exactly as the team I was working with helpful, easily approachable and always friendly. Even the higher ups would always take time to discuss information and ideas with the interns and of course get to know us better. For me, this type of environment makes me want to work hard to achieve my goals and make my colleagues proud which I strived to achieve during those 6 months.

After the first month, it felt like it went by really quick, I was already given some daily tasks to perform and work on my own at the side of my project. These tasks involved me responding to customers' requests through salesforce and doing that for two days in a row. Of course, that made me nervous at first because I could tell that I was not yet ready to perform such a task and I did not know what effect it had on my department. I immediately realized that I was trained well enough to be able to handle most responsibilities that were given to me, but most importantly I was always getting assistance from my colleagues without ever feeling that I was bothering them or making them frustrated. As an Intern I think those two feelings are the most important feelings for a successful internship. Knowing that you can perform because of the training that you were given and that you can always get assistance when you feel overwhelmed, made me achieve better results than I was expecting. This is something that was also connected to my first Internship in a laboratory environment. The moment you realize you can work on your own and only ask for advice, provides a creative freedom to start how you can do your job more efficiently and productively, while also putting effort on other projects.

For my research project, I had clear communication with my supervisor and he provided me with the flexibility to work on stuff I wanted to. I could reform the project to what I thought would be interesting to me and what the company might find interesting. Weekly meetings were planned to discuss the project and new leads that I might have. During the project my supervisor provided me with the first incentives and then tried to guide me every time I was providing him with new information. I think this was a great way to handle the research project from his side since it gave me freedom, while also steering me towards the right direction or explaining why things might be out of the planning. When I started conducting the interviews with the sales representatives of the company he would always listen to the points and notes I made and would make me think deeper on why things were happening that way or what might have been some underlying causes.

The interview process helped me a lot with my personal development as well. In my opinion, I managed to show a quick adaptation and flexibility to conduct surveys with people from different countries and work with different customers and make sure that I get the most out of those thirty minutes of discussion I had. I was not sure at first of how well I could succeed on that and how important my results would be. With the guidance I got and the feedback through the interview process I managed to improve a lot and make the experience way more interesting for me and the interviewees as well.

In my opinion, I managed to handle communications well with both internal employees and customers. I learned how to provide more clear and concise responses, provide statements that can cover customer requests and complaints without interfering with the company's policies and also best practices. I had to understand how a statement is formed and how to check whether substances that do not adhere with regulations are part or not of the formulation of the products we make. Those skills will help me become better with my new job and give me a head start since I am already working with the team for six months now.

What I also experienced during those last few months and what I think is important for every student, that is going through an internship, is to have a mentoring session. Mentoring sessions were planned monthly and they would consist of questions raised by the interns and had to be answered by mentors. This mentoring session helped me a lot in my journey to understand my strengths and weaknesses and most importantly to understand what parts of my job I like and what I would like to do differently. Having mentoring sessions can help students that are going through a job search process to narrow down their searching terms or at least the field that they are looking for. This is something that my university studies did not achieve to help me a lot with and therefore the opportunity I got from Avery Dennison, I tried to use as best I could. During those sessions I got to discuss with other experts from different departments like Procurement, Technical Sales. I got the opportunity to learn about positions my company was offering while also understanding the flexibility to switch between positions if needed. That is a huge part of the Avery Dennison team and creates an exciting and friendly environment for employees.

As for my first job within the company I had to make a very important realization. During the interviews for the position of Junior Compliance Analyst I realized that I need to transition from an Intern Master's student to a full time working person. This in turn bears the responsibility of working on my own projects and working proactively without having someone to supervise my every step. Even so, I am still aware that assistance is still going to be there and that's why I am grateful for the opportunity given to me.

To conclude my self-reflection, I would like to mention that the Science and Business Management Master's Program provided me with a lot of useful information that I can use in my future career. I think a more close support of the students would also help boost their careers to the maximum, without restricting their freedom. Overall, I think choosing Avery Dennison as the company to conduct my Business Internship was a choice that helped me hone my skills and show my best self and I am grateful for the opportunity I was given to keep working with the same team for a little while longer.

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