THE INFLUENCE OF GOAL ORIENTATION ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF USEFULNESS OF SUPERVISORY FEEDBACK AND PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE IN SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED SALES ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

Title: The influence of goal orientation on the perceptions of usefulness of supervisory feedback and perceived performance in small and medium sized sales organizations

Date of the seminar: May 2012

Course: Master Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation Internship and degree project (Master thesis 15 ECTS)

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Keywords: sales organizations, goal orientation, feedback, performance

Thesis purpose: This thesis has three purposes: solidify all research conducted around goal orientation, feedback, and performance, and making conclusions on combining these researches. Secondly, this research aims to test propositions based on earlier quantitative research in a real company and feedback setting. Thirdly, this research looks aims to develop an understanding why feedback has a perceived positive or negative feedback on performance.

Methodology: A case study in one specific company, Wackes whereby quantitative and qualitative research has been conducted. Quantitative analysis has been selected, to analyze the goal orientation and perceived influence of feedback on job satisfaction and performance. Qualitative research has been selected, to develop a further understanding of the role and perceptions of feedback and its effect on performance.

Theoretical perspectives: A person's goal orientation influences how people see their own ability in achieving situations such as a sales setting. A goal orientation can predict how a person perceives feedback, and which form of feedback has the best effect. A salesperson's goal orientation also influences how they see performance, and how feedback can influence their performance.

Conclusions: A learning goal orientation has a positive effect on performance and people with a learning orientation perceive feedback as a useful tool to develop skills and, therefore, prefer behavioral feedback, which can be either positive or negative. A person with a performance-avoid goal orientation does not perceive feedback as useful or as positively correlated with performance. Contradicting to literature, this research suggests that behavioral feedback is preferred over output feedback and both positive and negative feedback are perceived as useful. Finally, this research found four reasons why feedback is perceived useful; it provides a possibility to increase skills, furthermore feedback can provide focus and structure, and finally feedback provides reassurance. According to literature, the last two reasons are directly related to job satisfaction, which has a positive effect on performance.

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1. Introduction

This master thesis focuses on the motivation of sales people and the role of feedback on performance. Before introducing all concepts and findings in detail, a background and a problem discussion is presented, before the overall research question of this study is introduced. Finally, the purpose of this research and its key concepts are provided.

1.1 Background

For many companies sales are crucial for firm's existence, since it represent the incoming cash flows. In order to generate sales, a sales team is required. The more successful the sales team, the higher the sales and the financial performance of a firm. Therefore, considerable research has been conducted towards sales team motivation and personnel performance, to increase overall firm performance. Especially in times of economical difficulties, companies try every method to cut cost, increase effectiveness, and boost personnel efficiency. Hence, the amount of literature dedicated to staff performance and the role of goals towards motivation of employees (Locke & Latham, 1984; 1990; 2002) is extensive. At the same time, research recognizes the importance of feedback for employees, because a relationship between supervisory feedback and performance has been established in literature (Brett & Atwater, 2001; Kuvaas, 2006; Srivastava & Rangarajan, 2008; Jaworski & Kohli, 1991; Brett & VandeWalle, 1999). Therefore, feedback can provide a source of efficiency for companies in everyday life, and in times of economical difficulties, the difference between existence and bankruptcy. This thesis sets out to analyze the influence of regular supervisory feedback on performance, taking the concept of goal orientation into account.

1.2 Problem discussion

Sales team motivation has been a topic in literature for the last decades (Locke & Latham, 1984; 1990; 2002) and many concepts related to motivation have been investigated. Additionally, research towards motivation has been a studied concept in psychology as well, which lead to a interdisciplinary analysis of concepts. One of these concepts present in both literature streams is the concept of goal orientation, defined as *"a mental framework for how individuals interpret and respond to achievement situations"* (Brett & VandeWalle, 1999, p.864). This theory suggests that people in achieving situations, such as a business setting, can have two possible goal orientations: a learning goal orientation or a performance goal orientation. These goals depend on the set of beliefs a person has about ability and effort in achieving situations (Brett & VandeWalle, 1999). These goal orientations have been academically accepted in business research around goal setting and feedback research (Locke & Latham, 2002; Sujan, Weitz, & Kumar, 1994; Jaworksi & Kohli, 1991; Markose, 2011; Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Attenweiler & Moore, 2006). In recent literature, the performance orientation has been split up into two streams: performance-prove and performance-avoid (Middleton & Midgley, 1997; VandeWalle, 1997; Attenweiler & Moore, 2006). Performance prove

orientation states that people are looking for positive reinforcement, whereas performance-avoid orientation states that people avoid certain actions in order to circumvent performance feedback.

Therefore, a specific goal orientation leads to information and knowledge about how people perceive their own behavior, motivation, and ultimately how they can increase performance. People with a learning goal orientation perceive developing skills as needed, in order to increase their performance, whereas people with a performance orientation believe that hard work and effort can increase performance (Sujan et al., 1994). The relationship between goal orientation and performance has been tested in various studies, and different outcomes have been presented in academic literature. Research also recognizes that various moderators influence the relationship between goal orientation and performance, each having a different effect on the outcome of this relationship. One of these moderators, investigated in earlier research, is the influence of regular supervisory feedback on the relationship between goal orientation and performance (Anseel, van Yperen, Janssens & Duyck, 2011; Jaworksi & Kohli, 1991; Markose, 2011; Anseel & Lievens, 2009; Silver et al., 2006).

Although the relationship between goal orientation, regular supervisory feedback and performance has been investigated previously, many of these studies have been of quantitative nature, thereby, making use of questionnaires focusing on what if situations, rather than tests in a real company and feedback settings (Markose, 2011; Anseel & Lievens, 2009). By doing so, the role of regular supervisory feedback as a moderator, in the relationship between goal orientation and perceived performance, has to the knowledge of this study not been analyzed in a real company and feedback case study setting. Therefore, a gap in current academic literature around these concepts exists, which provides an opportunity for an academic contribution. Additionally, research has been conducted into the relationship between goal orientation and performance, mainly by Silver et al. (2006). These researches found a relationship between goal orientation and performance; the reasons behind this relationship are not investigated. This research aims to look into the relationship between goal orientation and perceived performance, thereby, taking the moderating effect of regular supervisory feedback into account. Moreover, it aims to identify the reasons for each goal orientation and why feedback might or might not, influence their perceived performance.

Therefore, this research aims to provide answers to two gaps in the current literature; do the findings made in previous quantitative literature around goal orientation, regular supervisory feedback, and performance apply in a real life company, and feedback setting? And why do people perceive feedback as a positive or negative influencer on performance?

1.3 Research question

As concluded in the previous paragraph, this research focuses on the impact of goal orientation of the sales team, perceived performance, and the influence of regular supervisory feedback in this relationship. Thus, the overall research question of this thesis is: *"How does a salesperson's goal orientation influence the stance towards regular supervisory feedback and its perceived effect on performance in small and medium sized sales organizations?"* In order to answer this question, a two-step process is followed: the first round of interviews took place before the actual feedback sessions were introduced, to analyze a salesperson's stance towards the feedback sessions and the influence on the perceived performance, without having experienced them yet. The second round of interviews took place after two feedback sessions and analyzed a person's goal orientation and again the stance towards the regular supervisory feedback sessions and perceived performance.

1.4 Purpose

This research serves several purposes. Firstly, this thesis aims to solidify various researches in the fields of goal orientation, regular supervisory feedback, and perceived performance. Many researches have been conducted related to these topics; however, a research involving all three concepts has not been conducted to the knowledge of this research. Therefore, combining all literature and making conclusions based on combining these theories is the first purpose of this research. Secondly, it aims to look into the role of regular supervisory feedback as a moderator in the relationship between goal orientation and (perceived) performance as suggested by Silver et al. (2006). Although several researches touched upon this topic, one way or another, a real study into the relationship between these three constructs has not taken place in a real company setting. Therefore, the second purpose of this research is to analyze the relationship between goal orientation, regular supervisory feedback, and perceived performance in a real company setting. Previous research into these areas took the form of large quantitative questionnaire based research, rather than into a real company setting with qualitative information. Therefore, the first contribution of this research is to test the previous made statements in a real life company setting with actual feedback sessions. Finally, this research aims to develop an understanding, why supervisory feedback has a positive or negative effect on perceived performance by making use of qualitative in-depth interviews. In order to answer the previously stated research question and to fulfill this purpose, an in-depth case study of one company is used, Wackes. Wackes is a Swedish company, specialized in tailored merchandising services for large corporations. The company has currently three offices in Sweden, two in China, and a sales representative in France. It has an annual turnover of around 125 million SEK. Wackes largely depends on sales within their current client base and therefore employees a sales team of 12 people in Sweden.

Next to being the case-study company of this research, Wackes is also an internship company of the master program "Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management". In this capacity, an entrepreneurial health audit was conducted in Wackes at the end of 2011. This Entrepreneurial Health Audit yielded surprising information for Wackes about the sales team and its motivation. One of the most surprising findings was that mainly the sales team disagreed with the statement *"there is an active search for big opportunities"*, something that is generally considered to be the major task of a sales team. Their answers showed a high standard deviation and a large amount of negative answers, when asked if the number of feedback sessions last year was sufficient. The limited amount of feedback was acknowledged by Wackes and is mainly due to the time constraints of the CEO, who is also responsible for the sales team. Therefore, it was decided to hire a new sales manager to introduce changes in the sales team and to provide more regular feedback. The new sales manager will hold two individual feedback sessions a month, with the various sales people, in order to provide assistance for the sales person on the one hand, and to increase sales and firm performance on the other hand. Due to these changes within Wackes, with the introduction of a new sales manager and a new feedback system, Wackes is a good candidate to examine the effects of newly introduced regular supervisory feedback sessions on perceived performance. A change in perceived performance can be found due to the fact that there is a before and after situation. This combination makes Wackes an interesting case study from an academic perspective that can potentially identify certain patterns, which might also be applicable in similar companies.

1.5 Limitations

Two limitations have been identified in this research. Firstly, due to the restricted time of this research, studying the effects of regular supervisory feedback on real performance is not possible; instead this research focuses on perceived performance of the salespeople themselves. The second limitation of this research lies in the small sample size of five salespeople participating. Because goal orientation is treated as given in this research, presence of all three goal orientations would yield the best results, unfortunately; only two goal orientations could be identified and therefore tested.

1.6 Key concepts and definitions

- **Goal orientation:** a theory developed in psychology stating that individuals can have three orientations in achieving situations: learning goal orientation, performance-prove orientation and performance-avoid orientation which implies different views on performance and capability.

- **Feedback:** *"information concerning one's progress towards attaining his or her goal(s), allows one to compare his or her performance with the target level"* (Tolli & Schmidt, 2008, p.692). This research makes use of two feedback frameworks: feedback matrix and feedback form. The feedback mentioned in this research

refers to the regular supervisory feedback provided by the new sales manager every two weeks in a private one-on-one setting.

- **Feedback matrix:** a model developed by Jaworksi & Kohli (1991) which argues that there are two dimensions in feedback: the locus of feedback, which is either behavioral (you did a good sales presentation) or output based (you exceeded your sales target) and the valance of feedback: feedback is either positive or negative. Combining these two dimensions results in a matrix with four different types of feedback.

- **Feedback form:** next to the feedback matrix research suggests that feedback can take two forms: task-oriented and comparative, the first being only focused on the task and an individual performance, the latter, how a person performs compared to the rest of the workforce.

- **Perceived performance:** performance is measured on a perceived basis rather than actual sales figures and refers to how a sales person sees his or her own performance relative to other salespeople in the firm.

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter the three main concepts are first discussed in general to explain the relations between the three concepts. Additionally, the three concepts are merged in order to go deeper into the relationships between the different concepts. In this process, several propositions are developed, which are tested in the empirical part of this research.

2.1 Goal orientation

Goal orientation is a theory developed in psychology, which was proposed by Dweck (1986). It states that people in achieving situations can pursue two different goal orientations: a learning goal orientation and a performance goal orientation (Dweck, 1986). This theory is also used in business literature, to explain the behavior in business situations and has been validated and academically accepted in goal and feedback theory (Locke & Latham, 2002; Sujan et al., 1994; Jaworksi & Kohli, 1991; Markose, 2011; Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Attenweiler & Moore, 2006). Although both orientations are fundamentally different, many researches show that they can be present simultaneously, and each goal orientation can be dominant at different times (Sujan et al. 1994; Attenweiler & Moore, 2006). Although the overall goal orientation has been accepted, changes have been made in the two-factor goal orientation model. Later research in this field modified this model, by splitting the performance goal orientation into two orientations: performance-prove orientation and performance-avoid orientation, which results in three different possible goal orientations: learning orientation, performance-prove orientation, and performance-avoid orientation:
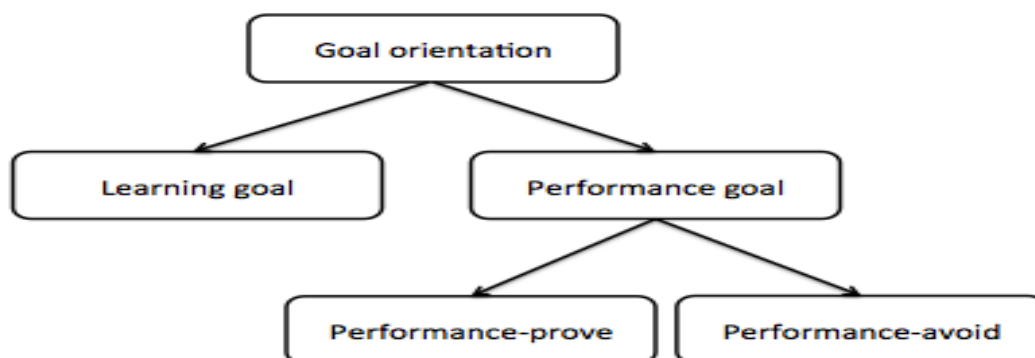

Figure 1: Goal orientation overview

Research conducted by Attenweiler and Moore (2006) and Silver et al. (2006) suggests that the three-factor analysis covers the goal orientation of people in general better than the two-factor orientation. This has been subject for debate; however, the three-factor analysis is now the most used model in goal orientation research (Markose, 2011; Silver et al. 2006). Therefore, when relating to goal orientations, the three-factor model is used throughout this research.

A learning goal orientation proposes simply that an individual is focused on the development of skills and competences (Anseel et al., 2011). With a learning orientation, salespeople enjoy the process of discovering how to sell effectively; they are attracted by challenging sales situations and not unduly bothered by mistakes (Sujan et al., 1994). Due to the mindset that skills can be learned, a learning orientation increases salespeople's willingness to change their method of sales (Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). A learning goal orientation is somebody's believe that ability can be developed and that effort is an efficacious strategy for developing the skills needed for successful task performance (VandeWalle et al., 2001).

In research, the concept of performance goal orientations has always lead to mixed results for company effectiveness and firm performance (Elliot, 1999; Payne, Youngcourt, & Beaubien, 2007). Anseel et al. (2011) argue that the inconsistent effect in previous research, related to performance goals, can be understood based on the "hybrid" nature of performance goal orientations. As noted earlier, performance goal orientations have been split up between performance-prove and performance-avoid goal orientations: under a performance-prove goal, salespeople seek favorable evaluations of their skills from their managers and colleagues. They are reluctant to experiment with new approaches because this might lead to less favorable outcomes and therefore negative evaluations. Salespeople with a performance prove or performance avoid orientation believe their skills and abilities cannot be changed and, therefore, tend to rely on increasing their overall effort, in order to get better outcomes and, thus, evaluation.

On the other hand, a performance-avoid goal orientation can be described as an orientation, whereby people aim to avoid any negative evaluations (Middleton & Midgley, 1997; VandeWalle et al., 2001). Therefore, the main difference between performance-avoid and performance-prove orientation is the fact that the first aims to avoid failure, whereas the latter is about achievement of success (Silver et al. 2006). When people have a performance-avoid orientation, they circumvent the appearance of incompetence by avoiding challenging tasks with a high risk of failure (Silver et al. 2006).

2.2 Feedback

Supervisory feedback is a useful mechanism for controlling sales people's performance (Teas, 1983). Although the earlier described orientations are relatively stable, these

orientations can be altered through conditions in the work environment (Ames & Archer, 1988). One of these conditions, which are likely to alter the goal orientation of salespeople, is supervisory feedback (Boggano & Barrett, 1985). Feedback has been studied extensively in research, mainly in relation to goal setting theories and is acknowledged to be needed in order for goal setting to be effective (Locke & Latham, 1990). Research also shows that there are two flows in feedback generally used by management: one that flows toward management about the activities of sales people and their outcomes, and one that flows from management to salespeople, in order to influence their activities and behaviors (Darmon & Martin, 2011). Furthermore, research generally found that positive feedback enhances job performance, job satisfaction and/or other criterion variables (Jaworski & Kohli, 1991).

2.2.1   Feedback matrix

An accepted model in academic literature regarding feedback is the feedback matrix proposed by Jaworksi & Kohli (1991), which argues that supervisory control can occur in two stages: either during the process stage, called behavioral feedback, or during the output stage, called output feedback. The output and behavioral models of control are called the locus of feedback (Jaworksi & Kohli, 1991). Furthermore, a second dimension is introduced: the valance of feedback. This states that feedback is either positive (you did a very good job on that client) or negative (you could have done a better job on that client). Combining these two dimensions, a matrix structure with four types of feedback is proposed by Jaworksi and Kohli (1991), which results in four feedback possibilities: positive output feedback, negative output feedback, positive behavioral feedback, and negative behavioral feedback. This framework has been the basis for additional research into various forms of feedback and its influence on sales team performance, motivation, and goals (Rich, 1998; Markose 2011; Sujan et al.; 1994). Sales researchers have found supervisory feedback to be an important variable, significantly influencing a salesperson's role clarity, job satisfaction, motivation, and performance (Teas & Horrell, 1981). Furthermore, Sujan et al. (1994) found that feedback could change the goal orientation of a sales person.

2.2.2   Form of Feedback

Next to the distinction between positive and negative feedback, and performance or behavioral feedback, research also has been conducted towards the form of feedback. A common distinction is between task-referenced feedback and comparative or normative feedback (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000; Anseel et al., 2011). In many feedback sessions, people are confronted with their performance level, compared to other people's one (Denisi & Kluger, 2000) and according to Anseel et al: *"Comparative feedback provides individuals with information on their performance level in comparison to others. Such interpersonal standards emphasize external evaluation and the possibility of failure and this, elicit self-presentation concerns"* (Anseel et al., 2011, p.706). Task-referenced feedback on the other hand is a form of diagnostic feedback about a person's own ability, regardless of the performance of other people (Anseel et al, 2011; Park et al., 2007). This form of

feedback contains corrective information that explains faulty behavior and suggestions for alternatives. This form of feedback can improve performance, because it provides information about which strategies to follow (Park et al., 2007). So next to the earlier dimensions of locus and valance of feedback a third dimension is, if the feedback is given only on the person's own performance or a person's performance relative to other people.

Combining this information, the concept of regular supervisory feedback is based on two constructs derived from the feedback literature: feedback matrix and form of feedback: Performance is a broad concept that can be identified in many ways. In this research,
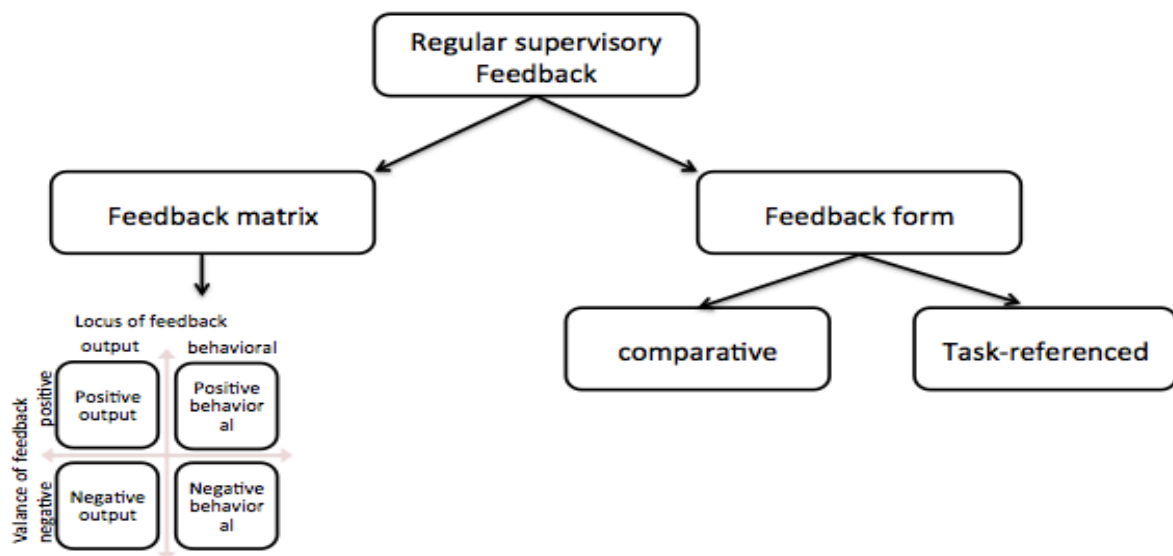
Figure 2: feedback overview

2.3 Perceived performance in relation to feedback and goal orientation

Performance concerns the sales people, how they score relative to other sales people in the firm, and how they perceive the feedback will influence their performance. In this research, "real" performance is not taken into account due to its short time. Instead, the perceived performance is analyzed. The notion that supervisory feedback is a significant determinant in relation to performance can also be found in conducted research (Jaworksi & Kohli, 1991; Sujan et al. 1994;Srivastava & Rangaran, 2008). Research has focused on several reasons for this relationship, which are discussed in the following paragraph.

Research conducted by Srivastava and Rangarajan (2008) found that sales people that receive timely and constructive feedback feel that they are part of the company, thereby, experiencing a higher level of job involvement and job satisfaction, which leads to increased productivity and, ultimately, performance. Another research focusing on job satisfaction found that feedback is strongly related to job satisfaction, in the sense that it is based on two items: (1) initiation of structure, a task-oriented form of feedback with a focus on structure and role clarity, and (2) consideration, an employee oriented form of

feedback with a focus on promoting a favorable work climate, mutual trust and respect (Teas & Horrell, 1981). Feedback focusing on these two items increases job satisfaction according to Teas and Horrell (1981). Combined with the research conducted by Srivastava and Rangarajan (2008), it can be concluded that initiation of structure and consideration most likely will lead to increased performance. Jaworksi and Kohli (1991) found that different types of feedback yield different outcomes. Looking at the locus of feedback, Jaworski & Kohli (1991) found that positive feedback has a direct and positive relationship with job challenge, because it contributes to the perception of a more challenging job. When faced with positive and constructive feedback, salespeople are likely to interpret this as a sign of supervisor's trust and people feel challenged and, as a result, perform better (Srivastava & Rangarajan, 2008).

Another important research into goal orientation and performance is conducted by Anseel et al. (2011) and looks into the relationship between goal orientation, feedback form, and performance. This research found that in comparative and task-referenced feedback settings, people with different goal orientations have different feedback reactions and that feedback reactions largely influence task performance. Especially people portraying a performance-avoid goal orientation showed differences in feedback reactions between comparative and task-referenced feedback. When receiving comparative feedback, people with a performance-avoid orientation will react more negative to feedback, than people with a performance-avoid orientation that receive task-referenced feedback and learning goal oriented individuals, who receive either comparative of task-references feedback. The notion of favorable feedback reactions and improved job performance is also evident in earlier researches conducted in this area (Brett & Atwater, 2001; Kuvaas, 2006).

2.4 Theoretical model

After explaining the individual concepts, it is important to explain, how these concepts are related. The main relationship analyzed in this thesis is between goal orientation and perceived performance, as can be seen in the figure below.
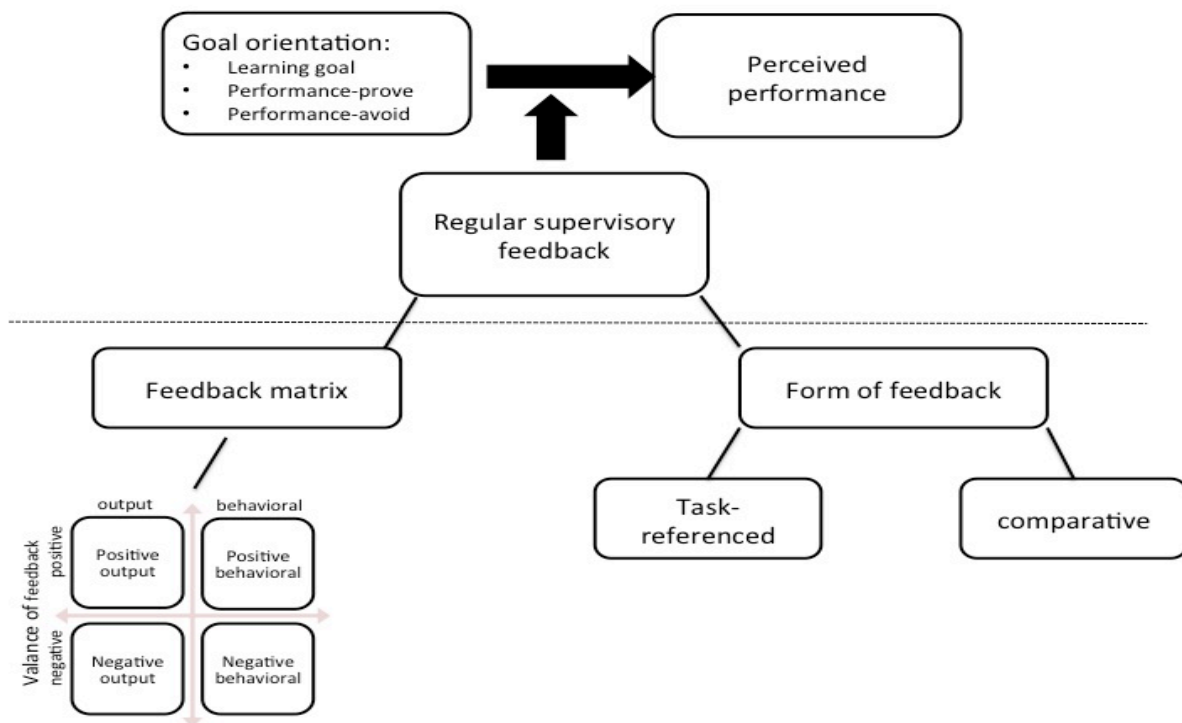
Figure 3: Literature model

According to literature, there are three goal orientations possible: learning, performance-prove, and performance avoid goal orientation. Literature states that goal orientations are present in achieving situations and, due to the nature of the three different orientations, each of them has a different effect on performance. However, this relationship can be mediated by moderators, which can influence the goal orientation or how people perform. In this research, regular supervisory feedback is investigated as the mediator between goal orientation and perceived performance. Within this regular supervisory feedback, two specific concepts related to regular supervisory feedback are included: the feedback matrix and the form of feedback. The feedback matrix suggests two dimensions: valance of feedback, which relates to positive or negative feedback, and the locus of feedback, related to either output or behavioral feedback. The form of feedback relates to the fact that feedback can either be task-referenced or comparative.

The above model explains the overall relationship between the three concepts used within this report. However, in order to examine how goal orientation influences a salesperson's stance towards regular supervisory feedback and perceived performance, a more in-depth explanation within each goal orientation is required. Therefore, the next paragraphs explain the role of feedback and perceived performance within each goal orientation. At the end of each of these paragraphs a proposition is stated, which is tested in the second part of this research.

2.5 Goal orientation, regular supervisory feedback, and perceived performance

In order to explain the exact nature of this research, the individual relationships between each goal orientation, performance, and the influence of supervisory feedback

need to be clarified. A comprehensive study on the relationship between goal orientation and a salesperson's performance was conducted by Silver et al. (2006). This research found that a learning goal orientation and a performance-prove orientation have a positive influence on a salesperson's performance. A performance-avoid goal orientation, on the other hand, appeared to be negatively related to salesperson performance as can be seen in figure 4.
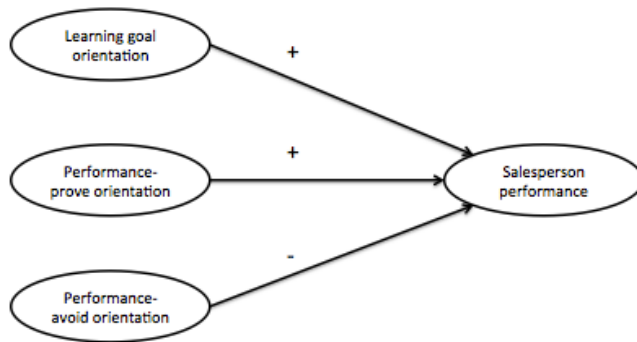

Figure 4: Relation goal orientation and performance (Silver et al., 2006)

However, supervisory feedback as a moderator was not taken into account in this research, and this was one of the recommendations for future research made by Silver et al. to be researched in the future (2006). Although some researches have looked either into the relationship between goal orientation and feedback, feedback and performance, or goal orientation and performance, a clear-cut study, where the relationship between all three goal orientations, feedback, and perceived performance is analyzed does not exist. This paragraph aims to outline the current literature, based on the three goal orientations, thereby, basing it on various studies into the three concepts and the established relationships between the three. At the end of each subparagraph, a proposition is made based on the literature..

2.5.1 Learning orientation, feedback, and perceived performance

A recent study conducted by Markose (2011) looked into the relationship between goal orientation and feedback. In this research, the feedback matrix of Jaworksi and Kohli (1991) was applied on the three goal orientations. This research found that behavioral feedback has a positive effect on a learning goal orientation, because people believe in developing skills. Therefore, a relationship between output feedback and a learning goal orientation was not found. Furthermore, Markose (2011) found no difference between positive and negative feedback in relation to a learning orientation. This is supported by Sujan et al. (1994), whose research indicates that both positive and negative feedback raise learning orientation. Positive feedback should enhance salespeople's learning orientation by signaling approval for the successful development of selling skills (Markose, 2011; Anseel et al., 2011). On the other hand, people with a learning orientation are less likely to perceive negative feedback as a judgment about their ability and more likely to perceive it as developmental (VandeWalle, Brown, Cron & Slocum, 1991; Park et al., 2007). Research conducted by Anseel et al. (2011), looked into the relation between feedback form and goal orientation. They found that for people with a learning goal orientation, feedback provides a diagnostic value with useful information for developing a competence and, therefore, they are more likely to perceive feedback as being useful. Nonetheless, they found no difference between comparative feedback and task-referenced feedback conditions. This has however only been discovered and no

further research has been conducted into this topic. As stated at the beginning of this paragraph, research conducted by Silver et al. (2006) looked into the relationship between the goal orientation and performance and found a positive relationship between a learning goal orientation and performance. People in this research were asked to rate themselves compared to peers. As a result, a learning goal orientation appeared to be positively related to perceived performance.

Combining this information, based on literature, it can be concluded that people with a learning orientation value the diagnostic information from a feedback session and believe that it has a positive influence on their performance. To combine the research presented before, and to test this empirically, the propositions are as follows:

Proposition 1: *People with a learning orientation prefer behavioral feedback to output feedback*

Proposition 2: *People with a learning orientation do not have a preference for positive or negative feedback*

Proposition 3: *People with a learning orientation do not have a preference for task-referenced or comparative feedback*

Proposition 4: *A learning goal orientation is positively related to the perceived usefulness of feedback in relation to their performance*

2.5.2   Performance-prove orientation, feedback, and perceived performance

Going back to the research conducted by Markose (2011), a relationship between a performance-prove goal orientation and the feedback matrix proposed by Jaworksi and Kohli (1991) found that output feedback has the best effect for people with a performance prove orientation. This is in line with research conducted by Jaworksi and Kohli (1991), which found that supervisors who focus on process and output stages appear to enhance salespeople's performance orientation. The research of Markose (2011) found furthermore, no difference in the effect of positive and negative feedback for people with a performance-prove goal orientation. However, research conducted by VandeWalle and Cummings (1997) found that individuals with a high performance-prove orientation tend to view feedback as an evaluation of the self and, thus, the threat of negative feedback can be seen as a risk (Park et al., 2007). This is in line with research conducted by Anseel et al. (2011), which states that the fear of failure makes performance-prove oriented people less receptive to feedback. Therefore, a clear conclusion cannot be drawn with regards to the valance of feedback and a proposition cannot be tested. Therefore, open questions regarding the valance of feedback are asked to determine the effects of both positive and negative feedback.

Looking at the influence of the form of feedback, it can be said that people with a performance-prove orientation seek more self-validating feedback, rather than self-improvement feedback, in contrast to people with a learning goal orientation. Furthermore, they aim to outperform others and, as a result, it is a likely assumption that they would favor comparative feedback to see how they score compared to others. However, research by Anseel et al. (2011) shows that if people with a performance-prove goal orientation receive task-referenced rather than comparative feedback and, thereby, focusing on their own level of task performance, rather than their relative level of performance, they may focus on the instrumental value of the feedback for improving performance and demonstrating competence. This leads individuals, with such a goal orientation, to pay more attention to the feedback itself, rather than social consequences (Anseel et al., 2011). The same research showed, moreover, that people with performance-prove goals yielded the same favorable feedback reactions as people with a learning goal orientation, when task-referenced feedback was provided. However, when participants received comparative feedback, performance-prove goals lead to more unfavorable reactions than learning goal orientations (Anseel et al., 2011). Therefore, it can be concluded that people with a performance-prove goal orientation should receive task-referenced, rather than comparative feedback.

Looking at the influence of a performance-prove goal orientation on performance, Silver et al. (2006) found that a performance-prove goal orientation is positively related to performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that people with a performance-prove goal orientation perceive feedback as risky and a possibility for reassurance rather than improvement, because of the belief that skills are static. This is also the explanation, why people with a performance-prove orientation are more receptive to output feedback than to behavioral feedback. Finally, looking at the form of feedback, task-referenced feedback yields the best results, because people look into the feedback itself, rather than the social component. Therefore, the following propositions are suggested:

Proposition 5: *People with a performance-prove orientation prefer output feedback to behavioral feedback*

Proposition 6: *People with a performance-prove orientation prefer task-referenced feedback to comparative feedback*

 Proposition 7: *A performance goal orientation is negatively related to perceived usefulness of feedback and perceived performance*

2.5.3 Performance-avoid goal orientation and feedback

Research conducted by Markose (2011) on the relationship between goal orientation and the feedback matrix (Jaworksi & Kohli, 1991) found that mainly output feedback yields the best results, when it comes to a performance-avoid goal orientation, which is in line with a performance-prove goal orientation. Looking at the valance of feedback, no difference between positive and negative output feedback could be found. Looking at the form of feedback, the same picture emerges as for the performance-prove orientation; comparative feedback provides information in relation to others, this emphasizes the external evaluation and the possibility of failure and, therefore, leads to self-presentation concerns (Anseel et al., 2011). This is also confirmed in research, conducted by Park et al. (2007), which showed that people with a performance-avoid goal orientation perceive feedback as a possibility of failure and, therefore, regard seeking feedback as costly. The research showed that people with an avoid orientation often have a preference for no feedback at all, or otherwise assurance feedback about certain behaviors.

When it comes to feedback, both performance goal orientations are fairly similar. Both orientations yield the best result when feedback is provided on the output stages and the effect of positive or negative feedback is either indifferent or not yet known. Looking at the form of feedback, it can be said that task-referenced feedback has the best effect, because comparative feedback can result in feelings of possible failure, which has a negative overall effect. Therefore the following propositions can be proposed:

Proposition 8: *People with a performance-avoid goal orientation prefer output feedback to behavioral feedback*

Proposition 9: *People with a performance-avoid orientation do not have a preference for positive or negative feedback.*

Proposition 10: *People with a performance-avoid goal orientation prefer task-referenced feedback to comparative feedback*

Proposition 11: *A performance-avoid orientation is negatively related to the perceived usefulness of feedback in relation to their performance*

3. Research method and design

In this chapter, the overall research structure of this paper is explained; the use of primary and secondary research, the role of literature, the interview guide, and the problems encountered during this research are explained.

3.1 Overall research design

In order to analyze the influence of goal orientation on a salesperson's stance towards regular supervisory feedback and its perceived effect on performance, this research makes use of a case study approach focusing on one specific company, Wackes. Within this setting, the main source of data is interviews with employees from the sales force. In order to analyze a possible change in its perceived effect in performance, all participants are interviewed twice, once at the beginning of the research, and once at the end. The dates for the interviews were selected, based on the first feedback interviews conducted by the new sales manager. The initial interviews took place before the regular feedback sessions started. The final interview took place after two or three feedback sessions with the sales manager. The reasoning behind this is the aim to identify a person's attitude towards regular supervisory feedback and the effect on perceived performance. Based on both sets of interview data, the propositions mentioned in chapter 2 are answered and reasons for the relationship between a specific goal orientation and the perceived effect of feedback on performance are analyzed.

3.2 Data collection

This research aims to test the proposed relationships in literature between goal orientation, regular supervisory feedback, and perceived performance. In order to do so, this research uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative theories and data. Data is gathered using interviews with various employees of Wackes. Parts of these interviews consist of quantitative statements that are used to first analyze the goal orientation of the respective sales person, and second to examine a possible change on certain statements related to job performance and happiness in the job. In the following paragraphs, the primary and secondary data used in this research is explained in more detail.

3.2.1 Secondary research

The secondary literature used in this research is derived from peer-reviewed academic articles published in both, business literature and psychology literature due to the nature of the topic, goal orientation and feedback. These articles have been found by using various academic search engines, mainly EBSCO Host complete and Science Direct. Furthermore, the books used in the course Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management has provided a starting point for wider literature search. Secondary research has been used mainly in chapter 2 to establish the overall theoretical framework; additionally the secondary literature has been used to develop the interview

guide for the primary data collection. Furthermore, the secondary research has been used for the framework in chapter 4 and for the analysis of the data collected, which is presented in chapter 5.

3.2.2   Primary research

In this chapter, the interview-guide used for this research is explained. In this study all participating sales people have been interviewed twice in order to observe a change in their stance towards feedback and its possible influence on performance. Due to the nature of the research into personal believe and behavior, a semi-structured form was selected to allow for additional questions and topics to arise during the interview as well as a flexible approach in regards to the order of the questions (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The interview guide is a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions to analyze the goal orientation, the stance toward the feedback session, and the perceived effect on performance and can be found in appendix A1 and B1.

This research was conducted into a specific assigned company, Wackes. Therefore, it can be argued that the overall sample is based on convenience sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2003). This entails that this research is not suitable to generalize to a large extent due to the limited sample size of one company in a specific industry. However, this research does not aim to generalize these findings, it aims to identify possible reasons and connections, which could be researched and developed in future studies. However, within the company, a sample also had to be made. In order to arrive at a sample within Wackes this research made use of stratified random sampling and utilized two stratifying criterion (Bryman & Bell, 2003): participating people needed to have sales accounts, so sales back-up was excluded and all three locations of Wackes (Stockholm, Boras, and Lund) needed to be represented. Based on these criteria a general e-mail was sent and five salespeople voluntary participated out of a sales force of 13 people. These people represent two locations: Stockholm and Lund, the two main sales hubs of Wackes

In order to obtain demographic data, general questions are asked regarding age, experience, number of years working for Wackes and the main customers. Additionally, qualitative open questions are asked to analyze the general feeling of people towards the feedback sessions and to establish the current situation. It needs to be noted that the qualitative open questions asked in both interview rounds differ on certain aspects: the first round of interviews focused also on broader themes related to feedback and sales organizations in general to analyze potential topics for further research. These items have been eliminated in the second round and were replaced by qualitative questions especially dealing with the feedback sessions and the newly introduced feedback sessions.

In order to measure goal orientation, this research has adopted a quantitative approach in line with previous research into goal orientation (Sujan et al., 1994; Kohli, Shervani & Challangulla, 1998; VandeWalle, 1999; Markose, 2011; Silver et al, 2006; Elliot & Church,

1997). This research used the questions proposed in the research by Markose (2011) and Silver et al. (2006), however; both researches rely heavily on the questions proposed in the earlier research into goal orientation. This research proposed statements into all three goal orientations and asked the participating sales people to rate these statements using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not agree at all) to 5 (completely agree). The goal orientation of the salespeople was established in the second round of interviews, due to the fact that the initial research into the goal orientation was not yet completed before the first round of interviews, but this does not pose a problem for this research, because it does not aim to analyze a change in goal orientation.

The main point of interest of this research is the perceived influence of regular supervisory feedback on performance. In order to analyze the stance towards the feedback sessions and preferred forms or feedback, general questions about feedback were asked, as well as specific questions about the form, locus, and valance of feedback. These questions are included to achieve a general understanding of the preferred feedback, rather than being the topic of this research.

The final set of questions in the second round of interviews is related to performance. In order to analyze performance, five statements are asked and people have to rate themselves. In order to do so, the set of statements proposed by Sujan et al. (1994) is used. On this scale, people rate how they perform related to the rest of the sales force. The self-rating approach is well accepted in research towards sales people (Silver et al., 2006; Markose 2011). Not all statements proposed by Sujan et al. (1994) are used, due to the nature of doing business in Wackes, where there is limited attention towards attaining new clients. Next to asking about performance, questions are asked about job satisfaction, happiness in the day-to-day activities and the role of regular supervisory feedback on the perceived happiness of salespeople. These questions are incorporated, because various researches (Teas & Horrell, 1981; Srivastava & Rangarajan, 2008; Anseel et al., 2011) acknowledge a positive relation between job satisfaction and performance. Furthermore, open questions are asked with regards to the feedback sessions to analyze the reasons, why these sessions are positively or negatively related to performance.

3.3 Method for data analysis

3.3.1 Quantitative

The quantitative data in this report is analyzed at a high level, using excel. Quantitative analysis is used to establish the goal orientation and a change in statements between round 1 and 2. Therefore, only the mean and standard deviation are taken into account, because these methods provide an easy to understand, general overview of the response to the statements, and possible changes and differences.

3.3.2 Qualitative

Due to the causal nature of this research, the five participating salespeople's interviews are first analyzed personally, to establish a relation between their goal orientation, their stance towards the regular supervisory feedback sessions and how these sessions might influence their performance. Although these topics have been subject in several quantitative studies, the overall relationships have, to the knowledge of this research, never been tested in a real company and feedback setting. Therefore, the first aim of the qualitative data is to assess, if those relations actually exist. The second aim is to analyze what are the specific reasons, why these feedback sessions have a positive or negative effect on perceived performance. The goal is to analyze, if specific reasons are linked to specific goal orientations or not. This is done by identifying keywords, which might lead to specific categories that might ultimately increase the insight into a person's stance towards feedback and its perception on the influence of performance. By knowing these reasons and specific wishes of the sales force, the feedback sessions can be tailored in such a way that it yields the best outcome for all sales people involved.

3.4 Reflection of method choices

The methods used in this research are carefully chosen in order to analyze the effect of feedback on perceived performance. As stated earlier, this research is conducted in a relative short time period, therefore, this research does not only rely on quantitative data to analyze changes, but also makes use of qualitative data in the form of interviews, to capture the salespeople's attitude towards the feedback sessions at the end of the test period, to collect a list of reasons why feedback sessions might influence performance or not. Second, a limited sample size is the basis for this research, thereby, making it difficult to analyze all three goal orientations to its full extent. However, due to the fact that this research is a single company case study, generalizations based on the data are difficult to make. Therefore, this research can be seen as a pilot study into testing the relations between goal orientation, regular supervisory feedback, and perceived performance in a real life company setting with actual feedback. Therefore, in chapter 6, possibilities for future research, on how to develop this study further, are discussed.

4. Presentation of results

In this chapter the findings of the interviews are presented, based on the earlier identified themes in literature. This data will be analyzed in chapter five, where a comparison between the findings of this study and the literature, in the form of the propositions is made.

4.1 Goal orientation

Based on the earlier described framework, it can be concluded that unfortunately not all goal orientations are present in the small sample for this research: four out of five participating sales people have a learning goal orientation and one person has a performance-avoid goal orientation. In order to assign a specific goal orientation to a sales person, the orientation with the highest individual orientation has been labeled the present goal orientation. The learning goal orientation has a mean of 4,22 with a standard deviation of 0,61 on a five point Likert-scale (5= totally agree). The mean for performance-prove goal orientation is 2,77 with a standard deviation of 1,22 and the performance-avoid goal orientation has a mean of 2,97 with a standard deviation of 0,81. All orientations and scores can be found in appendix C1.

4.2 Feedback

In order to assess the stance towards feedback, questions were asked about the perceptions of the feedback sessions before it started and the sales people's expectations how it would influence their work. In the second round, the experiences so far were investigated including how this would affect their day-to-day work, job satisfaction and perceived performance. These interviews can be found in appendix A and B. Additionally, questions were asked about their preferred form of feedback, based on the feedback matrix and feedback forms earlier introduced in this research.

When asked about the forms of feedback, mixed results were obtained: two people preferred more task-referenced feedback, two people preferred more comparative feedback and one person believes both are necessary. However, nobody felt a problem about sharing sales figures in a general meeting and saw it as an opportunity to improve one's self, if the figures were lower than the average. In the supervisory feedback sessions, people prefer task-referenced feedback specified to their situation.

Looking at the form of feedback, it can be stated that in general, people liked to be coached on behavior rather than outcome in the personal feedback sessions because they feel that skills are most important. However, the majority acknowledges that sales figures are important too. Several people remarked that when coached on skills, the output and performance would eventually increase as well. Within Wackes, next to the regular supervisory personal feedback, there are now company-wide meetings once a

month, where sales figures are publicly discussed; the need to discuss sales figures in the personal meetings was deemed less relevant.

4.3 Perceived performance

In the first meeting, the starting question of the interviews was to analyze the current situation of the feedback. Four out of five people stated that they felt the current feedback was not sufficient and if feedback or help was desired this had to be initiated by them (appendix A and B). One person, however, preferred to work independent and, therefore, liked the old approach of own initiative rather than the now forced, new regular supervisory feedback sessions. In line with these findings, it comes as no surprise that the four people not satisfied with the current situation felt that the feedback sessions would help in their day-to-day activities.

Additionally, people assumed that regular supervisory feedback would make them happier in their job; in the first round of interviews people were asked if more feedback would make them happier in their job, which scored 3,8 with a standard deviation of 1,17, mainly due to one person not seeing the purpose of the feedback sessions at all. In the second round of interviews, people were asked if the feedback sessions actually make them happier on their job; the scores increased to 5 out of 5.[1] Therefore it can be concluded that people felt happier in their job due to the feedback sessions.

In the interviews the direct influence on the perceived performance was investigated. The question "the frequency of feedback helps me to perform better in my job" yielded a mean of 3,6 in the first round with a standard deviation of 1,74. It needs to be noted here that the score of the four people in favor of the feedback sessions was 4,25. In the second round of interview sessions the same question was asked and yielding a mean of 4,00 with a standard deviation of 1,22 this time. The decrease in standard deviation shows that in general people are now more positive of the influence of regular feedback on their performance. Looking at the people in favor of the feedback sessions, the mean was even higher, 4,5 out of 5 in the second round of interviews.[2]

In order to analyze the reasons why people felt happier on their job, or felt their performance would increase, people were asked to describe what they would like to get out of the sessions or what makes them happier and several arguments were presented:
- By having regular supervisory feedback sessions it allows for an *open discussion forum,* whereby people can ventilate their own ideas. This lowers the possible boundary of calling the CEO for feedback, something that was required in the old situation. Therefore, it can be said the *communication flow* in the company will increase, which most likely leads to a greater perceived job satisfaction and therefore increasing performance.

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[1] See appendix C.2 and C.3
[2] See appendix C.2 and C.3
[3] The performance analysis can be found in appendix C.4

- Another argument for increased happiness and performance was that these meetings could be used to *determine a direction and focus* in the day-to-day tasks. Several sales people mentioned that the work can sometimes be overwhelming and people do not know where to start and focus on. By discussing these situations with the sales manager, a focus and plan of approach can be created. On the one hand, this leads to more clarity and security on the side of the sales person and on the other hand the focus can be put on the most important client and both items most likely affect performance positively.

- A third reason, the regular supervisory feedback has a positive effect on happiness and performance is the *possibility for problem solving help* in the feedback sessions. Problems can be discussed more quickly in the regular feedback sessions, whereby the sales manager can provide guidance and share experience to solve problems, thereby *sharing "tips and tricks"* in specific sales situations.

- Another item mentioned is the *possibility to improve skills and competence*. As stated earlier, in general people in the sample preferred to be coached on skills rather than behavior. The feedback sessions provide a setting for coaching specific skills for certain situations. Due to the set-up of the sessions, people can decide themselves on which skills to focus. As mentioned by one sales person, the performance will most likely increase as well by focusing on specific skills.

- The final argument mentioned, for the positive effect of the regular feedback sessions, is the *possibility for reinforcement*. In the sessions, positive feedback can be used to reinforce specific actions. This will most likely increase happiness and thereby influencing performance positively as well.

5. Analysis and discussion

In this chapter, the data described in chapter four is analyzed and compared with the literature presented in chapter two. As a guideline for this chapter, the propositions stated in chapter two are used, which implies that the data is analyzed based on the goal orientation. As mentioned in chapter four, the performance-prove goal orientation was not present in this sample, therefore, statements five, six, and seven are not answered.

5.1 Learning goal orientation, feedback, and perceived performance

As stated in chapter four, four out of five people from the sample portray a learning goal orientation. Those people were all in favor of more feedback. The initial situation, whereby, feedback-seeking behavior was required, was not perceived as favorable. This is in line with various researches (Markose, 2011; Anseel et al., 2011; Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck & Leggett, 1988) that found people with a learning goal orientation perceive feedback as a possibility to develop competences and to increase skills and, therefore, they are inclined to be more in favor of feedback than people portraying performance goal orientations. In the remainder of this paragraph the propositions proposed in chapter two are tested based on the primary data obtained in this research.

Proposition 1: *People with a learning orientation prefer behavioral feedback to output feedback*

When asked about the locus of feedback, all participating sales people were unanimous; they prefer being coached in skills rather than outcome-based feedback. This is in line with research conducted by Markose (2011), which found a strong relationship between behavioral feedback and a learning goal orientation. Overall, it can be stated that the learning goal orientation perceived in a real setting, as investigated by this research, is in line with earlier results produced in empirical questionnaire studies: sales people with a learning goal orientation prefer behavioral, or skills focused feedback, thereby, confirming proposition 1.

Proposition 2: *People with a learning orientation do not have a preference for positive or negative feedback*

According to research, both positive and negative feedback have good results for people with a learning goal orientation (Parsons et al., 1985), because people with a learning goal orientation perceive negative feedback as constructive feedback and a possibility to improve skills and as a challenge to increase performance (VandeWalle et al., 1991; Shrivastava & Rangarajan, 2008). This is in line with the findings of this research, which shows that all four people with a learning goal orientation perceive both, negative and positive feedback, as necessary. Arguments for this were that positive feedback reinforces one's actions but does not provide any possibility for learning. Negative

feedback, provided in a constructive setting, provides an opportunity to increase skills and ultimately performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that proposition 2 is confirmed in this research.

Proposition 3: *People with a learning goal orientation do not have a preference for either task-referenced or comparative feedback*

According to research conducted by Anseel et al. (2011), no relationship exists between a learning goal orientation and either comparative or task-referenced feedback. Both appear to have a similar effect on people portraying a learning goal orientation. This is in line with the outcomes of this study, as no preference was found for either task-referenced or comparative feedback for people with a learning goal orientation; two sales people had a preference for comparative feedback and two salespeople were very much in favor of task-referenced feedback, stating that comparative feedback does not make sense, because everybody is different. However, when asked about a monthly feedback session, where the sales figures are made public to the entire company, none of the sales people appeared to have problems with this situation but saw this as an opportunity to compare and possibility to learn from each other, rather than a competition. It would be motivating in a sense that it can be observed as a call for action, if sales figures appear to be lower than the average of the company for at least some sales people. Therefore, it can be concluded that in this research it appears that proposition 3 is confirmed.

Proposition 4: *A learning goal orientation is positively related to the perceived usefulness of feedback in relation to their performance*

Research conducted by Silver et al. (2006) shows that a learning goal orientation is positively related to performance. This is also backed-up by earlier research conducted by Sujan et al. (1994). As part of the second round of interviews, all people were asked to rate their own performance relative to other sales people in the company. The rating was based on five statements related to performance, whereby, people gave themselves a number between -5 (far below average) and +5 (far above average) and whereby 0 was the average. People with a learning goal orientation scored themselves an average of 2,45 on all statements (range between 0,6 and 4 per person), indicating that they perceive themselves to be above the average of the company[3]. By asking in depth questions about the reasons why they perceive their own performance positively, the importance of regular supervisory feedback in this process in this process was highlighted by several people, thereby confirming proposition 4.

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[3] The performance analysis can be found in appendix C.4

5.2 Performance-avoid goal orientation, feedback, and perceived performance

Before going into detail in the relationship between a performance-avoid goal orientation and feedback, it needs to be noted that only one interviewed person in the sample showed a performance-avoid goal orientation. Statements made around the performance-avoid goal orientation are therefore most likely not entirely representative for the performance-avoid goal orientation in general. The one person showing a performance-avoid goal orientation had a total score of 4 out of 5 for this goal orientation and was the only person not positive about the introduction of the regular supervisory feedback sessions in general. This is in line with research conducted by Park et al. (2007) that found since people with a performance-avoid goal orientation want to avoid negative feedback, feedback meetings could perceived to be costly. Therefore, people with a performance-avoid goal orientation often prefer not to receive any feedback at all.

Proposition 8: *People with a performance-avoid orientation prefer output feedback to behavioral feedback*

Looking at the locus of feedback, research conducted by Markose (2011) suggests that output feedback yields the best results for people with a performance-avoid goal orientation. However, the research conducted in this thesis shows that the person in question prefers to have behavioral feedback rather than output feedback. An open structure was preferred, whereby the sales person in question could initiate the preferred topics to talk about. However, due to the fact that this is based on one person, general conclusions cannot be made about this topic and, therefore, proposition 8 cannot be confirmed.

Proposition 9: *People with a performance-avoid orientation do not have a preference for positive or negative feedback*

Research by Markose (2011) found no difference in the effect of positive or negative feedback in relation to a performance-avoid goal orientation. This is in line with the findings of this study, whereby the person portraying a performance-avoid goal orientation saw the necessity of both types of feedback and acknowledged that both types of feedback are required in a feedback setting. Therefore, it can be concluded that proposition 9 is confirmed.

Proposition 10: *People with a performance-avoid goal orientation prefer task-referenced feedback to comparative feedback*

Because people with a performance-avoid goal orientation have the fear to fail, comparative feedback is not preferred (Anseel et al., 2011). The same research shows that people with a performance-avoid orientation who receive comparative feedback

will react more unfavorably towards the feedback than people with a performance-avoid orientation who receive task-referenced feedback. Task-referenced feedback on the other hand, provides them with feedback about their own level rather than being compared; therefore, they may focus on the instrumental value of the feedback for improving performance and exhibiting skills and capability (Anseel et al, 2011). This research found similar results when discussing task-referenced feedback, the person portraying the performance-avoid orientation preferred task-referenced feedback in general. However, this person saw the need for sharing sales figures in a more general setting and, thereby, participating in comparative feedback. Therefore, it can be concluded that proposition 10 is at least somewhat confirmed in this research.

Proposition 11: *A performance-avoid orientation is negatively related to the perceived usefulness of feedback in relation to their performance*

According to research conducted by Silver et al. (2006), a performance-avoid goal orientation is negatively related to performance, because people with this goal orientation do not see selling as skills rather than ability and, therefore, do not put effort in learning new skills. When rating the own performance, the person portraying the performance-avoid goal orientation scores 0,4, which is slightly above 0, the score when people perceive their own performance as average. However, this is lower than the people with a learning goal orientation. As noted by Anseel et al. (2011), the form of feedback, either task-referenced or comparative feedback, highly influences feedback reactions, whereby, task-referenced feedback evokes significantly more positive results than comparative feedback. The same research states that the more favorable feedback reactions salespeople are offered, the more inclined they are to improve performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that people with a performance-avoid orientation are most likely to increase performance when receiving task-referenced feedback. The person portraying a performance-avoid orientation was, in the first round of interviews, extremely skeptical about the possible influence of the feedback session on the personal performance and strongly believed that the feedback sessions would not provide any value. In the second round of interviews, the value of the actual sales figures was not acknowledged, however, the sessions would influence the happiness perceived in the job. After introducing the actual feedback session, the salesperson felt more confirmed in the job at hand, thereby, increasing happiness compared to the situation before the regular supervisory feedback sessions. The person acknowledged that feeling happy in the day-to-day job has a positive effect; an effect on the overall performance was not perceived. Therefore, it can be concluded that proposition 11 is confirmed.

5.3 Reasons for perceived usefulness of feedback towards performance

Research conducted by Shrivastava and Rangarajan (2008) found a connection between people with a learning goal orientation prefer constructive feedback; if this is combined with positive feedback, it can signal trust and people feel challenged which leads to better performance. This research found that all people exhibiting a learning goal

orientation assumed that their performance would increase with the introduction of the regular supervisory feedback sessions. The reasons mentioned for the perceived increase in performance mentioned can be defined in four categories:

- The regular feedback sessions provide an opportunity to *improve and develop skills* and to *learn new tips and tricks* from an experienced sales manager;
- The sessions also provide an opportunity to discuss specific problems, thereby, focusing on *problem solving.*
- The third category of reasons are concerned with providing *focus, structure*, *help to get things done*, and *overall guidance.*
- Finally, the regular supervisory feedback is a possibility to *increase confidence, support*, and the *feeling somebody cares about you and your well-being.*

Comparing these answers with the existing literature, it can be noted that the first category of answers is closely related with a learning goal orientation in general. Because people with a learning goal aim to develop their skills, it makes sense that this is an item they want to focus on in their feedback sessions. As mentioned by a sales person, increasing skills will most likely increase the overall performance as well. Secondly, the feedback sessions provide a possibility for *problem solving* and *idea generation* to help with the day-to-day activities. Thereby, the feedback provides an informational need (Charabanty, Oubre & Brown, 2008). It seems logical that by providing help to solve specific problems, the overall performance will increase.

Thirdly, an often-mentioned reason for the perceived effect of the regular supervisory feedback sessions is the fact that feedback sessions provide an opportunity to focus on a specific task or making a priority list. This is in line with the theory proposed by Teas and Horrell (1981), which proposes that if feedback sessions provide a form of initiation of structure, the overall job satisfaction will increase. Combining this with the research of Srivastava and Rangerjan (2008), which found that increased job satisfaction leads to improved performance, it can be concluded that by providing a focus and structure in the feedback sessions, job satisfaction is increased, which leads to an increase in perceived performance. The final group of reasons mentioned by people with a learning goal orientation, with regards to the feedback sessions, is that these sessions provide a possibility for boosting confidence and providing general support. This can be again linked to the theory proposed by Teas and Horrell (1981), which proposes that, next to the earlier mentioned initiation of structure, job satisfaction can also be increased by providing consideration. Consideration is described as providing a favorable working climate and mutual trust and respect. By offering support in the sessions, the overall confidence and trust is increased, which leads again to increased job satisfaction and (perceived) performance. Additionally, providing confidence and support implies positive rather than negative feedback. Anseel et al. (2011) and Chakrabanty et al. (2008) found that positive feedback in general has a greater effect on performance than negative feedback.

6. Conclusion and implications

In this final chapter an overall conclusion for this research is presented. Furthermore, suggestions for future research are offered, and finally the practical implications of this study are discussed.

6.1 Conclusions

This research set out to explore the relationship between goal orientation and perceived performance as well as the role of regular feedback sessions in this process and, thereby, answering the following research question: *"How does a salesperson's goal orientation influence the stance towards regular supervisory feedback and its perceived effect on performance in small and medium sized sales organizations?"*. By answering this question, the conducted research aims to make three contributions to existing literature: Firstly, this research develops a theoretical framework integrating contributions from various streams of literature and making theoretical conclusions based on various researches that have not been combined before in literature. Secondly, this research aims to test previous literature in the field of goal orientation, feedback, and perceived performance in a company and real life feedback setting. By doing so, this research attempts to confirm the statements made in previous literature. Finally, this research aims to investigate reasons why people perceive regular supervisory feedback as an influencer on performance and in what way. Although the relationship between regular supervisory feedback and perceived performance has been investigated, the reasons why people perceive feedback as positive or negative influencers on performance have not been examined in great detail. By making use of qualitative interviews, this research provides several reasons, why feedback is positively related to performance and anchors those reasons in existing sales team performance literature.

After examining and testing the propositions derived from literature, several conclusions can be drawn: First of all it can be confirmed that the goal orientation of sales people influences their perceived usefulness of feedback sessions. As was predicted in literature, people with a learning goal orientation see value in regular feedback sessions, because it provides clarity of the job on the one hand and a possibility to increase skills on the other hand. The performance-avoid goal orientation on the other hand, is more skeptical with regards to regular supervisory feedback and prefers feedback on its own terms. Second, it can be concluded that the goal orientation of a salesperson influences the perceived performance and especially the effectiveness of regular supervisory feedback on the perceived performance. Again, people with a learning goal orientation see the possibilities for feedback to positively influence performance; because it has a problem-solving element combined with the earlier mentioned clarified structure and communication. The person with a performance-avoid goal orientation on the other hand, does not see the relation between supervisory feedback and performance increase. It is, however, interesting to note that all

participating people in this research state that they are happier in their job with the more regular supervisory feedback. Therefore, the third conclusion that can be drawn is that supervisory feedback increases job satisfaction. Although, this was not the specific topic of this research, one of the findings was that job satisfaction is a result from the feedback sessions and is positively related to performance. Therefore, the overall conclusion of this research is that goal orientation influences a person's stance towards regular supervisory feedback, and that these feedback sessions influence the perceived performance, thereby confirming, the statements made in this research, based on combing various previous studies in this field. By analyzing a person's goal orientation, the type of feedback can be tailored in such a way that the feedback has the best result towards performance, and thereby increasing overall firm performance.

Finally, looking at the reasons why regular supervisory feedback can influence performance, this research showed that there are four categories of reasons perceived by salespeople that have a positive influence on performance: firstly, feedback can serve as a platform for improving and developing skills, thereby, being closely linked to a learning goal orientation. Secondly, feedback provides an opportunity for problem solving by providing an informational need. Finally, feedback provides an opportunity for increased job satisfaction. By focusing on initiation of structure and by providing confidence and support, people feel a higher need for job satisfaction, which is positively related to performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that several reasons exist why feedback can have a positive effect on performance, and that especially job satisfaction can play an important role in this relationship. However, additional research needs to be conducted on a larger scale to determine and quantify these influences.

6.2 Implications for future research

This research set out to test earlier research in the field of goal orientation, regular supervisory feedback, and perceived performance in a real company and feedback setting. However, this research relied on a very small sample size with only one company and five participating salespeople, which lead to no sales person portraying a performance-prove goal orientation in this research. Therefore, additional research in this area is highly desirable. Hence, four recommendations for future research to analyze the relationship between the three main concepts of this research into more detail have been identified. Firstly, it is recommended to test the stated propositions in this research again in a larger research. A cross-industry study with a larger sample size would provide more conclusive data and additional insights in the relation between goal orientation, feedback, and perceived performance in real feedback settings. It would be interesting to increase the time-span of the studies as well, to analyze the stance towards performance after more feedback sessions.

Secondly, an extension of this study could be to examine the effects of regular supervisory feedback on real performance, as to perceived performance in this study. However, these types of research require a bigger time frame, to actually observe a

change in sales figures over time. It would be interesting to see, if different types of feedback yield different results on performance in relation to various goal orientations. In order to analyze such an effect, a longitudinal case study approach is required.

Thirdly, within the relationship between goal orientation, regular supervisory feedback, and perceived performance, an interesting approach would be to analyze a possible change in goal orientation due to the regular feedback. In order to measure an objective change in goal orientation, a research conducted over a longer period of time is required whereby a difference in goal orientation can be central, rather than a difference in perceived performance, as was the topic of this research. Due to literature suggesting that a goal orientation can be changed by feedback, it would be an interesting study to look into the moderating effect of regular supervisory feedback on the goal orientation in a real company setting.

The final point for future research describes the influence of regular supervisory feedback on job satisfaction and goal orientation, which was already quickly mentioned in paragraph 6.1. Although, not the topic of this research, a clear increase in job happiness was observed during this study, even for the person with a performance-avoid goal orientation. The reasons mentioned, which lead to increased perceived performance, are likely to play a part in the perceived job satisfaction as well, however, qualitative research into this topic could reveal new relationships and moderators in this area.

6.3 Practical implications

Feedback and its influence on performance are, next to an interesting academic topic, a highly interesting concept for companies due to the potential large implications for firm performance. Therefore, the main practical implication of this research is the notion that by providing the right feedback to the right goal orientation, a salesperson's job satisfaction and performance can be enhanced. If the goal orientation of a salesperson is known, the best feedback form and structure can be selected. Therefore, this research highlights the importance of well-designed feedback programs, customized to individual needs and goal orientations, and agrees therefore with the research conducted by Anseel et al., (2011). By knowing a person's goal orientation, the best form of feedback can be selected taking the general preferences into account, thereby increasing the overall performance.

Furthermore, goal orientation can play a role in explaining a salesperson's specific situation and stance towards certain situations. Specifically, a performance-avoid goal orientation, in general, is negatively associated with sales, because of the lack of believe in skill and ability, and the tendency to avoid feedback. Therefore, feedback provides an opportunity for changing a possible goal orientation, and most likely a performance-avoid goal orientation (Silver et al., 1992; Ames, 1992). By acknowledging the goal orientation of the sales force, a manager can provide feedback specifically tailored to a

goal orientation, or influence the goal orientation in the desired direction. Therefore, the overall recommendation of this research is to assess a salesperson's goal orientation to analyze and predict the effect on performance. By knowing a salesperson's goal orientation the most appropriate feedback form can be selected, which will increase the overall job satisfaction and ultimately performance. Furthermore, by analyzing the goal orientation of salespeople, the overall company and performance goals can be aligned with the goal of the salespeople, thereby providing the best possible solution for both employees and companies.

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Appendix

A. Interviews round 1

A.1 Interview guide round 1

How do you feel about the current feedback?	
Do you think the sales meetings will provide more clearance and will help you to fulfill your work?	
Do you know what your current sales goals are?	
What do you think is most important in your job?	
Do you think sales organizations need to have bonuses or other incentives?	
What do you think you will get out of the regular feedback sessions?	

A.2 Interview Person 1

How do you feel about the current feedback?	The current feedback comes from Thomas but is limited. This is okay for me, since I have 15 years of experience and I like to work independent. But if I need Thomas I only need to call and he is there, so for me the feedback is currently better since I like to have the initiative on my side.
Do you think the sales meetings will provide more clearance and will help you to fulfill your work?	For me the current scheduled feedbacks do not add any value, however, I haven't got a meeting so far. But it appears to be time consuming and I know what I need to do. However, it might be when I start to have the feedback meetings that it turns out that I learn a lot of new information. But for me it is not necessary as I see it now. I have a very high drive as a person, therefore feedback for me is less important and could slow me down. But I can imagine for some people it really would work better. Numbers and behavior is important and learning could be done more. I think it is good that somebody with a fresh mind looks at my techniques and gives me feedback how I approach certain items.
Do you know what your current sales goals are?	I know which numbers I have to achieve.
What do you think is most important in your job?	I think most important in my job is to meet the actual client and understand his or her wishes.
Do you think sales organizations need to have bonuses or other incentives?	The bonus idea sounds very good but needs to be clarified more. There is a danger that you think something is done a certain way and turns out to be different resulting not in the bonus and negative behavior.
What do you think you will get out of the regular feedback sessions?	Joelina will ease the job for me by showing support; giving feedback on challenging ideas that I have. She will become a sparing partner for me to bounce ideas off.

A.3 Interview Person 2

How do you feel about the current feedback?	The current amount of feedback is rather low and unspecified and comes from Thomas. He is busy and in Lund making it a bit more difficult. But on the other hand you should always be critical on your own behavior as well and try to learn from this. Furthermore I go to my colleagues if I want feedback or want sparring with the partners, this is possible because Wackes has a flat organizational structure.
Do you think the sales meetings will provide more clearance and will help you to fulfill your work?	With Joelina the feedback will become much more, which I think is positive because it influences my work positively. Feedback also helps getting this done, so I like feedback on my behavior, on how to approach things as well as on my final outcome.
Do you know what your current sales goals are?	I know financial numbers I have to achieve
What do you think is most important in your job?	I think having regular contact with the client and delivering to their expectations is important.
Do you think sales organizations need to have bonuses or other incentives?	I think the new bonus will be a good trigger. It is not always the first thing on my mind, but it is always present and I always take it into account.
What do you think you will get out of the regular feedback sessions?	I hope I will receive a bit more guidance and the possibility to discuss problems with Joelina. But knowing her I think that will be the case.

A.4 Interview Person 3

How do you feel about the current feedback?	I have a close relationship to Thomas, so for me the current feedback is good. I can always call him when I need so that is good. However, I can imagine that for the rest of the sales team more feedback would be good. Therefore I think that hiring Joelina is a very smart move.
Do you think the sales meetings will provide more clearance and will help you to fulfill your work?	The regular sales meetings will definitely help. As a sales person in Wackes you have to be creative and need help and tips from colleagues. So I think talking a lot with other colleagues is sometimes better than with a sales manager, but the sales manager makes us talk
Do you know what your current sales goals are?	I know my current goals, I have a number myself which I have to do myself, I want Joelina to work with me.
What do you think is most important in your job?	I want to know if I have their support, whatever I do even do it is a mistake they stand behind me. Otherwise they can't let you alone if they don't trust me. This I feel now.
Do you think sales organizations need to have bonuses or other incentives?	The bonus will not influence my selling if I would have been here for a few years for sure; in a sales team you need such a motivation.
What do you think you will get out of the regular feedback sessions?	I will feel that someone cares about your job. Not just the figures of the end of the year.

A.5 Interview person 4

How do you feel about the current feedback?	The feedback poor, the feedback came from Thomas. In my old job I just to take my own decisions, but now I depend on other people. Now I can't prioritize anymore, I have to stand in line. Joelina can't change this, this is how it is at Wackes. We don't have enough resources. To be able to get it better we need to employ more people or start outsourcing. We today have difficulties to the web shops to get them ready in time. This is a key issue to increase sales when it comes to our customers because they expect changes so far most of them haven't seen any changes. There are difficulties in the working style between the old company and Wackes. The current sale support handles so many different customers, so they can't know everything about the customers. The knowledge at Wackes is at the KAM. All the lines between functions and accounts are blurry, which is a benefit for Wackes, but makes it difficult for the employees. We should share more information so that others can take over. We are wasting a lot of time searching for information. Currently too much focus on economics, not on the market. Now we are going to expand to other countries we need to know what they are doing abroad.

Do you think the sales meetings will provide more clearance and will help you to fulfill your work?	I think she has been working at Wackes before, she knows how the company functions. I think we need someone to combine all these people who are selling, not only in Sweden and Thomas doesn't have time to do it. It is a good idea to have someone. I haven't done any sales the last three years so I can use coaching. I wouldn't like to have her with me to sales meetings and presentations. All my clients are international clients and I have been working with them for many years. SCA has a huge project so see how a newly acquired company can be welcome in the big organization. In this client Joelina or Thomas can't add any value since I have had contact with them for so many years.
Do you know what your current sales goals are?	Yes, we know what our goals are, but this is only a figure and how to achieve this goal with activity budgets. If the SCA project is real than the budget needs to be changed drastically.
What do you think is most	The most important for me is to feel inspired. That it is not

important in your job?	the same all day long, so some variation is good. Progress is also important to me. I am not so struggling for progress such as Thomas, he is rushing into things but I am a close second. What we are doing it shouldn't be content with having the same result every year. There should be an increase and progress in every way. I am an entrepreneur, I can start things rather than running a clear defined projects.
Do you think sales organizations need to have bonuses or other incentives?	No need for incentive systems. Everybody functions differently. In my case money isn't the issue for making more efforts. I try to do the best all the way. In my old company we had a bonus for the whole company if we reached the budget. It is hard to define to see where all these efforts have been made. Also people outside of the team people help and should be rewarded as well. If it should be a bonus, it should be a bonus for everyone. With individual bonuses there is a risk for internal fights. If you can't work without a bonus than you're not doing good enough work.
What do you think you will get out of the regular feedback sessions?	I would like to sit down once a month or every two months to see my sales figures, but not more, I think I need it to do a better job. In some way sales are personal, I act in a personal way when I meet my customers and try to add a bit of humor it is nice to have a contact.

A.6 Interview person 5

How do you feel about the current feedback?	The feedback was minimal, it was sometimes was just positive and small, but could be more and also more critical. Both experience and persons at Wackes have a lack of time, such as Thomas it has not happened. And could have been more structural.
Do you think the sales meetings will provide more clearance and will help you to fulfill your work?	The new sessions will help me, they will help both in sharing between the sales people and Joelina is good in strategic thinking, the clients point of view and supportive, I can come and talk to Joelina and get support and find the tools I need to work on.
Do you know what your current sales goals are?	I know my goals. We have end of the year figures and we have figures from month to month. I don't have any personal development goal. There is development with my clients.
What do you think is most important in your job?	I think there are 2 different parts: from day to day basis to be listening to the clients and try to find the best solution for them and to be innovative. For me, as the KAM to see things from a higher level and to develop the client.
Do you think sales organizations need to have bonuses or other incentives?	No I don't think so. In a way, we go on travels together with the company, which is kind of a bonus. I know they asked if we want to have one month worth of salaries, but we like to travel. We have been together with the whole company to a nice city in Europe. I think these trips make people feel really part of Wackes and feel committed. There is a high level of trust in the organization this can be instead of a bonus.
What do you think you will get out of the regular feedback sessions?	I am sure that I will get help finding the tools, processes in Wackes and I am also sure to get help and ideas to develop the client at a higher level, to get more out of the client. But I can also get her help on a more day to day basis. I am really happy about these sessions.

B. Interviews round 2

B.1 Interview guide round 2

Feedback sessions in general		
	What do you think about the feedback sessions now you had some?	
	Are the sessions going as you expected?	
	Do you think the feedback is going to be helpful for you?	
	Do you think the videoconference meetings where all numbers are discussed helps you? Or does it make you feel anxious that your numbers are discussed in front of everybody?	
	What would you like to focus on most during the feedback sessions?	
	Do you think your performance will increase with the new feedback sessions?	
	Do you think knowing how you perform compared to the rest will motivate you more or less?	
	Do you think the number of feedback sessions is good now?	
Feedback		
Feedback locus/valance and form	How does Joelina give her feedback? • Positive/negative • Coaching on behaviors or outcome? • Task-focused/comparative?	

B.2 Interview person 1

Feedback sessions in general		
	What do you think about the feedback sessions now you had some?	I think everything works fine. But to see how it works with her role as a sales manager is too soon. I have only met her twice. There are so many changes in the companies now.
	Are the sessions going as you expected?	It is really soon to answer this question. I like that I can come up with the structure of the interviews.
	Do you think the feedback is going to be helpful for you?	As far as I see it now not really
	Do you think the videoconference meetings where all numbers are discussed helps you? Or does it make you feel anxious that your numbers are discussed in front of everybody?	I think that it is fair that everybody knows my sales figures. It is not so nice if you have a hard time for selling in the moment. For me it is absolutely okay. When we have had the meeting and the opportunity to tell why. I never see the other people fail; I don't know how I will feel. When you ask my new that is no problem, but maybe there is when the meetings are going. But now I don't think there is a problem. If you have bad figures and don't get the help you need than that is bad. For me so far okay.
	What would you like to focus on most during the feedback sessions?	For me as a person it depends from time to time. Last session we had I had a difficult situation with a customer and Joelina gave me advice. i would like to be an open space to bring up things. Something I need more skills feedback something it is to solve problems. Therefore I like the open structure of the sessions. We don't know each other that well and we don't discuss everything yet.

	Do you think your performance will increase with the new feedback sessions?	In the way that I feel better in my work yet. But in sales figures so far no. the mind of a sales person is affected by it.
Feedback		
Feedback locus/valance and form	How does Joelina give her feedback? • Positive/negative • Coaching on behaviors or outcome? • Task-focused/comparative?	I prefer 50/50 feedback, you need both. You need positive and constructive feedback, especially when you ask for it. I would like to be on skills than on sales figures. I want to be on me, not compared to other people. I want to be coached on my goal.

B.3 Interview person 2

Feedback sessions in general		
	What do you think about the feedback sessions now you had some?	Quite good
	Are the sessions going as you expected?	Yes, it was a lot of open questions, she asked me open questions
	Do you think the feedback is going to be helpful for you?	Very, well I think it will help me to overlook my situation, if I need help or specialist to my themes I can figure it out together with Joelina.
	Do you think the videoconference meetings where all numbers are discussed helps you? Or does it make you feel anxious that your numbers are discussed in front of everybody?	Very good, I am proud about my sales figures. When I have lower figures it would motivate to take action to improve figures.
	What would you like to focus on most during the feedback sessions?	Sales figures and how is going compared to how it is set up. Personal skills in selling and customer retention. I am sometimes a bit all over the place, I need to focus.
	Do you think your performance will increase with the new feedback sessions?	Yes, sometimes I am alone with my customers. Now I feel like I am now more into my case. I feel supported now.
	Do you think knowing how you perform compared to the rest will motivate you more or less?	Of course it will affect me but it is not the main things. The thing that motivates me most is how the whole of Wackes is doing.
	Do you think the number of feedback sessions is good now?	Every other week might be too much, but we'll see.
Feedback		
Feedback locus/valance and form	How does Joelina give her feedback? • Positive/negative • Coaching on behaviors or outcome? • Task-focused/comparative?	Too soon, I hope she will cover it all. I would like to have both negative and positive feedback, I don't know.

B.4 Interview person 3

Feedback sessions in general		
	What do you think about the feedback sessions now you had some?	Really like the feedback, tips tricks and helps, the feedback I got and the questions I had were given on a professional way.
	Are the sessions going as you expected?	Yes, perfect
	Do you think the feedback is going to be helpful for you?	Definitely, because she helps we with my issues. Joelina is very competent, she knows how to respond in which situation.
	Do you think the videoconference meetings where all numbers are discussed helps you? Or does it make you feel anxious that your numbers are discussed in front of everybody?	Not started yet, for me it is a must to compare my sales figures. From a company view you need to have it. Everybody knows about the figures anyway. I think it would motivate me if I see I do lower than the rest. For me it would be a trigger. Get into the teams and the customer and change.
	What would you like to focus on most during the feedback sessions?	For me skills, I am supposed to run two teams, and I don't have any education and experience in this field. My goal is to be a better leader for the teams, I am scared I am not a good leader. Joelina had some really good feedback.
	Do you think your performance will increase with the new feedback sessions?	For sure, more confidence which helps
	Do you think knowing how you perform compared to the rest will motivate you more or less?	Compared to the rest, at least for now.
	Do you think the number of feedback sessions is good now?	For me it is enough

Feedback		
Feedback locus/valance and form	How does Joelina give her feedback? • Positive/negative • Coaching on behaviors or outcome? • Task-focused/comparative?	Very positive feedback. Positive feedback would motivate me the most. I can stand criticism as well if useful and constructive. I would like to have feedback on both my task and compared. I would like to focus on skills.

B.4 Interview person 4

Feedback sessions in general		
	What do you think about the feedback sessions now you had some?	I think it was a good meeting, but not as much feedback because we were discussing a new kind of position for me. They want me to take care of tetrapak. I think it is a nice challenge because I don't think we are doing enough when it comes to this client. I accepted this, also, we were discussing more collaboration for the marketing and I have asked for more synergies between marketing and sales. We also discussed how to create group of people and discuss the strategy and action plan and so on. Within that group are me, Joelina and Peter.
	Are the sessions going as you expected?	The sessions are giving me a voice and making things done. This is a better forum than the Monday morning meetings. Those meetings are meant to be information about the project and asking for help in different projects. The last thing doesn't work very well because everybody is too busy. Those meetings don't work for me, I have the feeling I am reading the agenda.

	Do you think the feedback is going to be helpful for you?	The one on one sessions are helpful, I can ventilate my ideas, and we needed the talk we had last time. I have been working with marketing and she with sales and collaborations are needed. People now get information about where the company is going, it is more based on facts rather than feelings (Thomas). Now it is more structured and gathered and we get relevant information.
	Do you think the videoconference meetings where all numbers are discussed helps you? Or does it make you feel anxious that your numbers are discussed in front of everybody?	For me this is no problem, it is good that everybody can see my figures. Lets say if my sales figures are not as good as the others, there must be some things that I can do different. This is a good forum to discuss what to do different. It would give me a more objective way to look at my figures. I don't think anyone of the sales people here is low quality. But maybe not everybody is using their quality in the most optimal way.
	What would you like to focus on most during the feedback sessions?	If I see it for me, I think it is a change to get a better working situation. If you are not happy with something you can inform about it in this sessions and see if there is a possibility to change it .
	Do you think your performance will increase with the new feedback sessions?	It depends on the response, if I am not content with the way I am working and I don't get response in the right direction it will lead to more negative response. If they pick it up I will be more happy and motivated leading to better results. There needs to be a balance for each individual, it is hard to please everybody. People can compare situations to others.
	Do you think knowing how you perform compared to the rest will motivate you more or less?	See earlier questions
	Do you think the number of feedback sessions is good now?	I think Joelina changed it to every three weeks, I think this is good number. It depends on how much work load you have, if you have a lot of issues and work load and you might need it more often. For me currently this is good.

Feedback		
Feedback locus/valance and form	How does Joelina give her feedback? • Positive/negative • Coaching on behaviors or outcome? • Task-focused/comparative?	Positive and constructive. If it is constructive feedback it is more showing you some direction, which is better, and things that need to be changed and is for the better. If it is positive it makes you feel good but doesn't change my way of working. I would like to be coached on skills, if you have the skills the results will come. I prefer task-referenced feedback better because everybody does it in different ways. If my sales are not as good as somebody else's, it can depend on various reasons. I think it is hard to compare, it could be so different. If you compare you are not fair you need to compare the right things.

B.5 Interview person 5

Feedback sessions in general		
	What do you think about the feedback sessions now you had some?	I think it is really good because Joelina and I have open discussions around different themes. In the first sessions we kind of have tried together many things. And for the next meetings plans are made. This helps both me and us to focus; we discuss general Wackes and client specific.
	Are the sessions going as you expected?	Yes very
	Do you think the feedback is going to be helpful for you?	Yes I do, these sessions because I can discuss all themes. The sessions help to set a right focus and prioritize. I have a person to talk to about; she is experienced and competent.
	Do you think the videoconference meetings where all numbers are discussed helps you? Or does it make you feel anxious that your numbers are discussed in front of everybody?	I think that this is good. We look at the total sales figures and then look at the big clients. I don't see this as a competition, we all together we work for the same goal. I think we can all be happy and glad.
	What would you like to focus on most during the feedback sessions?	
	Do you think your performance will increase with the new feedback sessions?	Yes, to set priorities
	Do you think knowing how you perform compared to the rest will motivate you more or less?	See earlier

	Do you think the number of feedback sessions is good now?	This is enough
Feedback		
Feedback locus/valance and form	How does Joelina give her feedback? • Positive/negative • Coaching on behaviors or outcome? • Task-focused/comparative?	I like constructive feedback, I think it is better to focus on skills and development. Furthermore I would like to have task-focused rather than comparative.

C. Quantitative analysis

C.1 Goal orientation

C.1.1 Learning orientation

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Mean	S.D.
Learning orientation							
Making a though sale is very satisfying	3	5	5	5	5	4,60	0,89
An important part of a good salesperson is continuously improving your sales skills	3	3	5	5	5	4,20	1,10
Making mistakes when selling is just a part of the sales process	5	3	5	4	4	4,20	0,84
It is important for me to learn from each new selling experience	4	5	5	4	4	4,40	0,55
There are a lot of new things to learn about selling	3	3	5	5	4	4,00	1,00
I am always learning something new about my customers	4	3	5	5	5	4,40	0,89
It is worth spending a great deal of time learning new approaching for dealing with customers	3	4	5	4	4	4,00	0,71
Learning how to be a better salesperson is of fundamental importance to me	5	3	5	3	5	4,20	1,10
I put a great deal of effort sometimes in order to learn something new	3	3	5	4	5	4,00	1,00
	3,67	3,56	5	4,33	4,56	4,22	0,61

C.1.2 Performance-prove orientation

Performance prove	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Mean	S.D.
I want to do well in my job to show my ability to my family, friends, supervisors or others		4	3	4	4	1	3,20	1,30
My goal is to perform better than most other salespersons in my firm		3	2	5	3	1	2,80	1,48
I am motivated by the thought of performing better than other sales people in my firm		3	2	5	3	1	2,80	1,48
It is important to me to do better than other sales people in my firm		2	2	5	3	1	2,60	1,52
I am striving to demonstrate my ability relative to other salespeople in my firm		3	3	2	3	1	2,40	0,89
It is important to me to do well compared to others in my firm		3	2	5	3	1	2,80	1,48
	3	2,33	4,33	3,17		1	2,77	1,22

C.1.3 Performance-avoid orientation

Performance avoid	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Mean	S.D.
My fear of performing poorly at my job is often what motivates me		4	4	2	4	1	3,00	1,41
I prefer to avoid asking what might appear to others as dumb questions		4	1	1	3	1	2,00	1,41
I worry about the possibility of not meeting my sales quotas		5	3	4	3	3	3,60	0,89
I just want to avoid doing poorly in my job		4	3	3	4	5	3,80	0,84
I wish my job was not evaluated based on sales performance		3	3	2	4	2	2,80	0,84
I often think to myself what if I do badly in my job?		4	4	1	3	1	2,60	1,52
	4	3	2,17	3,5	2,17	2,97	0,81

C.2 Moderators and statements

C.2.1 round 1

Moderators	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Mean	S.D.
I accept my managers comments about attaining targets		4	4	5	4	5	**4,4**	0,49
I am good at selling		5	5	5	5	4	**4,8**	0,40
I like to work independent to reach my targets rather than having to meet every other week		5	4	2	4	4	**3,8**	0,98
I'd like to meet my manager more often to discuss my targets		1	5	4	2	4	**3,2**	1,47
I'd like to receive feedback on how I approach clients rather than how much I sell		3	3	5	2	3	**3,2**	0,98
The frequency of feedback helps me to perform better in my job		1	5	5	2	5	**3,6**	1,74
I would feel happier in my job if I have more regular feedback		2	5	4	3	5	**3,8**	1,17

C.2.2 round 2

Moderators	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Mean	S.D.
I accept my managers comments about attaining targets		4	5	5	4	5	4,60	0,55
I am good at selling		4	5	5	4	4	4,40	0,55
I like to work independent to reach my targets rather than having to meet every other week		5	3	1	3	1	2,60	1,67
I'd like to meet my manager more often to discuss my targets		2	3	3	3	3	2,80	0,45
I'd like to receive feedback on how I approach clients rather than how much I sell		5	5	5	3	4	4,40	0,89
The frequency of feedback helps me to perform better in my job		2	5	5	4	4	4,00	1,22
I feel happier in my job now I have more regular feedback		5	5	5	5	5	5,00	0,00

C.3 Own performance rating

Performance rating	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Mean	S.D.
Contributing to your company's goal in acquiring a good market share		0	5	5	4	2	3,20	2,17
Selling high-margin products		0	2	2	3	0	1,40	1,34
Generating a high level of sales		0	0	5	3	0	1,60	2,30
Exceeding sales targets		0	3	3	3	0	1,80	1,64
Generating current customer sales		2	0	5	3	1	2,20	1,92
Average		0,4	2	4	3,2	0,6		