S.PLA.S.H - SALES PLATFORM STUDIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

E-learning platform analysis in sales education

INDEX

1. Introduction

Describing IO2 aim

The importance of sales expertise is growing in an ever-changing environment, and not least because of the effects of Covid-19, therefore sales education should also respond to this change and requirements. According to research of Manpower (2007, 2009, 2018) "Business executives reported that being a sales representative was the most difficult job to fill worldwide." This also implicates the need for sales education and updated tools for sales professionals.

The main target of this entire project is to analyze a series of e-learning platforms that host lessons on sales and create new content suitable for an increasingly internationalized and digital-oriented scenario.

The main objective of the second section of this entire project is to provide an e-learning platform analysis describing a clear picture of the var types of e-learning platforms available for sales education and what they contain. In addition, the aim is to find out how scholars could utilize these different platforms both in sales courses and in teaching.

The analyses will be conducted in terms of functionalities, and content providing. Existing gaps will be identified, and the landscape of the chosen platforms among the researched ones will be presented.

1.1. Overview of digital platform ecosystem

The idea for the SPLASH project was initiated by discussions concerning how international cooperation on the teaching of digital platforms. As mentioned in earlier documents "in developing on-going customer relationships required in a global business world, nowadays' businesses are demanding greater numbers of well-trained salespersons and sales managers with, at the same time, high levels of professionalism and skills (Deeter-Schmeltz & Kennedy, 2011).

This project aims to answer these demands. The project started in 2020, aiming to develop ales education, which supports students to acquire Lisää tekstiä napsauttamalla tätä.acquire new skills for the changing business environments and selling digitally. A project labelled Intelleqtual Output 2 (IO2) was launched in 2021 after a proper search activity. During IO 2 it became clear that there are already several acquire new skills for the changing business environments and selling digitally. A project labelled Intelleqtual Output 2 (IO2) was launched in 2021 after a proper search activity. During IO 2 it became clear thta there are already several acquire new skills for the changing business environments and selling digitally. A project labelled Intelleqtual Output 2 (IO2) was launched in 2021 after a proper search activity. During IO 2 it became clear that there are already several acquire new skills for the changing business environments and selling digitally. A project labelled Intelleqtual Output 2 (IO2) was launched in 2021 after a proper search activity. During IO 2 it became clear that there are already several acquire new skills for the changing business environments and selling digitally. A project labelled Intelleqtual Output 2 (IO2) was launched in 2021 after a proper search activity. During IO 2 it became clear that there are already several acquire new skills for the changing business environments and selling digitally.

First, the importance of digital platforms will be presented and described. As it is argued, digital platforms with their opportunity to build e-commerce markets have much potential and their use probably will increase in the future. Teaching with the help of digital platforms also boosts the student's digital skills. Already the most successful companies have based their

businesses on digital platforms and in the private sector, the digital platforms are common for entrepreneurs and investors (Cusumano, Yoffie, & Gawer, 2020). Digital platforms have been increasingly popular in company's training programs especially in recent years (Sehoon, 2021). Despite these advances there are few studies of digital platform use in higher education. One reason for this can be that the universities are still on a development path with respect to their technology infrastructures (Kirkwood and Price, 2014.) argued, digital platforms with their opportunity to build e-commerce markets have much potential and their use probably will increase in the future.

In this report the digital platforms, and how platforms could be part of teaching ecosystems that invite lectures to interact with students using lectures, assignments, and exams, will be defined, (see more Cusumano, Gawer, & Yoffie, 2019).

To understand the situation with the digital platforms more presice, a short literature review is made. The peer-reviewed articles with full paper access and papers which have been published in the years between 2016-2021 were selected to start the research with. The words used in this literature research were "platform" and "learning". Moreover, mainly the journals that have a Publication Forum rating number (1 = basic; 2 = leading; 3 = top), were used. Tampere University's Library and their search machine called Andor to do this literature search was also used. Based on selected criteria, only few articles were found. Also studies that focus on personalization in learning with the support of technologies (Alamri, Watson, & Watson, 202.), into student engagement, learning and creativity (Chen, & Chiu, 2016), gamification strategy influence (Sehoon, 2021), social networking
learning (Krouska, Troussas, & Virvou, 2019), machine learning and platforms (Lee, Yoo, Kim, Lee, & Hong, 2019) and students use of E-Learning platforms (Moreno, Cavazotte, and Alves, 2017.) were found. This document and motivations after presenting the platforms and functionalities are based on these digital and educational studies.

1.2 Sales education platform analysis criteria and evaluation

This document presents the providings offered by 78 different sales educational platforms invented to develop and support sales training. The criterias of analysis leans on interviews conducted during IO1, when 27 sales professionals from four different countries were interviewed. As presented in the previous document called SPLASH FOCUS GROUP REPORT "The 27 subjects involved were carefully selected following a maximum variation criterion to achieve data saturation in the various countries, particularly trying to incorporate the points of view of the most relevant BtoB sectors of the various countries."

When starting to evaluate the platforms the definition of *Sales platform* was identified: "Interactive website, or LMS, with set of interactive online services (MOOCS, Open Educational Resources, video lessons…) that provide trainers, learners, and others involved in education with information, tools and resources to plan, support and enhance education delivery and management." The following search terms following were executed: Software, Web page, Playlist.

The target was to find 78 platforms, therefore after introducing the premises for platforms each 4 countries (5 participants) needed to find 20 sales platforms, based on the evaluation criteria presented in the next chapter.

When each partner (5 of all) conducted the search, the search terms in English included:
- sales, digital sales, international sales, selling, personal selling, sales management, sales force management, sales competition, sales gamification, sales training, sales onboarding software, KAM, sales enablement, inside sales, remote selling.

The words executing were the following:

- marketing, entrepreneurship, business, management - platforms generally treating other topics and having one coherent unit/video/interactive content.

The Finnish team had made an evaluation criteria list (attachment no 1.) based on interviews and the requirements shown by the interviewees during the phase 1. This was the preliminary list, which was presented to the international team, all 4 countries. The second list was created after the evaluation of the participants.

The topics of the second list were the following:
- Data
- Partner
- Link
- Description
- Languages
- Technology
- Access
- Provider
- Target
- Type of Content
- Topic
- Overall Evaluation
- External Evaluation
- General Comment

After choosing the 20 platforms, each partner had to fill in the Excel file called "Master list", following the given criteria.

Later on, the Finnish team evaluated all the answers, which were not equal to compare due to the fact of the written comments, which vary a lot. Therefore, the Finnish team made a third list including data fields, named as presented below (only one answering option for each question).

This gave the data analyzing possibility. In order to better serve future salespersons and their development in sales, the needs found during the interviews were also taken into consideration.

The topics of the third list and selection alternatives were the following:

Product name (ex data)	Partner	Link	Type of Platforms	Access
			Course	Open
			LMS	Free trial + Paid service
			Repository	Paid service
			Metasearch	N/A

Type of Provider	Business Type	Sales Management	Personal Selling	Digital Selling
Company	B2B	Yes	Yes	Yes
Educational Organization	B2C	No	No	No
EU Project	Both	N&A	N&A	N&A
Non-Profit Organization	N&A			

KAM (keyaccount management)	Business Acumen	Team Selling	Sales Force	Sales Competition

Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	No	No	No	No
N&A	N&A	N&A	N&A	N&A

Videos	Assignments	Chat	Forum	Quiz
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	No	No	No	No
N&A	N&A	N&A	N&A	N&A

Questionnare	Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Gamification		
Yes	Yes	Yes		
No	No	No		
N&A	N&A	N&A		

## 1.3. Sales education platform master list analysis

The graphs below show the functionalities of 78 different electronic platforms, and diversity in infunctionality or content. All of the functionalities and content provided can't be analyzed at the same depth. For example, the platforms, where the access to the services is free, or the provider is offering a free demonstration video. This required - in most cases - registration and waiting for confirmation, or sending an e-mail asking for a presentation meeting. Given the time restraints, this would have taken too long. This is why the analytical depth of the different functionalities may vary across our research of the platforms. Due to the diversity infunctionality or content all of the functionalities and content provided can't be analyzed at the same depth. For example, the platforms where the access to the services is free, or the provider is offering a free demonstration video. This required - in most cases - registration and waiting for confirmation, or sending an e-mail asking for a presentation meeting. Given the time restraints, this would have taken too long.

The total number on the left column corresponds to the number of platforms (78 in total)   .
Due to the program with which the graphs are made, the program counts to the left on a different
scale depending on the amount of the object being measured.

Sales related features consist of the main sales subjects taught. The majority of platforms have
sales management and personal selling capabilities. Digital selling, team selling, and sales force
seems to be rather common. On the   other hand KAM (Key Account Management), business
acumen, and sales competition play a minor role in analyzed platforms.
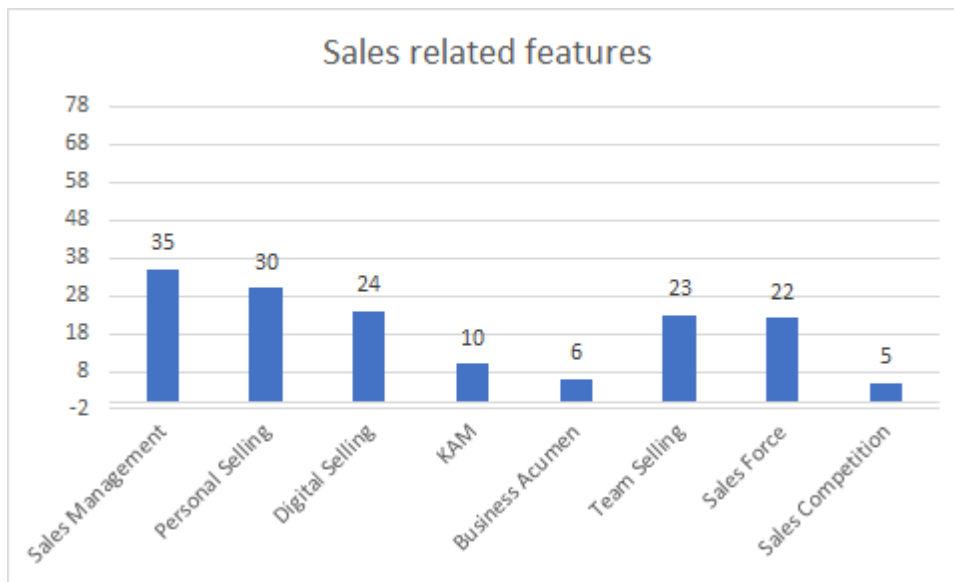
The figure of general features shows the fact that common features such as videos,
assignments, chat forum and quizzes are "must functions", but don't create a differentiation
factor between platforms. The features for the future such as artificial intelligence and
gamification exists in only few platforms.

General features
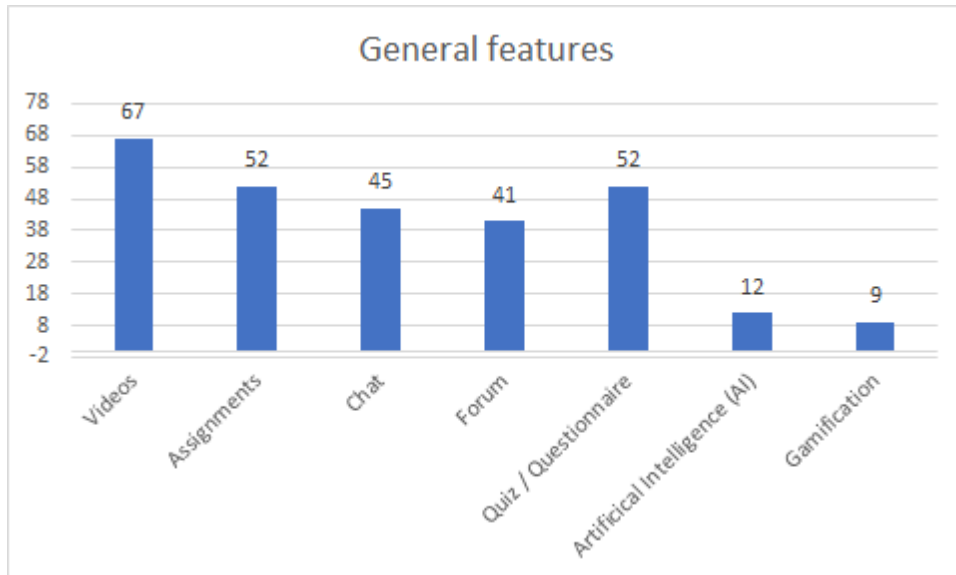
Four types of platforms are described in the platform evaluation:

1.LMS means a learning management system.

2.A repository means a platform providing single learning objects, i.e (text)books, articles, videos, interactive content, etc. Mainly provided by the platform operator.

3.Metasearch means a search platform aggregating information about learning elements/courses from other sources.

4.Courses means single courses and collections of courses.

The majority of the analyzed platforms were LMS (learning management system) type of platforms. None of those were repositories. LMS type of platforms. None of those were repositories.

Type of Platform

| Category	Value
LMS	48
Repository	0
Metasearch	5
Course	25
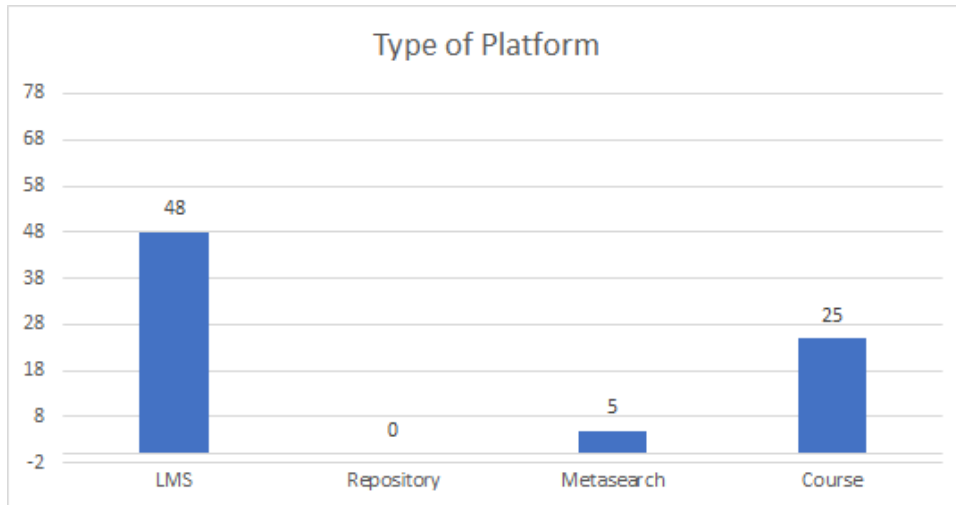
Access is a critical factor when analyzing platforms. Access in this descripted context means accessibility or prechecking /evaluation before final investment. Access classification is divided in three groups:

1. Open access means that the use will be totally free.

2. Free trial + paid services category describes that there is free trial but, in the end, the usage will cost something.

3. Paid service means that to be able to test a platform one must pay.

The sum of payment and minimum time period depends on the vendor but nevertheless, something must be paid before the test drive.

Access

Bar chart titled "Access" with y-axis from -2 to 78:
- Open: 28
- Free trial + paid service: 26
- Paid service: 21
- N/A: 3
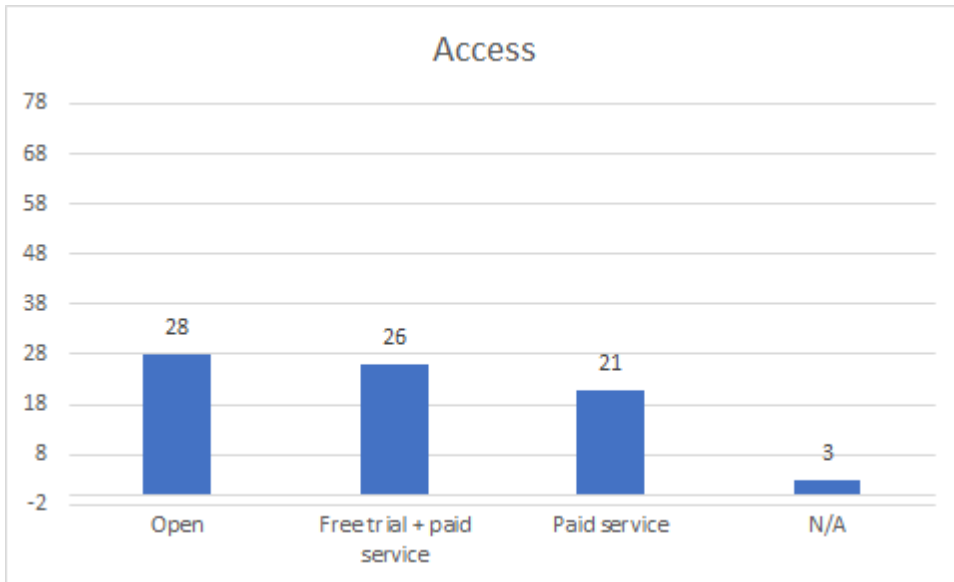
The majority of the platform providers were private companies. Educational organizations also have a significant role as providers. Despite the scarcity of EU projects and non-profit organizations, they do exist.

Type of Provider

Bar chart titled "Type of Provider" with y-axis from -2 to 78:
- Company: 52
- Educational organisation: 18
- EU Project: 3
- Non-profit organisation: 5
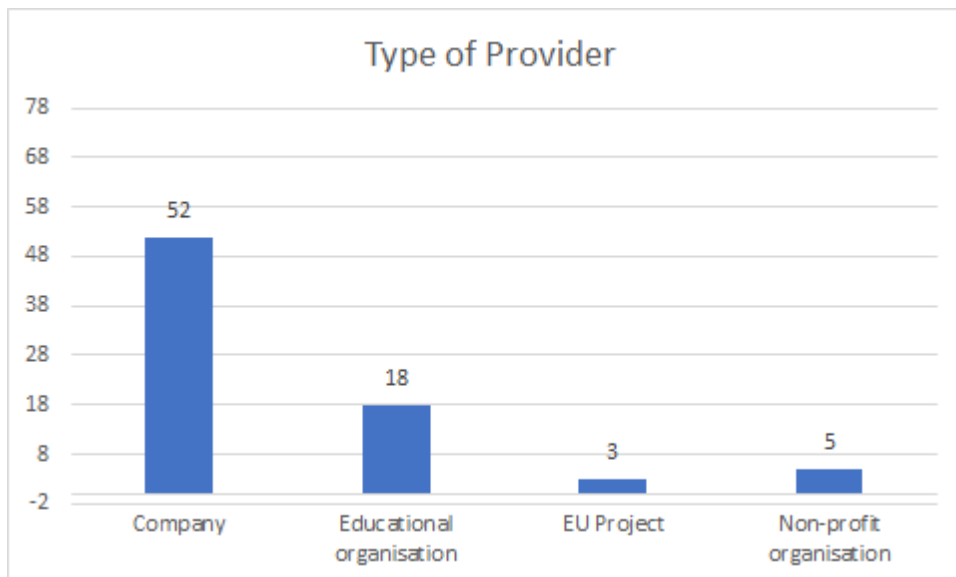
Business type as a definition was challenging due to the fact that pure B2C (Business to Consumer) solution have a minority role in these platforms. The majority part of were both (B2B

Business to Business and B2C) meaning that the platform is more general instead of targeted to exact business segmentation.

Business Type
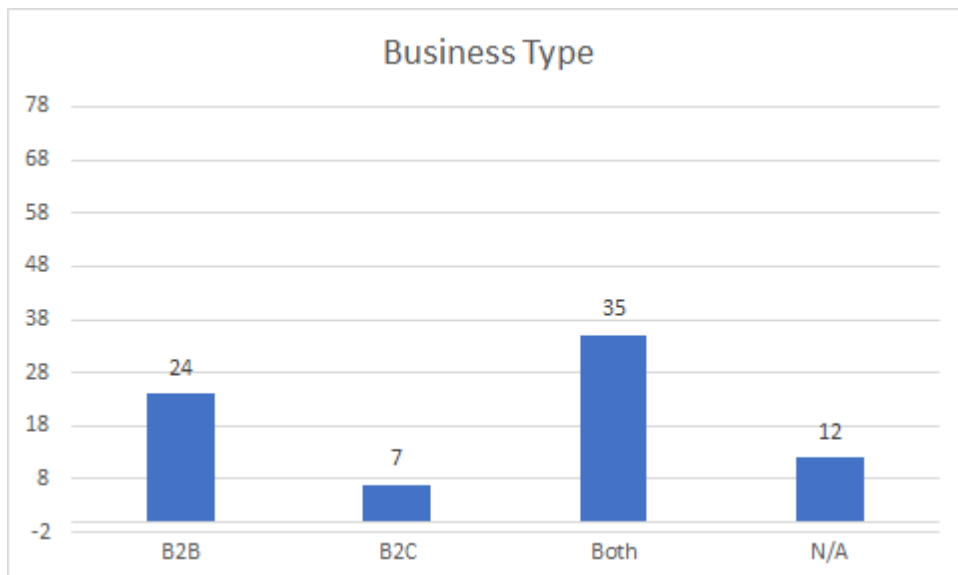
Sales management functionality and back up exists in 35 platforms out of 78, which was a surprisingly low number. Sales management is the core functionality in everyday sales. Teaching sales should be part of the platforms targeted for sales education.
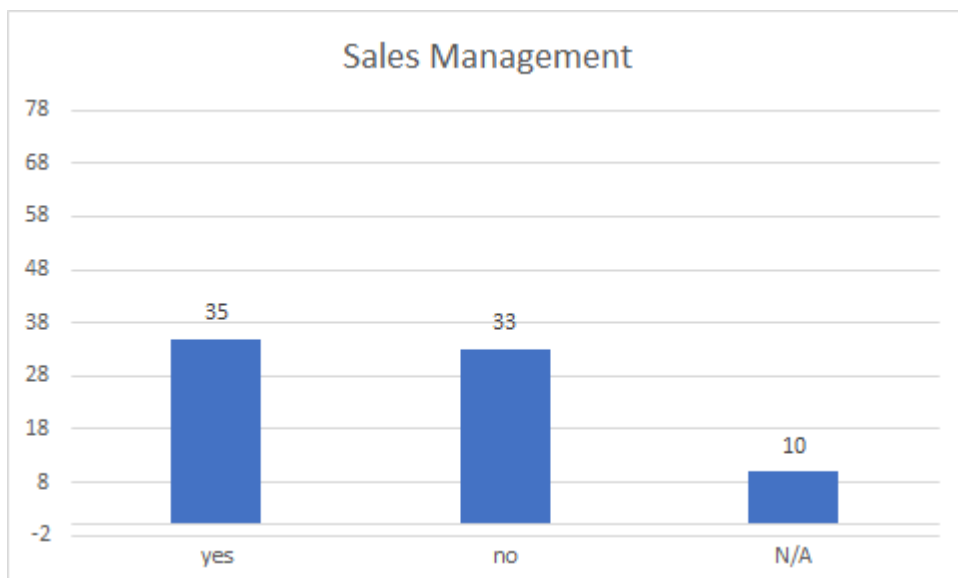
Sales Management

Personal selling is the second important topic together with sales management. Despite the importance of personal selling, only 30 platforms out of 78 were providing functionalities such as training sales pitch, negotiation skill, and argumentation.
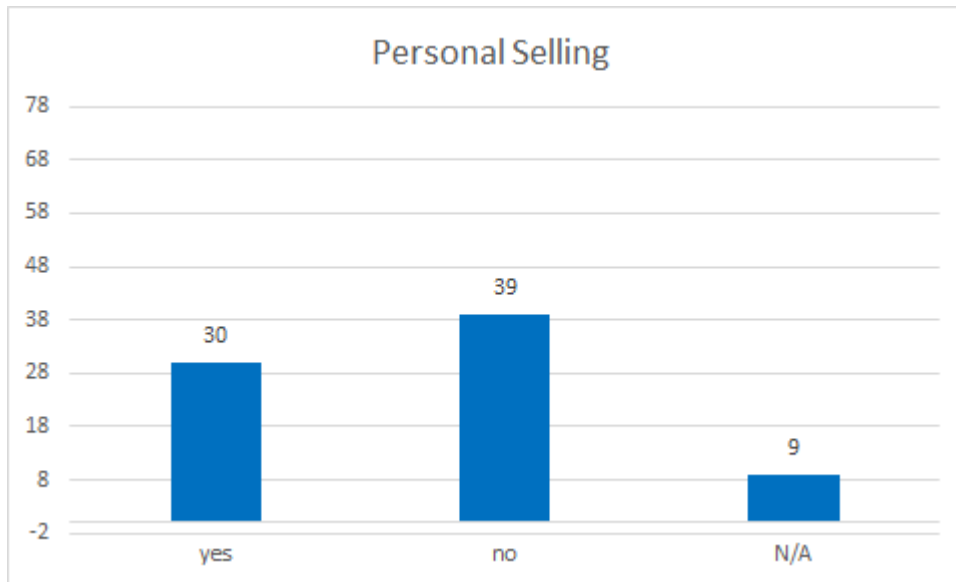

Digital selling's importance has been raised by the interviewees, who were interviewed in phase IO1. Covid 19 has changed the way sales should be organized in the Covid world.

It is still unknown how the "new normal" will look like, but digital selling competencies will be required even more than today. That will lead to the situation where the sales education platform shall have features and functionalities to fulfill those needs. In platform analysis 24 platforms have digital selling capabilities.

Digital Selling
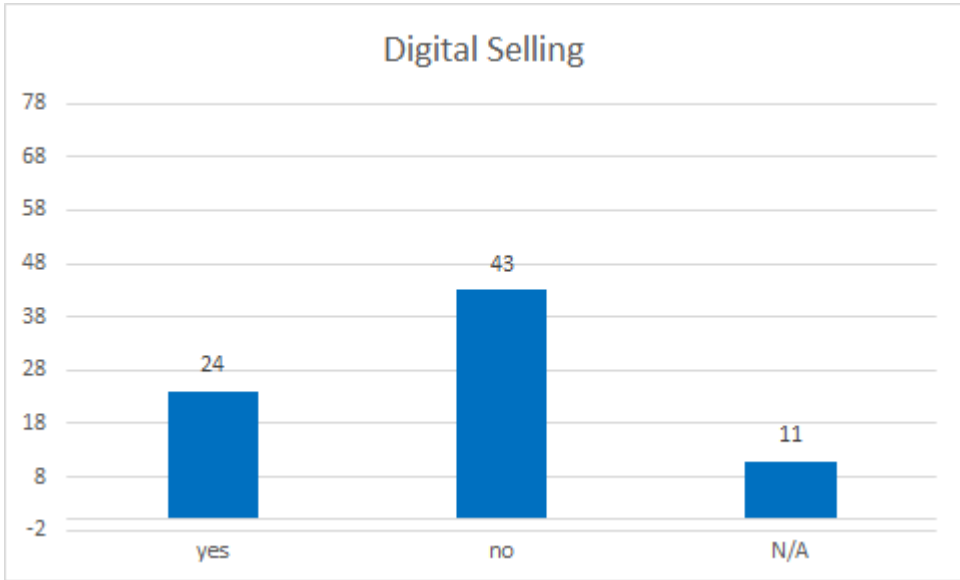
KAM (Key Account Management) is one of the basic operations in B2B sales. Surprisingly only 10 platforms of the whole group have KAM functionalities and processes in their platform. The research group could not identify if the parts of KAM process were available such as sales pitch, cultural differences, negotiation skills etc.


KAM
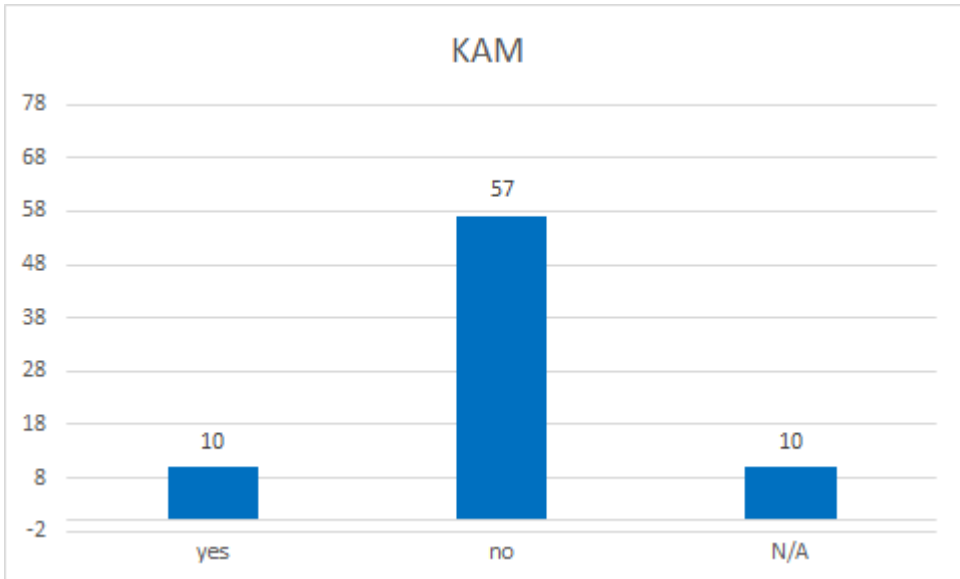
Business acumen (business applicability/ suitability) has reported to exist only in 6 platforms. When researching this topic only 6 platforms were offering business acumen.

Business Acumen

Category	Value
yes	6
no	61
N/A	11
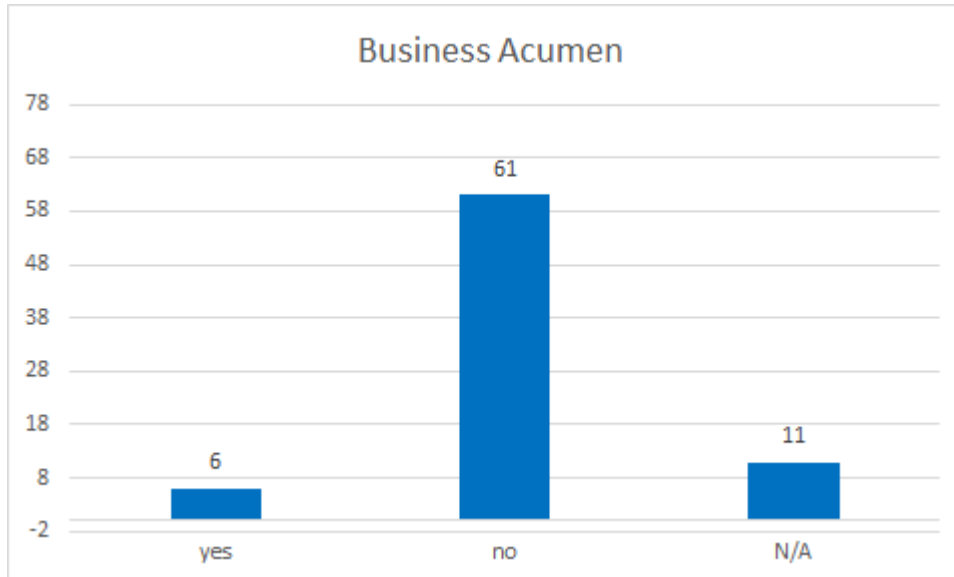
Team selling requirements are based on interviews made during phase IO1. Team selling is one of the most significant skill for today and for the near future for sales professionals. According to interviews with sales managers, sales in the near future is more service selling focused than product selling focused. These demands are requiring more cooperation competences from sales professionals. Despite the importance the graphic shows, only 23 platforms support team selling.

Team Selling

	yes	no	N/A
	23	44	10

Sales Force

|	yes	no	N/A
	22	45	10
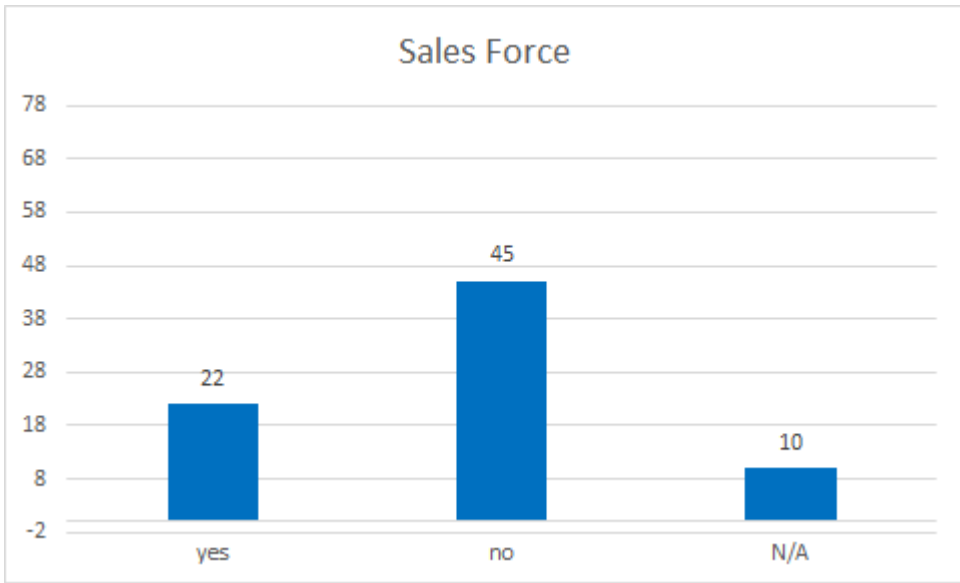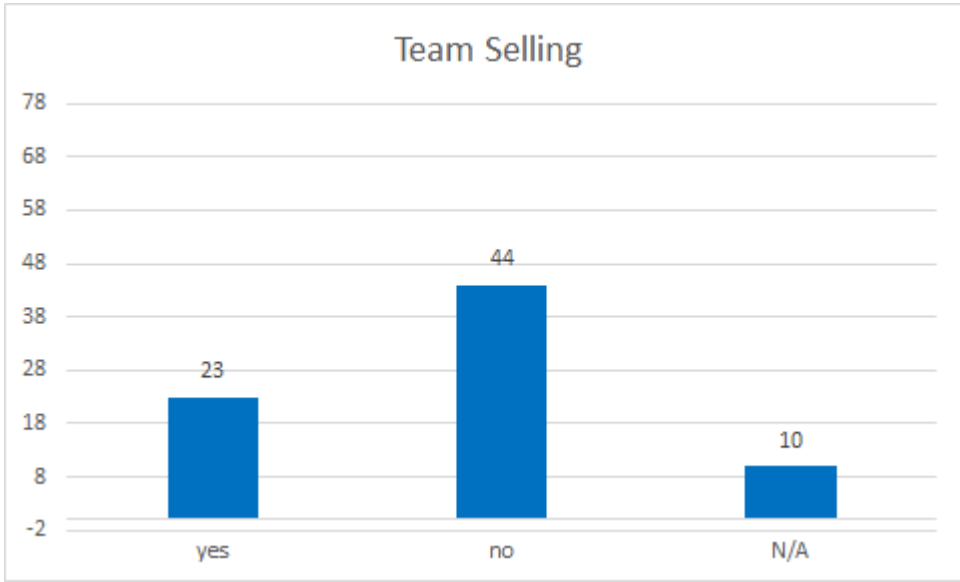
Detailed list of general features is shown in the following five charts:

Videos,

Assignments,

Chat,

Forum

Quizzes

Videos

yes 67
no 4
N/A 7

Assignments

yes 52
no 17
N/A 9

Chat

	yes	no	N/A
	45	24	9

Forum

	yes	no	N/A
	41	28	9

Quiz / Questionnaire

Category	Value
yes	52
no	17
N/A	9
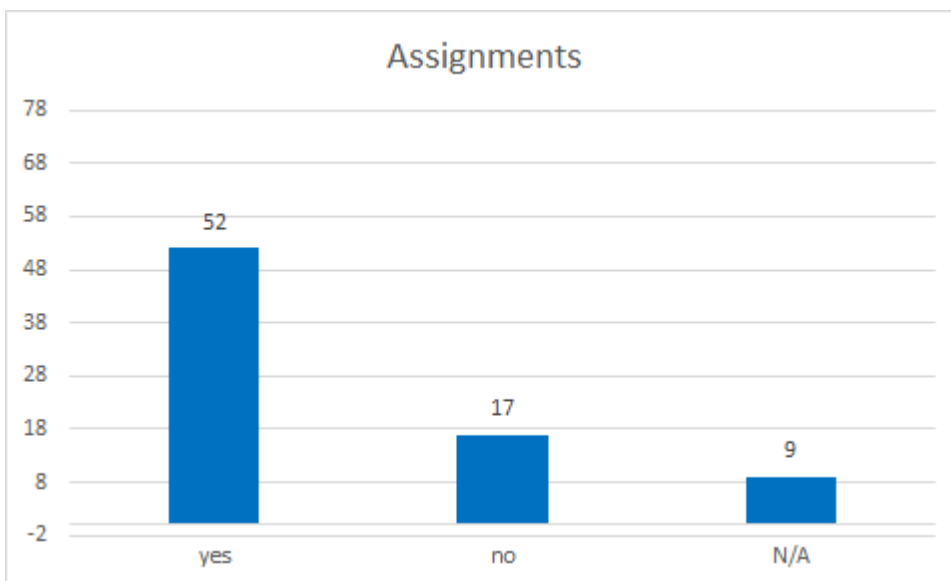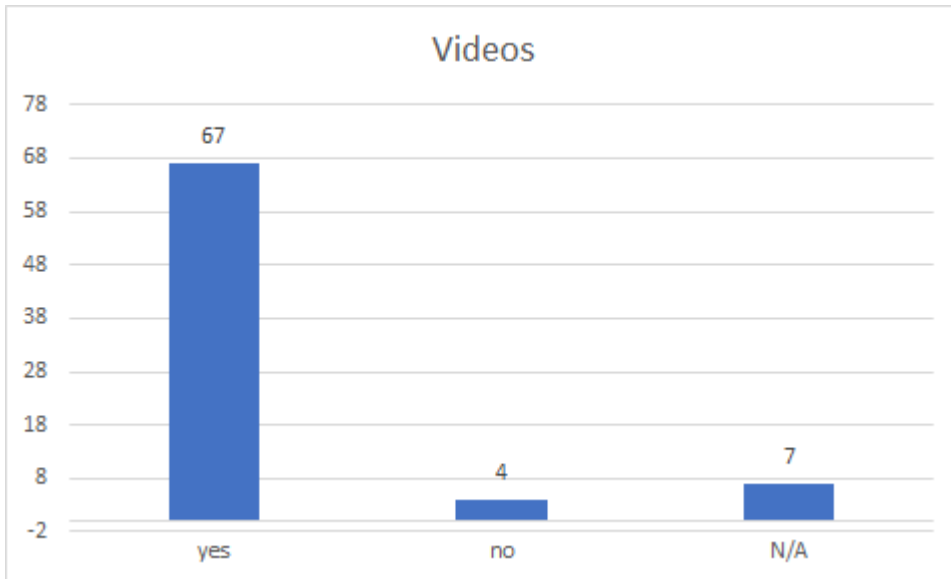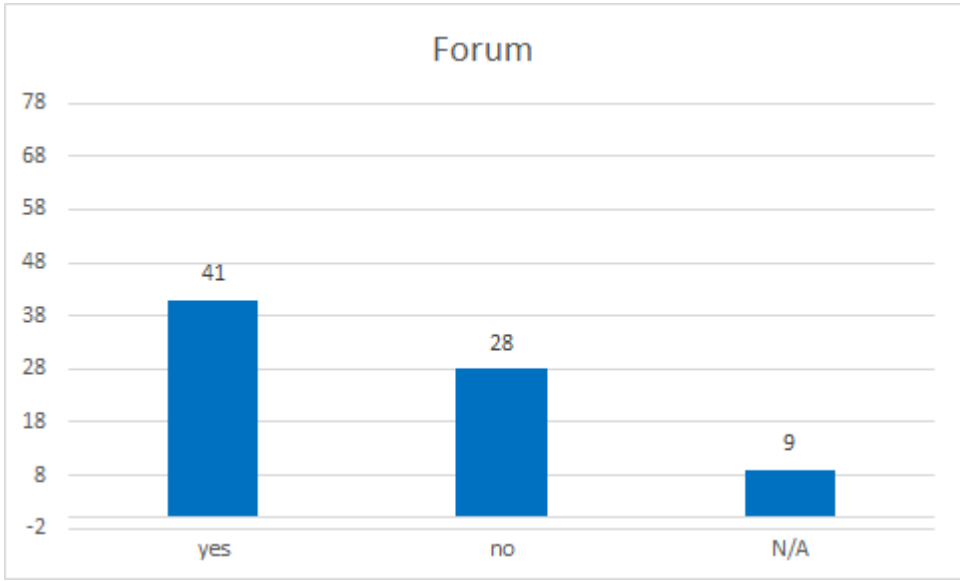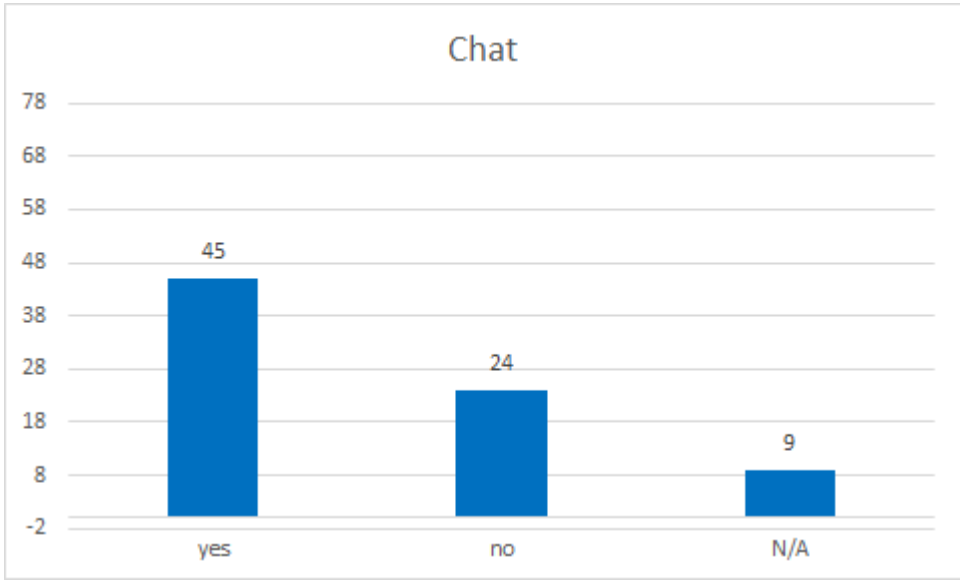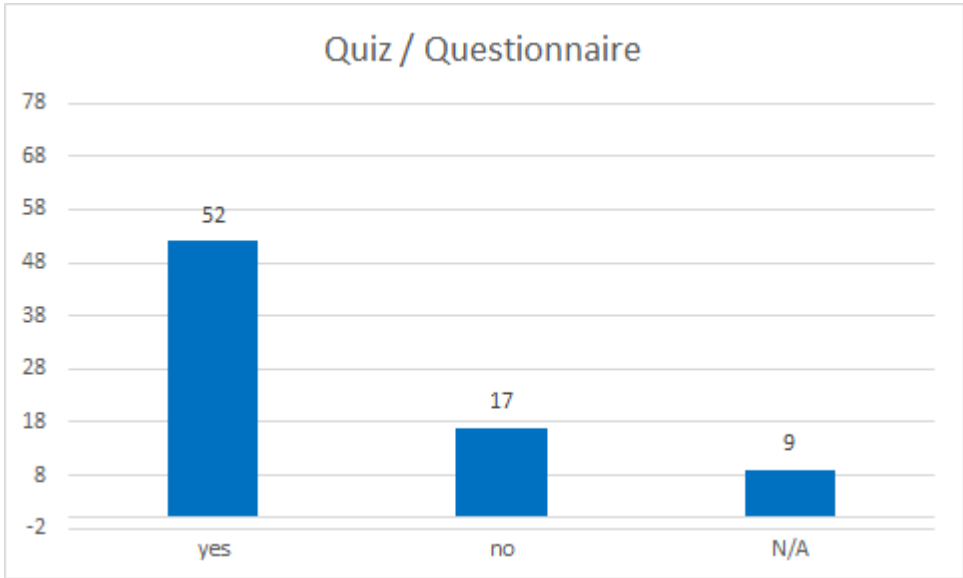
The following three charts cover sales competition, gamification, and artificial intelligence.
Only 5 platforms out of 78 put development power to organizing sales competition. Gamification
was offered by 9 platforms. Artificial intelligence is offered by 12 platforms out of 78.

Sales Competition

Category	Value
yes	5
no	53
N/A	20

Gamification

	yes	no	N/A
	9	60	9

Artificical Intelligence (AI)

	yes	no	N/A
	12	57	9
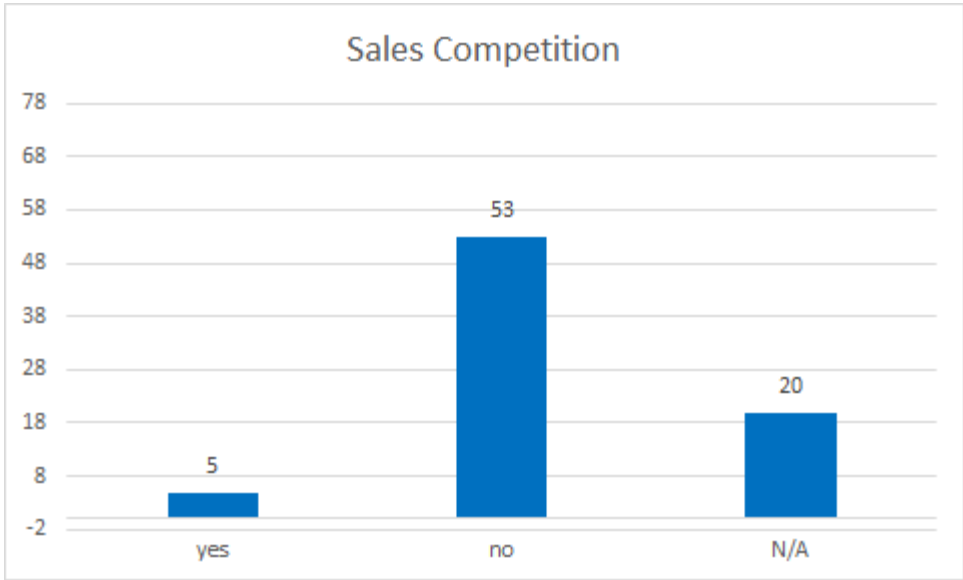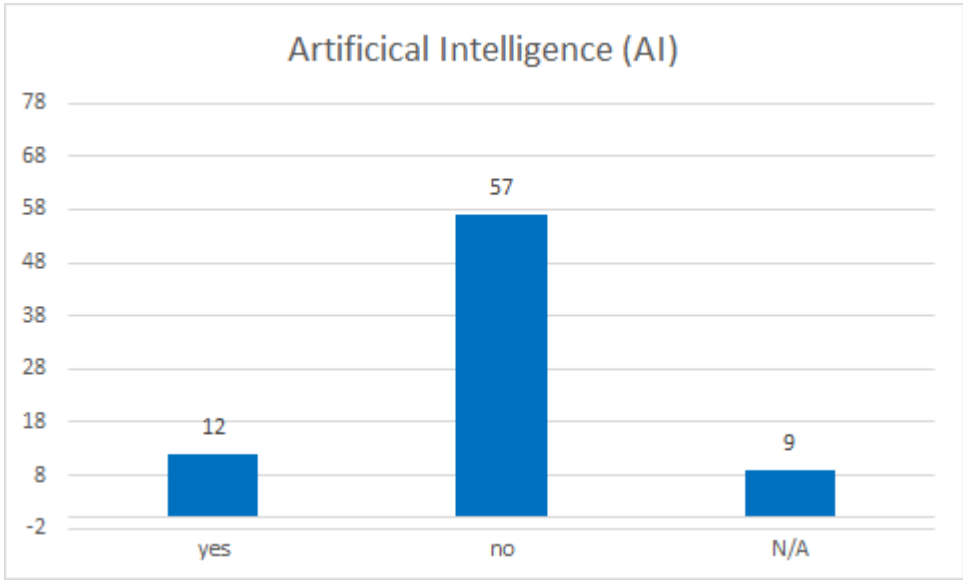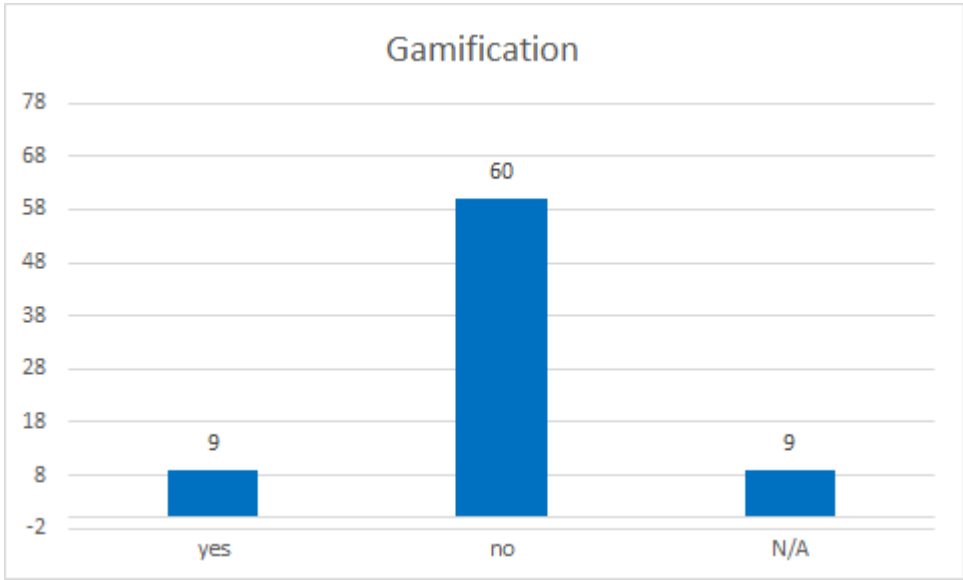
1.4 Sales education platform benchmark

All in all after 78 platforms six platforms were deeply and carefully analyzed by all partners. Each partner has analyzed one platform, except Docepo, which has been analyzed twice due to the fact that Docepo provides 2 different approaches such as Sales enablement and Docepo SalesForce integration. This is the reason for analyzing 2 instead of 1 from Docepo.

Analyzed platforms are listed below:
- Northwestern Kellogs
- Docebo Sales Enablement
- Docebo SalesForce
- SalesHood
- MIT OpenCourseWare
- S.M.I.L.e Sales Management, Inter-culture, Learning

Comparing these deeply analyzed platforms the following results were found:
1. Personal selling features are the most common features, offered by 4 platforms.
2. The rest of the features are widely divided; sales management and team selling are second most offered by 2 platforms. Rest of features are offered only by one platform, excluding business acumen, which is not offered at all.
3. Two of the platforms are free of charge. Rest four demand payment. Two of them has free test period before invoicing.

Type of provider was divided as following:
- one has EU project as a provider,
- two have educational organization
- three were commercial products.

Unfortunately, none of the platforms offered inbuilt artificial intelligence possibilities. Gamification features were also limited. Only one of the platforms offered this functionality.

Business type were:
- B2B (3 pcs)
- Both: B2B and B2C (2 pcs).

One of the platform's - MIT OpenCourseWare - business type couldn't be described due to missing analysis.

Digital selling, KAM, and sales competition were offered only by one provider. This is unfortunate, because according to the interviews made during IO1, these skills and features are most required in future.
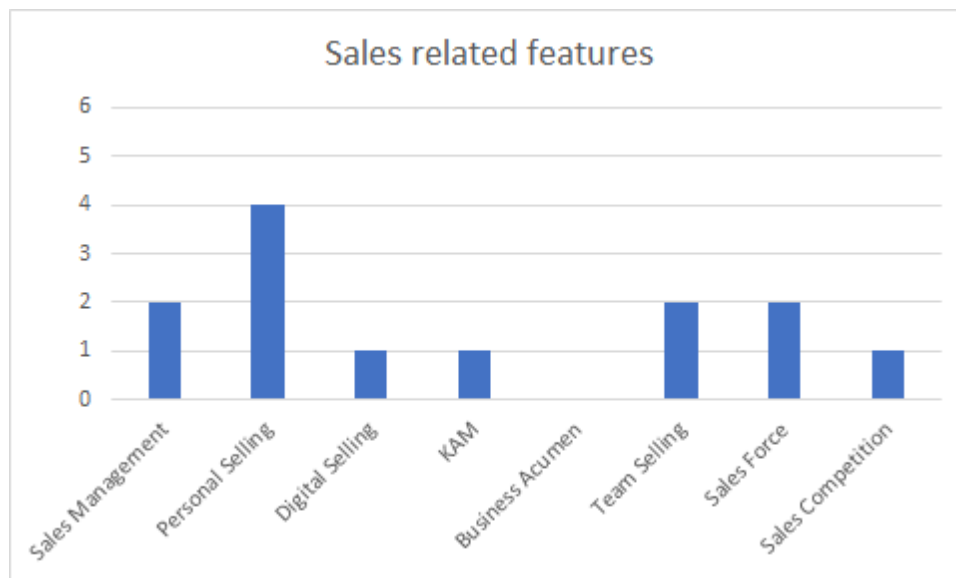
General features look very similar in every platform: All of them have videos, and assignments. Out of 5 platforms (including Docepo twice) 6 have chat and quizzes. Forum feature is offered by 4 platforms.

General features

Bar chart showing counts for general features:
- Videos: 6
- Assignments: 6
- Chat: 5
- Forum: 4
- Quiz / Questionnaire: 5
- Artificial Intelligence (AI): 0
- Gamification: 1

Sales Management

Bar chart showing counts for Sales Management:
- yes: 2
- no: 2
- N/A: 2

Personal Selling

	yes	no	N/A
value	4	0	2

Team Selling

	yes	no	N/A
value	2	2	2

Digital Selling

	yes	no	N/A
Value	1	3	2

Type of Platform

	LMS	Repository	Metasearch	Course
Value	5	0	0	1

Access

Open	Free trial + paid service	Paid service	N/A
2	2	2	0

Business Type

B2B	B2C	Both	N/A
3	0	2	1

Type of Provider

Sales Force

KAM

Sales Competition

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

	yes	no	N/A
	0	6	0

Gamification

	yes	no	N/A
	1	5	0

Business Acumen

1.5 Sales Education landscape

Wanting to give a concise and comprehensive overview of the current sales education available on platforms, we present here the aggregation of the platforms currently available on sales education, grouped according to the two criteria.

The first of these criteria is the topic, i.e. sales management, personal selling, team selling and digital selling, while the second criterion is that of accessibility, i.e. open, free trial and paid.

Sales Management

|	Open	Free trial	Paid service
Company	• Alison • Coursera: Salesforce Sales Development Representative Professional Certificate • Coursera:IBM Customer Engagement Specialist Professional Certificate • Coursera:Sales Training for High Performing Teams Specialization	• 360learning • Absorb • Allego • Factor8: Thesalesbar • Linkedin • Skillshare • Skillshare	• Business Danmark • GONG • Imparta - The 3D advantage for sales & service • Mindtickle • Negotiation Experts • Richardson Sales Performance • Saleshood • Seismic • Udemy
Educational organisation	• Coursera: Sales Management • Coursera: Sales Operations/Management Specialization • Coursera:Strategic Sales Management Specialization • EdEx: Marketing Analytics: Products, Distribution and Sales • EdEx: Sales in Sport Business • OpenupEd	• Coursera: HubSpot Academy • The Digital Sales Institute	• EdEx: Enterprise sales • Northwestern Kellogg
EU project	• ESCAPE Enhancing Sales Capacity for Agri-Food Products in Europe • IN.KAMS International Key Account Management & Sales		
Non-profit organisation			• Association for Key Account Management (AKAM)

Personal Selling

	Open	Free trial	Paid service
Company	• Alison • Coursera: Salesforce Sales Development Representative Professional Certificate • Coursera:IBM Customer Engagement Specialist Professional Certificate • Coursera:Sales Training for High Performing Teams Specialization • Future Learn: Dynamics 365: Customer Engagement for Sales	• 360learning • Docebo: Sales Force Integration • Easygenerator • Factor8: Thesalesbar • Future Learn: Sales Skills for Today: An Introduction to Entrepreneurial Sales • Linkedin • Skillshare • Skillshare • WTT Campus One	• Business Danmark • eloomi • Future Learn: The Digital Economy: Selling Through Customer Insight • Mindtickle • Negotiation Experts • Saleshood • Udemy Practical Sales Techniques
Educational organisation	• Coursera:The Art of Sales: Mastering the Selling Process Specialization • EdEx: Sales Enablement & Analytics • Trio		• EdEx: Enterprise sales • Northwestern Kellogg
EU project	• S.M.I.Le Sales Management, Inter-culture, Learning		
Non-profit organisation			

Digital Selling

	Open	Free trial	Paid service
Company	• Alison • Coursera: Salesforce Sales Development Representative Professional Certificate	• 360learning • Allego • Docebo: Sales Force Integration • Linkedin • Raven360 • Showpad • Skillshare • Trailhead	• Business Danmark • Imparta - The 3D advantage for sales & service • Ranking Bootcamp • Richardson Sales Performance • Seismic • Udemy
Educational organisation	• EdEx: Marketing Analytics: Products, Distribution and Sales • EdEx: Sales Enablement & Analytics • FutureLearn • RNMKRS	• The Digital Sales Institute	
EU project			
Non-profit organisation			

Team Selling

	Open	Free trial	Paid service
Company	• Alison • Coursera:Sales Training for High Performing Teams Specialization • Sales Bootcamp powered by vendition	• 360learning • Absorb • Allego • Factor8: Thesalesbar • Linkedin • Raven360 • Showpad • Trailhead	• Business Danmark • GONG • Imparta - The 3D advantage for sales & service • Mindtickle • Negotiation Experts • Richardson Sales Performance • Saleshood • Seismic • Talent LMS
Educational organisation	• RNMKRS	• Coursera: HubSpot Academy • The Digital Sales Institute	
EU project			
Non-profit organisation			

This sales education landscape representation shows how sales management, digital selling, personal selling, and team selling will be represented on different platforms.

Sales Education Landscape

2. Manual for the adaptability and Pedagogical suggestions

Digital platforms present a new online environment also for the students, and they must be trained well to successfully utilize the new learning environment, as well as the lectures too. The training needs to include technological and communication skills, self-learning and self-mentoring skills. This can be a challenge for universities because the implementation of these new approaches requires a new set of technology and communication skills, new pedagogical approaches, advanced networking, and virtual teaching and mentoring skills. (Kirkwood and Price, 2014.)

Despite the challenges of the new technical learning environment, one should focus on various pedagogical approaches (Lozano et al. 2017) "Teacher quality is one of the most, if not the most significant factor in students' achievement and education improvement" (Cohran-Smith 2004, 3). When researching and discussing of developing technical learning environment there should be parallel research of teacher quality. To enhance teacher's quality and skills one should focus on pedagogical approaches i.e. science of teaching. "Pedagogy is to help the child understand better" (Mortimore 1999. s. 7). Watkins and Mortimore (1999, 1) explain pedagogy as a word derived from an ancient Greek word (παιδαγωγο′ς) boy and leader. "Paidagōgos" - "literally means a man having oversight of a child, or an attendant leading a boy to school!" Pedagogy in practice means helping students learn to understand better, more efficiently.

Apart from defining the meaning of pedagogy, what are the methods a teacher uses to enable maximum learning? Is the teacher using team teaching, enhancing thinking skills, for example integrating technology, or using co-operative learning? Maybe the teacher is using visible learning methods, audio learning or learning by doing and resolving problems (Montessori and Valsiner, 2014).

The approach a student is taught by a teacher, how the teacher teaches the student, and what methods he or she chooses, depends on the teacher's experiential background, the subject he

or she teaches, and the teacher's personality. The target group, learner itself, has also an impact on teaching, as will be pointed out later on in this chapter by Bruner (1996).

However, teaching methods are generally divided into two different styles:
Teacher-centered and student-centered teaching methods:
The teacher-centered style gives a role to a teacher to be the only expert in the middle of the classroom. Theory behind this teacher style is behaviorism, concept supported by researches like Thorndike (1911), Pavlov (1927), and Skinner (1957).
The student-centered teaching style – as the name implies - focuses on having the one who will be teaching in the middle, and deciding what is learnt, how it is learnt, and where the learning takes place. Theory behind this is supported by constructivist approach, and strongly supported by pedagogical research of Piaget (1896-1890).

Watkins and Mortimore (1999, 4) also point out that "prevalent modes of pedagogy depended on much more than the style of the teacher", meaning that pedagogy is not influenced only by teacher's personality and style, but also the whole context of teaching. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that teaching can also be viewed from the learner's perspective, as Bruner writes (1996, 2):
"1. Seeing children as thinkers, constructing a model of the world to help them construe their own experience. The model considers what children think and how they arrive at what they believe.
2. Seeing children as knowledgeable, testing whether hypotheses stand up in the face of evidence, interpretation and existing knowledge. "

How to use these platforms providing digital sales education in a most effective and creative way in one's teaching? Which approach should one take? Constructivist, collaborative, integrative, reflective or inquiry-based learning? According to scholars like Williams (2017), Roussou (2004), learning is always more effective when the learner does things by him/herself than just being told to how to do. Piaget's student Duckwoth (1964) also pointed out already in the 1960's the importance of not forgetting the relevanceLisää tekstiä napsauttamalla tätä.of

this ancient educational philosophy, which still gives effective results in learning despite different educational approaches. Schools, which are at 2020' using John Dewey's educational philosophy are "developing higher level thinking skills for real-life application" (Williams 2017, p. 100). Leaning on these scholars' education philosophies, digital educational sales platforms could be used as a supportive tool in learning and teaching sales. More the sales platform can offer "real life sales simulation cases", the more effective they are found to

Be in educational matters. Also Alvarez et al. (2015) support this approach as mentioned in earlier report: "Lectures (face to face or online) allow students to learn the basics of sales in a predominantly passive mode, while the use of anecdotal experiences and real-world examples within the lectures offer students a higher level of realism than simply the delivery of textbook information (Alvarezal et al. 2015)."

In conclusion, it should be noted that teachers could take e-platform in use in following ways:

1.Videos: filmed examples made from different situations can be utilized in leaching team sales: what happens to participants in a sales situation, how they react, what body languages are telling for the observer. Acting as an outstanding observer helps one to notice signals, which might be hidden when participating in a real sales situation. Also when teaching negotiation skills, sales processes (closing), and emotional skills, videos could be in great help.

2.Role plays: acting in various roles helps one to understand the dynamics of behaviour and sales processes better.

3.Creating sales teams and sales competitions: being able to follow sales improvment by using e-lerning sales platforms. This supports students' understanding of CRM in use and its importance.

4.Exsamples of sales videos: videos can be shown alongside instruction to increase interest and memorization.

5.Using materials provided by platform for personalized learning and later reflections in groups.

5.Teaching sales pitch: Using possibility to make own video and share it with fellow students would support sales speech practice.

6.Social selling: Creating groups conducting different types of selling, and finding out how to use social media as support.

2.1. The challenges of adaptability

There have been defined several barriers in higher education and into the shift towards personalized learning. There is a lack of alignment between personalized learning and digital pedagogies, and this may build a challenge for progress (Garrick et al., 2017). Moreover, the challenges faced in transition to more personalized learning environments are the missing link of the organizational support, teacher attitudes towards their role change, and the technology itself (Mohd, Shahbodin, and Pee 2014). At the moment based on a study by Alamri, Watson & Watson (2021) the main features needed for the shift towards personalized teaching in digital platforms are student dashboards which show the records of accomplishments, algorithm-based coaching, adaptive curriculum, learning analysis possibility and the multimedia integration.

E-learning can be defined to provide an online environment where learners and educators are interacting with each other's and it's also a place where all the course materials are saved. Based on Krouska et al.'s (2019) study, E-learning has evolved from content management systems (CMS) and learning management systems (LMSs) to learning CMS (LCMSs) and to the most modern social learning CMSs. Social networking sites, including Facebook and other specialized social networks, complete the innovative approaches in the learning process. Social media applications as Facebook, Twitter and Google+ may be called Social Network Learning Systems (SNLS).

The major finding is that SNLS does not yet provide personalized and adaptive coaching and there is room for a lot of improvements. In SNLS, lectures can interact directly with students, share course material, and create online communities to promote collaboration and student engagement. Moreover, these kinds of platforms enable for deeper communication, sharing the feelings and data access. However, these tools miss the advanced educational features which are the strengths of the universities as adaptivity, assessment tools, and pedagogy. It is said, that LMS functionalities that focus on supporting interaction and collaboration should be preponderant in e-learning platform evaluation and selection processes. (Krouska et al., 2019.)

Most universities' institutional structures rely on educational technology tools that enhance teacher-centered classrooms in which students learn from the standardized curriculum (see e.g. Demski, 2012). The studies founded during this research highlight the need for personalized learning. Personalized learning may be defined as self-regulated learning, where the learner's motivation guides the learning process and to the learners' self-set targets (see e.g. Zimmerman, 2002; Deci, Ryan, and Williams, 1996.) However, it is notable that the only thing which changes is not the classroom to the digital platform. Additionally, personalization shifts the role of the teacher to the facilitator of individual learning. It is said that personalized learning has the potential to create customized learning environments via technology platforms. These platforms can offer pathways to personalize students' learning based on their motivation. However, personalized learning implementation is a challenge without information technology platforms to support the learning process. (See e.g. Garrick et al., 2017.)

3. Conclusions

All five participants first analyzed the 78 sales-related platforms. Then platforms were narrowing the platform analysis to the top five, which each participating country was allowed to decide for themselves and complete. During this process we found that - contrary to our expectations from sales-focused platforms and services - the main sales support functionalities for sales education were not existing. To be able to develop one's skills as a salesperson, and enhance "entrepreneurial sales", the platforms were required to offer role plays, capability to follow sales processes and results, and teach emotional skills by videos to handle customer encounters better. The most crucial functionalities were therefore defined to be *digital selling, personal selling, sales management, and team selling.* Unfortunately these needs were not fully met.

Digital selling

The use of social media in social sales is significantly increasing. Customer information is being pre-fetched on social media. If sellers don't know how to take advantage of social media and don't use electronic tools and platforms, they simply won't succeed in selling. Therefore, platforms that provide functionalities to teach social media exploitation should be favored.

As mentioned in the beginning of this document, interviews made in IO1 proved that salespersons' have a need to increase their e-sales skills. It is self-evident that Covid 19 has changed the way of organizing sales in the future, therefore it is also going to have a remarkable impact on sales education. This should also reflect how sales support functions and content are taken into account in these chosen digital platforms. However, only 24 platforms out of 78 offer digital selling capabilities.

Personal selling

Enhancing personal sales skills, one has to be able to negotiate, give sales pitches, and create argumentation. In addition to being   able to develop one's skills most efficiently, positive feedback is one of the most effective methods of creating results (Dweck, 2010). Researched

platforms were able to provide few options for feedback functionalities, such as group conversation, teachers were offered possibilities to give personal feedback, and automatic rating feedback. Emotional intelligence should also be supported in order to learn to handle vary people during sales processes, which are more complex than ever before (Goleman 1999).

Sales management

For example, only 10 *platforms* have Key Account Management (KAM) functionalities and processes in their platform, although KAM is one of the main operations in sales. According to our research group it was not possible to identify whether the parts of KAM functionalities were including teaching sales pitch, negotiation skills or taking cultural differences into the consideration due to the fact that not all platform allowed a test user to enter and try the services. For example, to find out whether platform called Learnster provided ready made templates, we send an email to get larger view of the provided functionalities. Our email was answered later on during the same day, but also asked for an appointment to get to know more.

Team selling

Sales education should therefore take into account team sales in order to better teach future salespeople to involve everyone who is influential in sales. In the future, sales will no longer be barter between two people, but the complexity of services and products. This demands knowledge and special skills from sales professionals. For this reason, platforms that support team selling should be prioritized. It is notable that only 55 platforms out of 78 were providing team selling functionalities. As noticed from the interviews, it was mentioned to be one of the increasing skills in the future:

"It can be a great advantage to have both representatives at the meeting, the technical one and the one with sales skills, the technical ones give security with the knowledge they have and the one with sales skills pushes the conversation forward so that it is not purely about the technical stuff. (Denmark)

As mentioned earlier in the phase IO1, the analysis choosing the suitable platforms were carried out leaning on the most recommended methods insales field by Marshall and Michales (2001), such as: field experiences, mentors, career shadowing, role-play, and involvement of sales experts in role-play. However, roleplays as experiencing being sales manager, sales representative etc. were paucity. In addition, attention was drawn to the fact that sales competition was not taken into account. However, sales monitoring is one of the most important tasks when having a role as a sales manager. Out of 78 platforms only 27 sales platforms were providing sales competition functionalities. Then again gamification was provided by 60 sales platforms.

Nonetheless, as Deeter et al. (2011) point out in their research over 10 years ago, one of the most effective teaching methods include videos, so did almost all of the platforms: 67 out of 78 were providing video content and possibilities of making videos. It is evident that the need for videos will continue to increase .

To whom these services are provided and segmented is not clear: a specific target group such as business to business (B2B) or mainly business to consumer (B2C) were not clearly perceptible. Platform approach were mainly target for general sales target groups than a more specific sales professional target group. Nevertheless, as being a researcher and a scholar, we found out that it should be most significant how easy it is to use functionalities platform is providing and not focusing on wo is using, but how.

The major part of providers were private companies. Nonetheless, educational organizations have also a significant role in providing sales-oriented platforms. However, EU projects and non-profit organizations both have minor role although they do provide some services.

3.1. Suggestions

Researchers Parker et al. (1996), and Magnotta (2020) are pointing out that one of the most effective learning methods is experimental teaching, meaning students get to learn by experimenting and doing. This approach was not materialized with chosen and researched

platforms. According to Spiller et al. (2019), it seems like one of the current and most popular teaching methods among scholars in sales courses are – despite all – lecturing and role plays. Despite the fact, that this research is made in USA it seems to be the case also in Europe (Koponen et al. 2019).

These researches indicate that there is a great need for e-learning platforms, especially for sales platforms. Also Teräs et al. (2020) argue that teaching as to be integrated to online learning. In addition, as mentioned earlier in SPLASH FOCUS GROUP REPORT, *"The U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics (2019) indicated that 14.54 million workers are currently employed in sales-related positions. This number is projected to grow 3% from 2016 to 2026, which will result in about 458,700 new sales positions that will need to be filled on an annual basis"* (Spiller, Kim, and Aitken, 2019).

"But what I think is, in the future, you have to know how to use these [digital] tools. Mural, flipcharts, sticky notes, mentimeters, - just a small fraction, but these people should be able to handle all these tools. The young could be a bit ahead of us older ones! Then at the client's, everything has to work, it shouldn't be bumpy." (Austria)

We strongly recommend that the available platforms should be used in the development of sales education and that the opportunities they offer should be integrated into teaching in order to make teaching more diverse and to support the memorizing in various ways. On the other hand, leaving sales education alone to platforms on the market does not support the development of the salesperson and does not train the salesperson into a professional who can meet the challenges of the future.

In order to support future skills of selling requirements, as mentioned in IO 1 document (SPLASH FOCUS GROUP REPORT), opportunities to play role games, use gamification, and some level of artificial intelligence, for example suggesting additional offerings during the sales process, should be offered as part of the education.

The following list below summarizes the requirements even more precisely:

- Team selling skills

- Gamification

- Role games

- Artificial intelligence (supporting a sales person's

- Key account management (KAM including definition making analyzes, elevator speeches, pitching, sales processes)

- Videos supporting emotional intelligence training by narrative approaches

In addition, we suggest that each teacher take tips from the platforms to their own teaching. Coaching emotional skills through videos increases the student's understanding of emotional knowledge. Similarly, videos can serve as an excellent support when teaching social selling.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier in SPLASH FOCUS GROUP REPORT, the platforms should not be used as substitutes for appropriate situation orientated pedagogical approaches.

References

Saini, M. C., & Abraham, J. (2015). Using Social media for educational purposes: Approaches and Challenges. In *International Education Conference 2015 on Learning Technologies in Education*.

Alamri, H. A., Watson, S., & Watson, W. (2021). Learning Technology Models that Support Personalization within Blended Learning Environments in Higher Education. TechTrends, 65(1), 62-78.

Chen, C. H., & Chiu, C. H. (2016). Employing intergroup competition in multitouch design-based learning to foster student engagement, learning achievement, and creativity. Computers & Education, 103, 99-113.

Cusumano, M. A., Yoffie, D. B., & Gawer, A. (2020). The future of platforms. MIT Sloan Management Review, 61(3), 46-54.

Cusumano, M. A., Gawer, A., & Yoffie, D. B. (2019). *The business of platforms: Strategy in the age of digital competition, innovation, and power*. New York: Harper Business.

Deci, E. L., Ryan, R. M., & Williams, G. C. (1996). Need satisfaction and the self-regulation of learning. *Learning and individual differences*, *8*(3), 165-183.

Demski, J. (2012). This time It's personal: True student-centered learning has a lot of support from Education leaders, but it Can't really happen without all THE right technology infrastructure to drive it. And the technology just may be ready to deliver on its promise. *THE Journal (Technological Horizons in Education)*, *39*(1), 32.

Dewey, J. (1938). Experience and education. New York: Macmillan.

Dweck, C. S. 2010. Even geniuses work hard. Educational Leadership, 68 (1), 16–20.

Garrick, B., Pendergast, D., & Geelan, D. (2017). Personalised learning, pedagogy, and E-mediated tools. In *Theorising Personalised Education* (pp. 27-46). Springer, Singapore.

Goleman, D. 1999. Working with emotional intelligence. Bloomsbury Publishing, London UK.

Kim, Sehoon. "How a Company's Gamification Strategy Influences Corporate Learning: A Study Based on Gamified MSLP (Mobile Social Learning Platform)." Telematics and informatics 57 (2021)
Kirkwood, A., & Price, L. (2014). Technology-enhanced learning and teaching in higher education: what is 'enhanced'and how do we know? A critical literature review. *Learning, media and technology*, *39*(1), 6-36.

Price, L., & Kirkwood, A. (2014). Using technology for teaching and learning in higher education: A critical review of the role of evidence in informing practice. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *33*(3), 549-564.

Koponen, J., Julkunen, S., & Asai, A. (2019). Sales communication competence in international B2B solution selling. Industrial Marketing Management, 82, 238-252.

Krouska, Akrivi, Christos Troussas, and Maria Virvou. "SN-Learning: An Exploratory Study Beyond E-learning and Evaluation of Its Applications Using EV-SNL Framework." Journal of computer assisted learning 35.2 (2019): 168–177. Web.(2)

Kumpulainen, K & Renshaw, P. 2007. Culture and Learning. A special theme issue. International Journal of Educational Research 46 (3–4), 109–115.

Lee, K. M., Yoo, J., Kim, S. W., Lee, J. H., & Hong, J. (2019). Autonomic machine learning platform. International Journal of Information Management, 49, 491-501.

Magnotta, S. R., Peev, P., & Steffes, E. (2020). Everyone'sa winner: The initiation and effectiveness of an Intracollegiate sales competition. Journal of Marketing Education, 0273475320947774.

Mohd, C. K., Shahbodin, F., & Pee, N. C. (2014). Personalized learning environment (PLE) experience in the 21st century: Review of literature. In *Third World Congress on Information and Communication Technologies (WICT 2014); MITC: Melaka, Malaysia*.

Moreno, Valter, Flavia Cavazotte, and Isabela Alves. "Explaining University Students' Effective Use of E-learning Platforms." British journal of educational technology 48.4 (2017): 995–1009. Web.(2)

Montessori, Maria, Hunt, J.McV., Valsiner Jaan. (2014). The Montessori Method. Routledge, New York.

Mortimore, Peter. Understanding Pedagogy and its Impact on. Learning. (1999). A SAGE Publication Company, London.

Parker, R. Stephen, Pettijohn Charles E. & Luke, Robert H. (2015)
Sales Representatives and Sales Professors: A Comparative Analysis of Sales Training Perceptions, Topics and Pedagogy. Pages 41-50 | Published online: 09 Oct 2015

Spiller, L. D., Kim, D. H., & Aitken, T. (2019). Sales education in the United States: Perspectives on curriculum and teaching practices. Journal of Marketing Education, 0273475319852756.

Vygotski, L.S. 1978. Mind in Society. The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Watkins,C., Mortimore, Peter, Understanding Pedagogy and its impact on learning, 1999.

Williams, Morgan K. (2017). John Dewey in the 21st Century. Journal of Inquiry & Action in Education, 9(1), 2017

Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview. *Theory into practice*, *41*(2), 64-70.

Attachments: single platform analysis

SALES MANAGEMENT

Legend: Open / Free trial / Paid service

- Business Danmark: https://businessdanmark.dk/lydbogsapp/
- EdEx: Enterprise sales: https://www.edx.org/professional-certificate/queensx-enterprise-sales?index=product&queryID=1800fe29ec42c59a1r41e99790577101&position=1
- EdEx: Marketing Analytics: Products, Distribution and Sales: https://www.edx.org/course/marketing-analytics-products-distribution-and-sale?index=product&queryID=ac111be42575d0335c28a769f08257f0&position=5
- EdEx: Sales in Sport Business: https://www.edx.org/course/sales-in-sport-business?index=product&queryID=a9400e6600255542f46b871e8d1b4527&position=4
- IBA: https://www.iba.dk/efteruddannelser/online-master-of-science-in-international-business-2
- Coursera: HubSpot Academy: https://www.coursera.org/learn/build-sales-career
- Linkedin: https://www.linkedin.com/learning/sales-management-foundations
- Negotiation Experts: https://www.negotiations.com/training/sales-negotiation/
- Northwestern Kellogg: https://online.em.kellogg.northwestern.edu/mastering-sales
- Skillshare: https://www.skillshare.com/search?query=Sales%20Training%20Masterclass
- Skillshare: https://www.skillshare.com/search?query=modern%20sales%20training
- Coursera: Sales Management: https://www.coursera.org/learn/sales-management#syllabus
- Coursera: Sales Operations/Management Specialization: https://www.coursera.org/specializations/sales-operations
- Coursera: Salesforce Sales Development Representative Professional Certificate: https://www.coursera.org/professional-certificates/sales-development-representative#about
- Coursera: IBM Customer Engagement Specialist Professional Certificate: https://www.coursera.org/learn/ibm-customer-engagement-specialist
- Coursera: Sales Training for High Performing Teams Specialization: https://www.coursera.org/specializations/sales-training-high-performing-teams
- Coursera: Strategic Sales Management Specialization: https://www.coursera.org/specializations/sales-management-bridging-gap-strategy-sales
- Association for Key Account Management (AKAM): https://a4kam.org/ WTT Campus One: https://www.wtt-campusone.com/ https://demo.campusone-trainings.com/#/etrainings
- Absorb: https://www.absorblms.com/solutions/sales-training
- Factor8: Thesalesbar: https://factor8.com/our-services/sales-bar/
- Mindtickle: https://www.mindtickle.com/
- Saleshood: https://saleshood.com/
- 360learning: https://360learning.com/boost-sales-training-today
- Alison: https://alison.com/it/corsi?query=sales
- Allego: https://www.allego.com/
- ESCAPE Enhancing Sales Capacity for Agri-Food Products in Europe: http://www.escape-project.eu/courses/login/index.php
- GONG: https://www.gong.io/sales-training/
- Imparta - The 3D advantage for sales & service: https://imparta.com/
- IN.KAMS International Key Account Management & Sales: http://www.inkams.eu/cli-ma/
- OpenupEd: https://www.uninettunouniversity.net/it/mooc-corsi-online.aspx?faculty=&degree=209&idindirizzo=&mode=cs
- Richardson Sales Performance: https://www.richardson.com/online-sales-training-program-delivery/
- Seismic: https://seismic.com/product/training/
- The Digital Sales Institute: https://www.thedigitalsalesinstitute.com/online-sales-training-platform/
- Udemy: https://www.udemy.com/courses/business/sales/

PERSONAL SELLING

Legend: Open / Free trial / Paid service

- Docebo: Sales Force Integration: https://www.docebo.com/docebo-salesforce-integration-lms/
- EdEx: Sales Enablement & Analytics: https://www.edx.org/course/sales-enablement-analytics
- Future Learn: Dynamics 365: Customer Engagement for Sales: https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/customer-engagement-for-sales
- Future Learn: Sales Skills for Today: An Introduction to Entrepreneurial Sales: https://www.futurelearn.com/microcredentials/entrepreneurial-sales
- Future Learn: The Digital Economy: Selling Through Customer Insight: https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/customer-insight
- Smartlearning: https://www.smartlearning.dk/akademiuddannelser/salg-og-marketing
- Teknologisk Institut: https://www.teknologisk.dk/kurser/kurser-i-salg-indkoeb-og-forhandling/c578?gclid=Cj0KCQjw0caC8hClARIsAGAfuMzvxfBLrP82hhM1Uo9hGUOCS0PLWG7BQqDOYlXntB_W5Z1sNYWxFsiaAmHREALw_wcB
- Linkedin: https://www.linkedin.com/learning/sales-discovery
- Udemy Practical Sales Techniques: https://www.udemy.com/course/master-successful-selling/
- Coursera: The Art of Sales: Mastering the Selling Process Specialization: https://www.coursera.org/specializations/the-art-of-sales-mastering-the-selling-process
- Easygenerator: https://www.easygenerator.com/
- eloomi: https://eloomi.com
- S.M.I.Le Sales Management, Inter-culture, Learning: https://www.smilearning.eu/
- Trio: https://www.progettotrio.it/catalogo-corsi
- Business Danmark: https://businessdanmark.dk/lydbogsapp/
- EdEx: Enterprise sales: https://www.edx.org/professional-certificate/queensx-enterprise-sales
- IBA: https://www.iba.dk/efteruddannelser/online-master-of-science-in-international-business-2
- Negotiation Experts: https://www.negotiations.com/training/sales-negotiation/
- Northwestern Kellogg: https://online.em.kellogg.northwestern.edu/mastering-sales
- Skillshare: https://www.skillshare.com/search?query=Sales%20Training%20Masterclass
- Skillshare: https://www.skillshare.com/search?query=modern%20sales%20training
- Coursera: Salesforce Sales Development Representative Professional Certificate: https://www.coursera.org/professional-certificates/sales-development-representative#about
- Coursera: IBM Customer Engagement Specialist Professional Certificate: https://www.coursera.org/learn/ibm-customer-engagement-specialist
- Coursera: Sales Training for High Performing Teams Specialization: https://www.coursera.org/specializations/sales-training-high-performing-teams
- WTT Campus One: https://www.wtt-campusone.com/ https://demo.campusone-trainings.com/#/etrainings
- Factor8: Thesalesbar: https://factor8.com/our-services/sales-bar/
- Mindtickle: https://www.mindtickle.com/
- Saleshood: https://saleshood.com/
- 360learning: https://360learning.com/boost-sales-training-today
- Alison: https://alison.com/it/corsi?query=sales

DIGITAL SELLING

- X FutureLearn: https://www.futurelearn.com/
- X Ranking Bootcamp: https://bootcamprankings.com/?s=sales
- X Raven360: https://www.raven360.com/
- X RNMKRS: https://www.rnmkrs.org/
- X Showpad: https://www.showpad.com/?s=sales
- X Trailhead: https://trailhead.salesforce.com/
- X EdEx: Marketing Analytics: Products, Distribution and Sales: https://www.edx.org/course/marketing-analytics-products-distribution-and-sale?index=product&queryID=ac111be42575d0335c28a769f08257f0&position=5
- X Allego: https://www.allego.com/
- X Imparta - The 3D advantage for sales & service: https://imparta.com/
- OpenupEd: https://www.uninettunouniversity.net/it/mooc-corsi-online.aspx?faculty=&degree=209&idindirizzo=&mode=cs
- X Richardson Sales Performance: https://www.richardson.com/online-sales-training-program-delivery/
- X Seismic: https://seismic.com/product/training/
- X The Digital Sales Institute: https://www.thedigitalsalesinstitute.com/online-sales-training-platform/

- X Udemy: https://www.udemy.com/courses/business/sales/
- X Docebo: Sales Force Integration: https://www.docebo.com/docebo-salesforce-integration-lms/
- X EdEx: Sales Enablement & Analytics: https://www.edx.org/course/sales-enablement-analytics?index=product&queryID=e84e8a49b403ea42165d50f9fec600b9&position=1
- Smartlearning: https://www.smartlearning.dk/akademiuddannelser/salg-og-marketing
- Teknologisk Institut: https://www.teknologisk.dk/kurser/kurser-i-salg-indkoeb-og-forhandling/c578?gclid=Cj0KCQjw0caCBhCIARIsAGAfuMzvxfBLrP82hhM1Uo9hGUOCS0PLWG7BQqDQYlXntB_W5Z1sNYWxFslaAmHREALw_wcB
- X Linkedin: https://www.linkedin.com/learning/sales-discovery
- X Business Danmark: https://businessdanmark.dk/lydbogsapp/
- X Skillshare: https://www.skillshare.com/search?query=Sales%20Training%20Masterclass
- X Coursera: Salesforce Sales Development Representative Professional Certificate: https://www.coursera.org/professional-certificates/sales-development-representative#about
- X 360learning: https://360learning.com/boost-sales-training-today
- X Alison: https://alison.com/it/corsi?query=sales

TEAM SELLING

- X Sales Bootcamp powered by vendition: https://salesbootcamp.com/about/
- X Talent LMS: https://www.talentlms.com/solutions/sales-training-software
- X Coursera: HubSpot Academy: https://www.coursera.org/learn/build-sales-career
- X Linkedin: https://www.linkedin.com/learning/sales-management-foundations
- X Absorb: https://www.absorblms.com/solutions/sales-training
- X GONG: https://www.gong.io/sales-training/
- X Negotiation Experts: https://www.negotiations.com/training/sales-negotiation/
- X Coursera:Sales Training for High Performing Teams Specialization: https://www.coursera.org/specializations/sales-training-high-performing-teams
- X Mindtickle: https://www.mindtickle.com/
- X Saleshood: https://saleshood.com/
- X Raven360: https://www.raven360.com/

- X RNMKRS: https://www.rnmkrs.org/
- X Showpad: https://www.showpad.com/?s=sales
- X Trailhead: https://trailhead.salesforce.com/
- X Allego: https://www.allego.com/
- X Imparta - The 3D advantage for sales & service: https://imparta.com/
- X Richardson Sales Performance: https://www.richardson.com/online-sales-training-program-delivery/
- X Seismic: https://seismic.com/product/training/
- X The Digital Sales Institute: https://www.thedigitalsalesinstitute.com/online-sales-training-platform/
- X Business Danmark: https://businessdanmark.dk/lydbogsapp/
- X 360learning: https://360learning.com/boost-sales-training-today
- X Alison: https://alison.com/it/corsi?query=sales
- X Factor8: Thesalesbar: https://factor8.com/our-services/sales-bar/