LYCar Company Project Report

The relationship of monotonous tasks and job satisfaction among starters in the commercial real estate industry

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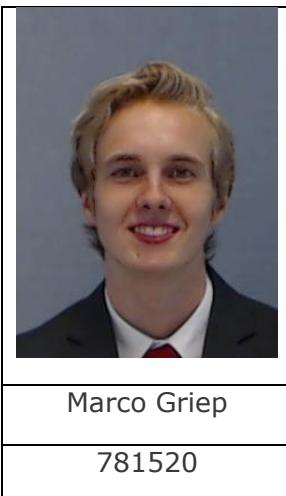
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Preface

In the final phases of Hotelschool the Hague, student undergo a transformation known as LYCar (Launching Your Career), preparing them to become a hospitality leader in the field of their choice. Students are required to create a Company Project Report following the process of Design-Based Research, as well as create a Career Portfolio to self-reflect on their growth during this transformation.

The topic of this paper was commissioned by Felix Nees, someone whom I have worked closely with during my internship at Cushman & Wakefield in Prague. The topic is something I have experienced closely, as my satisfaction and motivation suffered at the multitude of repetitive and tedious tasks to be completed.

I took initiative into creating a document to automate one of these repetitive tasks, and after receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback, I wanted to discover to which extent this repetition could be diminished.

Seeing how my peers at the company experienced similar feelings of stress and demotivation, I became inspired to make a change and discover ways to unlock the creative potential these young employees have.

Marco Griep

Executive Summary

Over two-thirds (67%) of global office workers feel like they are constantly repeating the same tasks over and over again, according to a recent survey performed by a leading enterprise automation software company.

The employees (specifically the starters and interns) of Cushman & Wakefield in Prague (C&W) are not finding joy in their work, which is evident from numerous feedback sessions. After a brief analysis of the root problems causing this low job satisfaction, it is found that the abundance of tedious, repetitive tasks leads to less joy in their work. In turn, this leads to less time that could be spent on enjoyable and self-developing tasks.

Following this, a Main Research Question was developed:

"How can the hospitality team of Cushman & Wakefield improve the aspects of monotonous tasks which have a negative impact on job satisfaction among starters and interns?"

A literature review was conducted, with a goal to provide background details of the key concepts and theories of the study. It was found that simply reducing the time and/or number of repetitive tasks is not enough, and that the balance between variety and specialisation should also be taken into consideration. Also, a correlation of job tenure and job satisfaction could be found, yet due to the reliance of job satisfaction on other external factors such as compensation, it is too premature to conclude anything. Automation was found as a widely acclaimed and proven solution to monotonous tasks. Several noteworthy gaps were also found in the literature: a gap of automation in the lens of the commercial real estate sector, and a gap of the influence of repetitive tasks in the commercial real estate sector. Finally, a conceptual framework was designed to create a visual stimulus of what the study is aiming to achieve.

Based on the findings of the literature review, three secondary research questions were developed. This led to the methodology of the study, which is qualitative in nature, using interviews, focus groups, and observations as a method of research. Due to the exploratory nature of the main- and secondary research questions, semi-structured interviews were chosen to be conducted, using an inductive relational content analysis strategy to analyse the findings. Furthermore, various measures were taken to ensure an ethical approach to the data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

Four interviews and one focus group were conducted. Based on the analysis of the transcriptions, the research findings were written. It was found that the starters and interns of C&W seek more variety in their work, and that the satisfaction that they perceive from specialising in their work has faded away. The tasks that were perceived as most monotonous included recording transactions, performing market analyses, formatting, and organisational tasks. The respondents named numerous potential solutions for the problem; primarily the use of automation and standardisation.

The findings from the qualitative research were then aggregated with the findings in the scientific literature, and the sub-research questions were answered.

The Main Research Question was answered with a means of a solution design. The defined solution is to allow and empower the starters to implement automation and standardisation in their work, following a predetermined schedule to ensure the effectiveness of the solution. Besides that, the sense of variety and specialisation is improved by enforcing cross-departmental initiatives to the job design, and widening the decision-making process to allow for more collaboration among the departments.

The solution was made clear and actionable by means of a schedule and timeline, indicating who has what role in the solution, how it will take place, and when it will take place. The solution can be evaluated with a before-after assessment, by measuring a baseline of the job satisfaction of the starters, and comparing it to the results after the solution has been implemented.

The findings, conclusions, and solution were disseminated to the various stakeholders of the project. A presentation was given to the client company. An online post was made to share the findings to young workers and executives of the world.

Finally, a reflection was made on the academic development of the student, and what his perspectives were on the topics covered in this study. Several limitations and implications for further research were defined, such as the widening of the population and the use of quantitative research.

List of Abbreviations

CEE	Central Eastern Europe
C&W	Cushman & Wakefield
JDI	Job Descriptive Index
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LYCar	Launching Your Career
MRQ	Main Research Question
PLO	Personal Learning Outcome
RPA	Robotic Process Automation
SEE	South Eastern Europe
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SRQ('s)	Sub-Research Question(s)

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1 Problem Definition

1.1 Project and company context

Cushman & Wakefield s.r.o (C&W) is a company located in Prague, Czech Republic. C&W is part of the multinational company Cushman & Wakefield, which has over 400 offices in 70 different countries (Cushman & Wakefield, 2022). C&W is specialised in commercial real-estate (CRE), with several departments such as industrial, hospitality, retail, offices, and project management. This research focusses on the hospitality department, which is a team consisting of approximately 15 members. This team is responsible for all hospitality & hotel related service in Central Eastern Europe (CEE) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE). Due to the client-driven nature of the services provided, the team occasionally assists in other regions, such as the United Kingdom or France.

The hospitality team offers four services to its clients, including:

- Operator Selection (OS),
- Valuation & Advisory (V&A),
- Capital Markets, and
- Strategic Advisory & Research.

These are known as the "service lines". Employees are typically focused on one of these individual service lines, however, as the topics, data, and reports used for the various service lines are highly similar, employees often help and support in the other lines as well (Cushman & Wakefield, 2022; Griep, 2022).

The hospitality team has a hierarchical team structure (Clarity Consultants, 2022). The organisational structure of the Hospitality team can be found in Appendix 10.2: Organisational Chart.

1.2 **The problem**

Over two-thirds (67%) of global office workers feel like they are constantly repeating the same tasks over and over again, according to a recent survey performed by a leading enterprise automation software company (Daly, 2021).

Respondents stated that these repetitive tasks take up five business hours per week on average, which disallows them from being as creative in their work as preferred.

A lack of employee purpose, poor compensation, job stress, and a lack of job prospects remain among the top causes of employee turnover. When a company is responsible for one or more of these factors, the low job satisfaction leads to a higher turnover rate. If these factors are not treated with urgency, there is a significant impact on the company's morale, productivity, profitability, and the capabilities of achieving the company's objectives (Holliday, 2021; Al-Suraihi et al., 2021; HR Profiling Solutions, 2022).

The researched problem concerns the job satisfaction among starters (with less than three years on the job) and interns of the C&W hospitality team. This became evident from the personal experience of the internship, the preliminary interview with the research commissioner (see appendix 10.3), as well as an open feedback session that was conducted with the team. During this feedback session, employees were asked to rate their level of joy of work from a scale of one to ten. It was clearly visible that the employees that had been working in the company for three or more years, rated their joy significantly higher than the employees that just started (averaging at approximately an 8/10 for members who had worked for two or more years, and a 5/10 for the starters and interns) (Nees, 2022a; Griep, 2022).

1.3 Assumed major causes

To visualise the problem and to help identify the core problem, an Ishikawa/Fishbone diagram has been created:

Figure 1
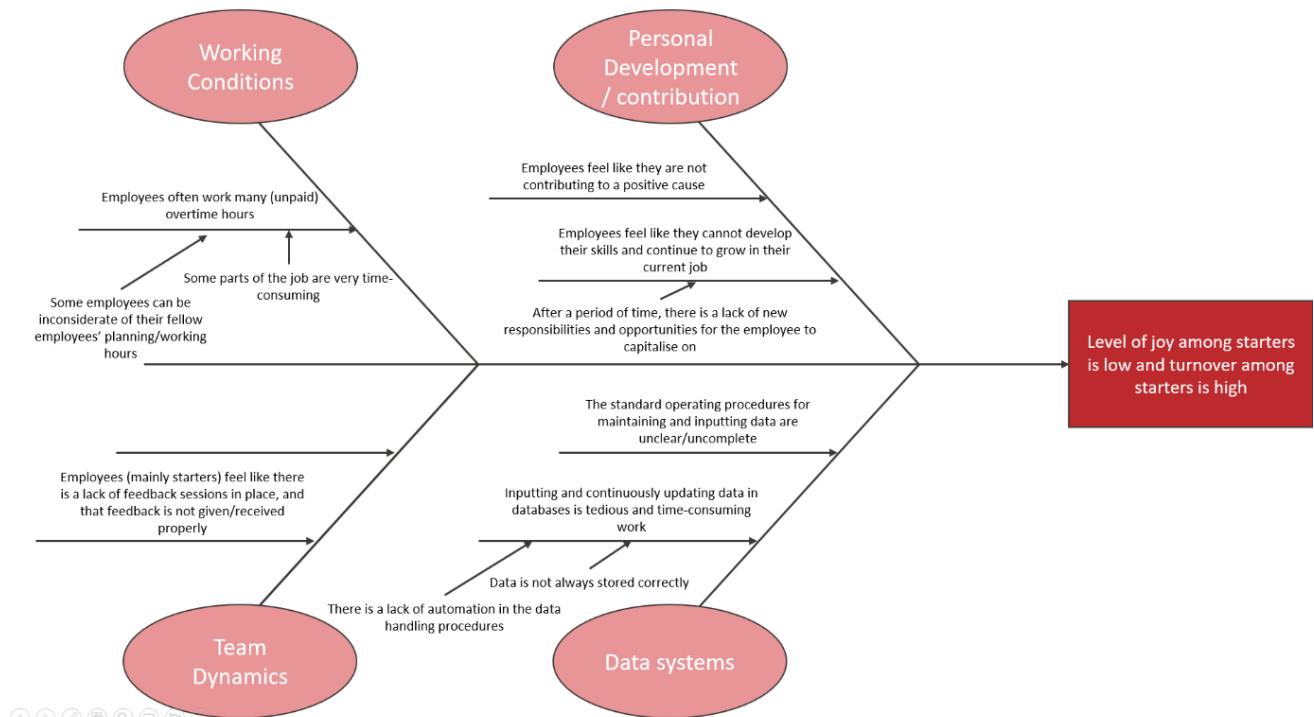
(Barends, 2018; Nees, 2022a; Griep, 2022; Al-Suraihi et al., 2021, Grzelak, 2022)

1.4 Scope of the study

As seen from Figure 1, there are multiple causes to the identified problem. As these causes are all righteous of their own in-depth analysis and research, this study will aim to tackle one of these causes. The chosen area of research is the tediousness of completing repetitive data management tasks, as it is one of the main causes of the low levels of joy and increased amounts of boredom among the starters of the company (Nees, 2022a). This increased amount of boredom generally leads to a decline of work quality, a deterioration of employee evaluations and an increase in employee mistakes. This ultimately leads to the observed fact that **"bored employees are twice as likely to leave a company"** (Grzelak, 2022), which causes side effects like increased associated turnover costs and the loss of potential profits (Tagence, 2021).

Following the analyses above, the following logic model was derived:

"There are many monotonous data management tasks to be performed (by starters) > thus employees lose energy and have to work (unpaid) overtime > employees feel like their job doesn't stimulate personal growth and learning > staff turnover increases and employee retention decreases > the team is understaffed and spends time and money finding new employees > the company loses the opportunity to improve the quality of work and generate higher profits > the company does not fulfil its core objectives"
(Bryman and Bell, 2011) (Nees, 2022a)

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1.4.1 Main research question

Hence, the following Main Research Question (MRQ) has been constructed:

"How can the hospitality team of Cushman & Wakefield improve the aspects of monotonous tasks which have a negative impact on job satisfaction among starters and interns?"

1.5 Purpose of the study

By answering the MRQ, this study aims to find solutions which will enable starters and interns (of C&W) to find more joy in their work. It is believed that this will reap **many benefits**, including decreased staff turnover, improved employee retention, and an improvement in the quality and consistency of the work delivered. Finally, it will allow employees to target their efforts on tasks that will help them and/or the company grow and develop (Grzelak, 2019; Tagence, 2021; Nees, 2022a).

2   Literature review

2.1   Introduction

As stipulated in , this study aims to answer the MRQ: "How can the hospitality team of Cushman & Wakefield reduce the time and effort spent on monotonous tasks to improve the job satisfaction among starters/interns?"

The following literature review aims to explore the key topics, texts and themes that will contribute to answering the MRQ.

The review covers an in-depth reasoning of the identified problem and provide several plausible solutions.

2.2   Review

2.2.1   Defining job satisfaction

There are many ways in which job satisfaction is defined over the years. The most-used definition, however, is that of Locke (1976), who describes job satisfaction as "**a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences**".

Hulin and Judge (2003) builds upon this definition, stating that job satisfaction includes "**multidimensional psychological responses to one's job, and that such responses have cognitive (evaluative), affective (or emotional), and behavioural components** (Sessa and Bowling, 2003).

Robbins et al. (2013) explain in a more recent study, that job satisfaction depicts a positive perception towards a particular job. Simply put, **a higher job satisfaction leads to a positive judgement towards one's job, and vice-versa.**

Colquitt et al. (2020) expresses employee dissatisfaction as follows:

$dissatisfaction = (V_{want} - V_{have}) \times (V_{importance})$

Here, V_{want} refers to how much of particular value a staff member wants, V_{have} refers to the value that the job supplies, and $V_{importance}$ reflects the importance of that value to the staff member.

It is clear from the literature published on job satisfaction that **job satisfaction cannot (yet) be definitively defined**, due to its complex nature and the boundless variables, factors, and determinants that influence it. There is, however, a theory that is widely used by organisations and researchers to divide job satisfaction into five separate facets, known as the **Job Descriptive Index** (JDI) (figure 2):

Figure 2
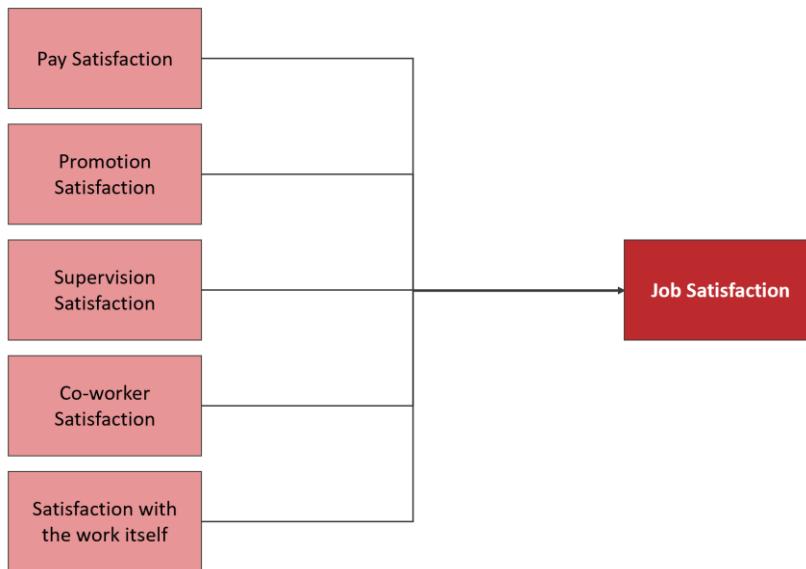
All criteria must be met for overall job satisfaction (Colquitt et al., 2020).

The JDI was originally developed by Smith et al. (1969), and has been revised in 1985, 1997, and most recently in 2009 (Castanheira, 2014).

Though the JDI is widely acclaimed among organisations as a valid measurement of job satisfaction, there is some **criticism to be found**. A meta-analysis was performed by Kinicki et al. (2002) to evaluate the construct validity of the JDI. The analysis concludes that the construct validity of the JDI was supported by reliability tests. The study however found, that the JDI should be appropriately used when facet measures are desired yet should not be used when an 'overall' measure is theoretically necessary. The study also states that a high level of variance found in the JDI measurement scale makes the measure **good yet not outstanding**, and that other measurement tools may be superior in accurately measuring job satisfaction (ibid).

While there is a fair amount of scepticism on the various measurement tools of job satisfaction, it is clearly visible that the thoroughly developed and peer-reviewed measurement tools **all** include sub-measurements such as **activity, creativity, variety and working conditions**. These subjects are suspected to be influenced by the time and effort spent on monotonous tasks.

2.2.2 The relation of repetitive tasks and job satisfaction

It has become clear from the section above, as well as the Problem Definition, that the dissatisfaction of the starters/interns of C&W is **largely affected by dissatisfaction with the work itself**. This is expected to be influenced by the **repetition of tedious tasks**. The following section aims dive deeper into this relation.

Over two-thirds (67%) of global office workers feel like they are constantly repeating the same tasks, according to a recent survey performed by a leading enterprise automation software company (Daly, 2021). Respondents stated that these repetitive tasks take up five business hours per week on average, which **disallows** them from **being as creative** in their work as preferred. When asked what tasks they would like to be automated,

respondents said:

- E-mails (60%)
- Inputting data and creating datasets (59%)
- Scheduling calls and meetings (57%)

(Ibid)

These findings could be perceived as **biased**, as the organisation's services could benefit from the marketing of a survey proving the problem of repetitive tasks. Other studies, however, also confirm the effect of repetitive tasks on job satisfaction: Raso and Olsson (2019) found that employees' intrinsic motivation is **significantly increased** when they perform a **variety** of tasks, rather than performing the same tasks repeatedly.

This balance of variety and specialisation is a commonly researched topic. A study by Staats and Gino (2012) investigates the costs and benefits of specialisation and variety in repetitive work tasks. Here, specialisation means the act of making workers skilled in a particular discipline or task. This study, as well as other sources (IJSSIR, 2017) find that there are **advantages and disadvantages** in both **variety and specialisation**. Variety allows workers to stay motivated and committed to tasks, which may improve their working quality. Specialisation, on the other hand, enforces a worker to become skilled in a particular task, and minimise changeovers. Concludingly, specialisation is more effective in increasing productivity over a shorter timeframe, and vice-versa (ibid).

When comparing the literature found on balancing variety and specialisation, it becomes clear that there are no concrete guidelines (yet) on determining the correct balance. Due to its reliance on other external factors, it is important to work with the context of the situation when determining this balance.

2.2.3 The relation of job satisfaction and starters/interns

Since the population of the MRQ is narrowed to the starters/interns of the company, there is a need to discover correlations between job satisfaction and the age/tenure of an employee.

A study performed by Robert Half (2017) investigates the relation between the tenure of an employee and several indicators such as satisfaction, stress, and interest:

Work happiness levels by tenure

Rating out of 100

Less than 1 year	1 - 2 years	3 - 5 years	6 - 10 years	11 - 20 years	21+ years
73	69,6	72,2	72,3	70,2	70,3

Number of years on the job

Work interest levels by tenure

Rating out of 100

73,5   71,4   73,5   74,3   73,9   74,4

Less than 1 year   1 - 2 years   3 - 5 years   6 - 10 years   11 - 20 years   21+ years

Number of years on the job

Work stress levels by tenure

Rating out of 100

53,5   50,9   52,6   51,9   49   48,8

Less than 1 year   1 - 2 years   3 - 5 years   6 - 10 years   11 - 20 years   21+ years

Number of years on the job

The results show that happiness and interest levels are significantly lower around the one-to-two-year mark, after the so-called "**honeymoon phase**" of the job has passed. Contrarily, stress levels are significantly low around the one-to-two-year mark yet **increase** again as the employee gets more **responsibility**. The study has a large sample size, however, these results must be taken with **caution**, as the sample only contained professionals from North America. Also, the sample was not filtered by industry/sector.

Bedeian et al. (1992) attempt to find a correlation between the variables of age, tenure, and job satisfaction in a regression analysis (measured with the JDI tool). Their findings conclude that age and tenure had significantly independent effects on job satisfaction, and that tenure is a more stable predictor of job satisfaction than age. The study also concludes that a significant relation between tenure and job satisfaction elements could **not** be found. This is consistent with earlier research, stating that job satisfaction is difficult to compare in a global setting due to the individuals' frame of reference.

Dobrow and Ganzach (2014) conducted a similar study in more recent times, using an empirical approach with longitudinal data to find a stronger relation between age, tenure, and job satisfaction. The study uses 21,670 participants spanning across 40 years in two USA-representative samples. Their results indicate a significant **decrease in job satisfaction as tenure increases.** Also, the results show that age has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Compensation plays a mediating role with both relations, as seen in Figure 3:

Figure 3
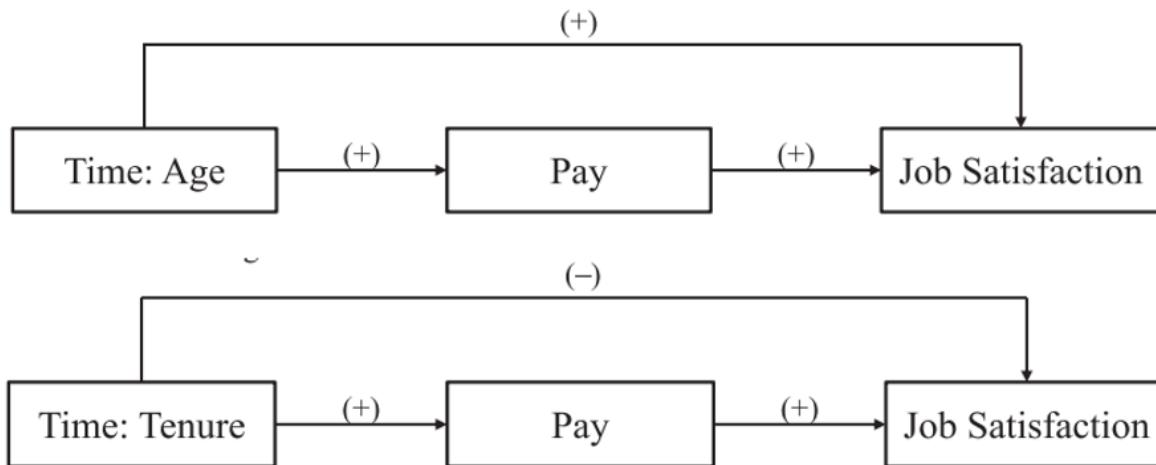
Upon comparing the various results that studies provide on the relation between tenure and job satisfaction, it becomes clear that **other factors** (such as compensation) make it difficult to find a significant correlation between tenure and job satisfaction. It is also clear, that the responsibilities of an employee increase as tenure increases, which in turn could lead to more stress. Despite this stress, the increased responsibility also leads to more interest in the work, and overall higher happiness.

2.2.4 The needs, advantages, and disadvantages of automation

According to Daly (2021), "it is **critical** that companies provide training for and access to **automation** and other digital technologies to create more fulfilled and energized employees". Daly also mentions that the adoption of automation by organisations is gaining global popularity, that training in automation improves job performance, and that upskilling is crucial for keeping pace with digital transformation.

The term of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is often used in the field of automation. RPA is defined as the act of automating basic tasks through software and/or hardware systems across a variety of applications, in a similar manner as humans would manually do (Frankenfield, 2022).

Dilmegani (2022) shows a list of the most common activities where RPA bots can be used to automate business processes and activities. The list includes numerous examples that are also applicable to the CRE industry, such as data validation, periodic report preparation and generating mass emails.

Kun-Young (2018) confirms the above, stating that RPA can be used to automate processes that overload employee workloads **with ease, and at a low cost**. Kun-Young also stresses the need for **assigning (a) specific employee(s)** to facilitate the introduction of RPA to a company.

There are disputes to be made with the glorification of automation and its benefits. Pratt (2021) displays the benefits and **drawbacks of RPA** in the enterprise. While it is suggested that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages in the long-term, the disadvantages of RPA include **attrition**, as the automation decreases the manpower needed. Automation also risks **sprawling technology and added complexity** and can

magnify problematic processes when applying RPA to a process that was not sufficiently optimised in the first place. Finally, executives who treat RPA as a small addition to their organisations rather than a part of a holistic strategy risk **thwarted transformation**, receiving more limited benefits.

There is an abundance of literature to be found on RPA in the context of businesses and organisations. Yet, when attempting to discover more on RPA in the context of CRE, there is little to be found.

Goswami (2020) writes in an online article that "the real estate industry has been **slow to adopt new technology**" and points out that the CRE industry might be latching on to being an "industry that is built on relationships". Goswami goes on to mention numerous tasks that could save much time in the CRE industry, such as the comparison and parsing of data from one document to another, exporting data from one file type to another, and performing property analyses.

The majority of research conducted on the application of RPA in organisations confirms that RPA is highly applicable to the real-estate sector as well, yet there are **no tangible, specific solutions for CRE RPA solutions**. This is even more evident in the hospitality CRE sector.

2.3 Conclusions

The literature review intended to explore the key concepts, theories, and topics to provide a base of knowledge for answering the MRQ.

Numerous definitions and measurements of job satisfaction were found and critiqued. Despite the large variety in these definitions, many underlying similarities were found, allowing this study to define job satisfaction accurately in the context of the MRQ.

The relation of monotonous/repetitive tasks has been reviewed, with evidence supporting the claim that office workers feel as if they are losing time to spend on other tasks. When looking through the lens of the (hospitality) CRE industry/sector, however, there is a significant lack of empirical literature designed to find and test solutions for monotonous tasks. Similarly, there is a lack of literature to test the correlation between the frequency of repetitive tasks and job satisfaction, at various levels of job tenure. These are both areas which have a need for further future studies.

As the research conducted into the influence of repetitive tasks on job satisfaction often mentioned automation as a solution, it was further explored. Automation has proven to be widely acclaimed as a valuable tool to improve job satisfaction in many applications. Whereas several specific industries have been used as case studies to prove its usefulness, there is a lack of the application of automation and RPA in the (hospitality) CRE sector.

To conclude the review, and to create a visual stimulus to better understand the goal that this study is aiming to achieve, a conceptual framework has been designed (Figure 4):

Figure 4
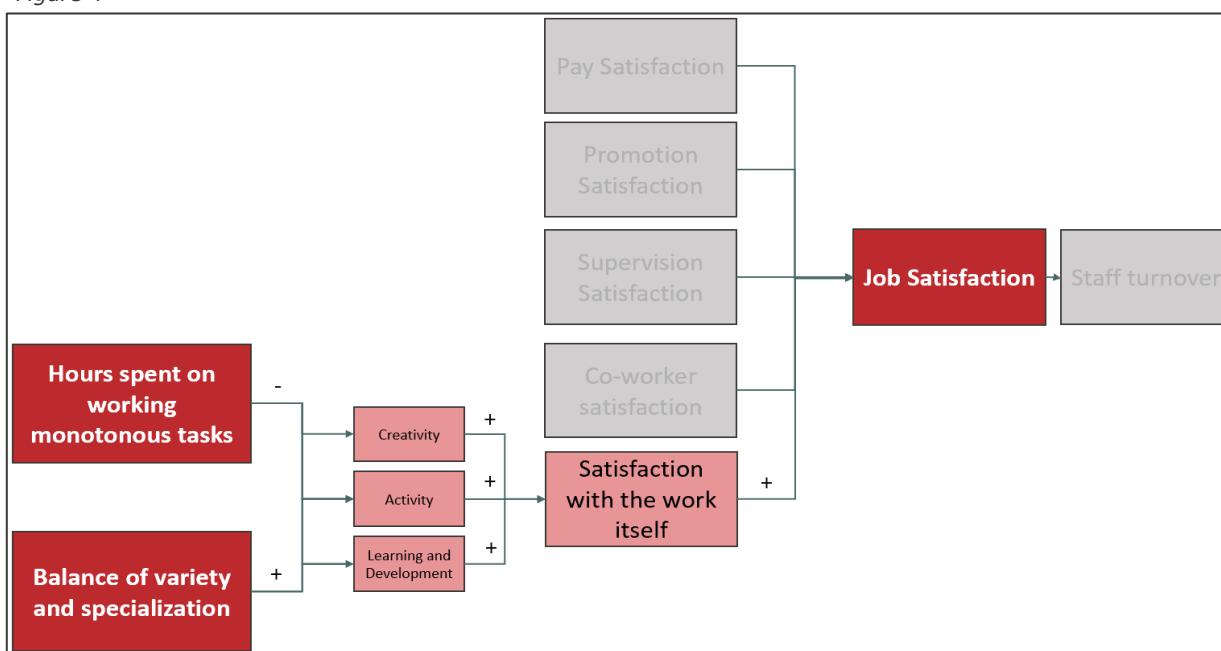
(Red- and pink-coloured boxes will be examined in this study, grey boxes are for context)

2.4 Sub-research questions

After review and analysis of the literature on the subject, and constructing a conceptual framework, the following sub-research questions (SRQ's) have been defined (Figure 5):

Figure 5

MRQ

How can the hospitality team of Cushman & Wakefield improve the aspects of monotonous tasks which have a negative impact on job satisfaction among starters and interns?

SRQ1

Are the starters & interns of C&W satisfied with the level of variety and specialisation?

SRQ2

What specific tasks of the hospitality team of C&W are perceived as most tiresome and in need of change?

SRQ3

What common solutions are proven (un)successful in the field of other (hospitality) CRE companies than C&W?

3 Methodology

3.1.1 Qualitative research

One of the main qualities and difficulties with qualitative research is its ability to rapidly generate a large, cumbersome database. This is due to its reliance on its research methods such as interview transcripts, field notes or documents (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Qualitative research is a useful method when trying to capture changing attitudes or behaviours in a workplace, by using a flexible and speculative approach which is not bound by the theoretical rules of quantitative data (Ibid).

Simultaneously, this flexible and speculative approach brings its downfalls. The main issues involve biased sampling methods, incoherent sample sizes, and the difficulty of processing and analysing large sums of data (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Vaughan, 2021).

Nevertheless, due to the exploratory nature of the MRQ and SRQ's, qualitative research has been chosen to be conducted.

3.1.2 Data collection

Numerous data collection methods were used to ensure sufficient concepts and categories emerge, which are thoroughly compared (see table 1).

Table 1

Data Collection Tool	Population	Methods	Purpose
Interviews	Starters & Interns of C&W	Semi-structured, open-ended questions	To gain as many valuable insights as possible, and to determine which solutions are necessary or irrelevant, and to feel out the perception of variety and specialisation (**SRQ1, SRQ2, SRQ3**).
Focus Group	Starters & Interns of various CRE companies	Open discussion on the job satisfaction of starters in CRE companies, and its relationship with monotonous tasks, variety and automation.	To find any common struggles and/or desires of the CRE industry, and to compare where the findings of the interviews stand in relation to CRE companies as a whole (**SRQ3).**

Observations/Field Notes	Hospitality team of C&W	Notes of observations made during the internship experience at the company.	To create context of the complexity of the job satisfaction, and to identify shifting attitudes in the team (**SRQ1, SRQ2**).

The interviews and focus groups have been conducted in a semi-structured manner, due to the exploratory nature of the MRQ's and SRQ's (George, 2022). For an overview of the questions that were asked during the interviews and focus groups, please see appendix 10.4 and appendix 10.6.

3.1.3 Data analysis

Both the MRQ and its SRQ's are questions that deal with the attitudes, values and opinions of the employees of C&W, and the way they perceive the work they are performing. To improve job satisfaction by changing the way that monotonous tasks influence it, it is first important to discover what the employees value in their work and where similarities can be found in their shared perspectives. Hence, a relational content analysis strategy is used (Drisko and Machi, 2016) (Jansen, 2021).

Again, due to the exploratory nature of the MRQ's and SRQ's, an inductive coding approach was used. The data was first categorised into themes and narrowed down to match defined codes (Delve, 2022). To further assist the smooth process of analysing the qualitative data received, the following colour codes have been defined:

Category	Code
Variety or specialisation	Amount of variety in work
	Amount of specialisation in work
	Satisfaction levels of variety in work
Most tiresome tasks	Recording transactions
	Creating market analyses
	Design-type tasks
	Populating documents
	Other tasks
Solutions	Automation (software)
	Standardisation/Templates
	Payment as mediator

The transcripts of the interviews and focus group were coded according to set colours (see appendix 10.7).

3.1.3.1 Sampling methods

Theoretical sampling was used to choose the participants of the interviews and focus groups. This sampling method uses a purposeful sampling for the first round of data collection. As the data was generated, and a clear necessity for further data collection

were to be shown, more participants were sampled as a result of the collected data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, the length and detail of the first round of interviews proved to be of sufficient content to perform the qualitative research. Hence, only one round of interviews was conducted.

The first round of interviews was held with one randomly chosen starter/intern per service line, to a total of four participants (see company context for C&W's service lines). Due to the limited size of the hospitality team of C&W, there are approximately only seven to eight starters and/or interns working at the company at one time. With four interviewees, this comes down to a sample of approximately 50% of the population.

The focus group was conducted with one or two starters/interns per hospitality CRE company. Companies approached are include C&W, as well as various CRE companies located in the Netherlands, such as CBRE and JLL. An interview schedule has been added in appendix 10.5.

3.1.4 Ethical considerations

There is an ever-ongoing debate on what methods of research are deemed ethical. However, these discussions tend to include harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasions of privacy and deception as unethical practices, which should be avoided (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

The following study took every measure needed to prevent these unethical practices. Among the measures taken to ensure this are:

- All participants of the data collection will be kept anonymous, and made-up labels were used to analyse the data.
- A signed form of consent of each interview- and focus group participant, with clear guidelines on how their data will be treated and disseminated.
- A signed form of the company commissioner of the research, on behalf of C&W, with clear guidelines on how their data will be treated and disseminated.
- No methods of unreasonable invading of private information were used, e.g., private conversations, usage of socially available content, etc.
(Trochim et al., 2015)

4 Findings

The following chapter will present the findings of the main qualitative research performed. The chapter has been structured according to the defined codes and categories as shown in the methodology chapter. Also, the names of the interview subjects have been anonymised. See table 2 for the various positions and tenures of the interviewees:

Table 2

Interviewee	Position	Tenure
Sophie	Hospitality Analyst, Operator Selection	2.5 years
Tony	Hospitality Analyst, Capital Markets	1.5 years
Lucia	Hospitality Analyst, Strategic Advisory (Research)	1.5 years
Lewis	Hospitality Analyst Intern, Valuations & Advisory	4 months
Gerrard et al.	Focus group participants, various hospitality analyst positions	≤3 years

Furthermore, the observation and field notes made of the company during the internship experience are referred to as 'Griep, 2020'.

The interview transcripts can be found in appendix 10.7.

4.1 Balance of variety and specialisation

4.1.1 Variety

Of the interview respondents, a relatively one-sided view was given when asked about the perceived balance of variety and specialisation in their work. Starters at C&W would generally appreciate more variety in their work, by being able to help out the other service lines in their day-to-day tasks. Many respondents, including Lucia, Tony and Sophie, state that their schedule is simply "already too busy to help out in any of the other service lines". It costs too much effort to take the initiative to widen the variety in their work.

When interview respondents were asked how they could increase the variety in their work, despite their busy schedule and working hours, answers were varied, yet analogous. All answers either pointed to a decrease in the amount of work to be performed in their own departments (through automation, or letting other employees take over their tasks), or by spreading out the responsibilities over various staff members (and not being limited to one service line per employee).

One focus group member mentioned splitting the tasks among various members of the team: "one person (..) will do the text in the document, and the other one will have the contact with the client. And the other one will do the valuation. And then the other one will make all the charts and do the market appendix" (Gerrard et al.).

4.1.2   Specialisation

Interview subjects were relatively satisfied with the amount of specialisation at their workplaces. More variety was welcomed, yet due to the steep learning curve of the hospitality CRE industry, specialisation was welcomed and appreciated. Respondents did mention, however, that specialisation was only satisfying on the short-term, yet after having learnt something and gaining enough expertise to excel in them, satisfaction quickly dropped.

Lewis mentions that the satisfaction of specialising in one's service line is there, but "this satisfaction has passed away". He would have preferred doing "a bit of every service line rather than (…) a focused internship (…) rather than having learned most of it after two months".

4.2   Most tiresome tasks

Respondents were asked to rank the tasks they perceived as most tiresome and tedious, to compare to the tasks noted above and to provide insight into the second SRQ: "*What specific tasks of the hospitality team of C&W are perceived as most tiresome and in need of change?*".

Based on this question, an overview of the perceived most tedious tasks among respondents is made (figure 6):

Figure 6
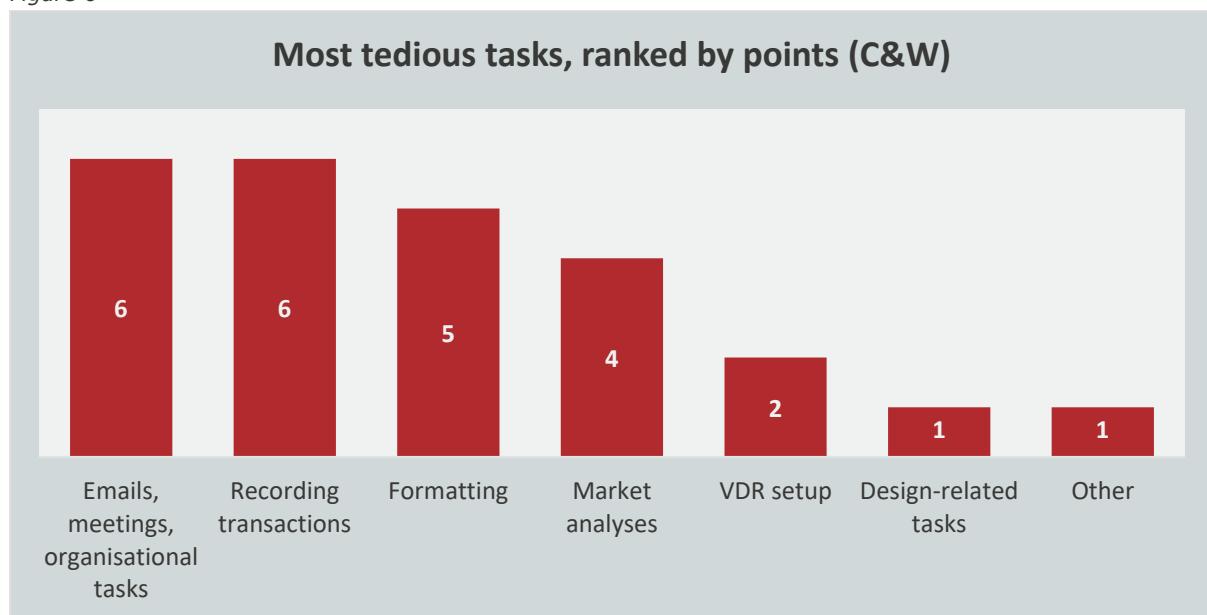
(points were based on a system where 3 points = most tedious, 2 points = 2nd most tedious, 1 point = 3rd or higher most tedious)

Four tasks come out as most tedious, with organisational tasks and transaction recordings on top. To avoid a high deviation in the points system used above, the frequency of respondents mentioning a certain task as tedious is also measured (figure 7):

Figure 7
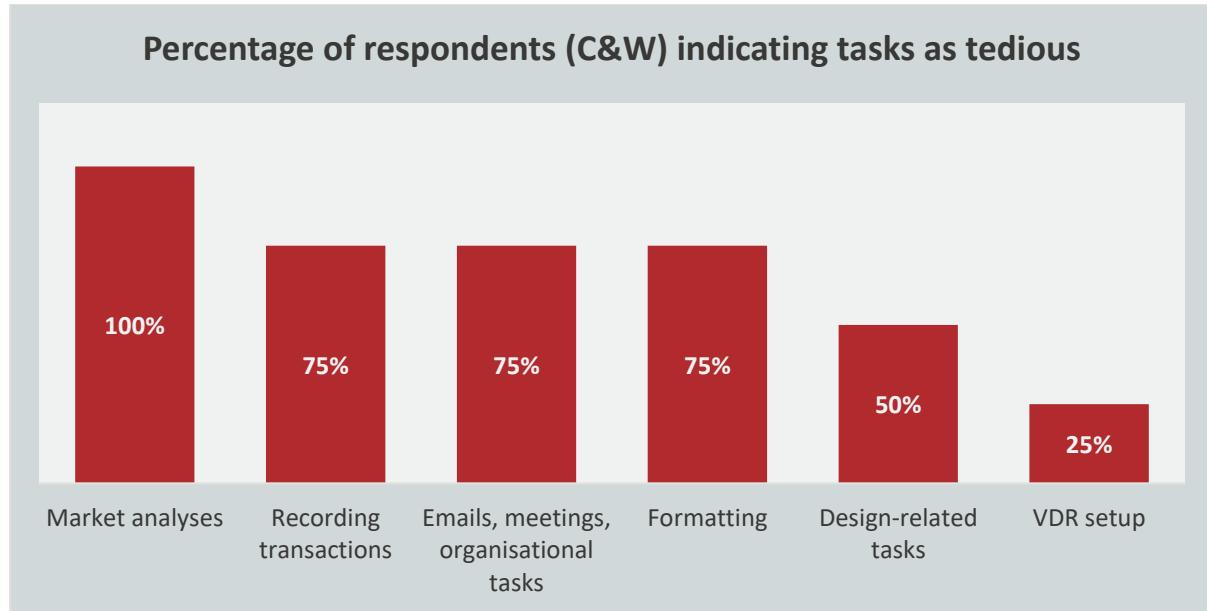
Evidently, these same four tasks are perceived as most in need of change by the starters of C&W.

4.2.1 Market Analyses

Performing market analyses refers to the task of gathering correct market data, presenting them in relevant graphs and drawing conclusions based on the results found (Griep, 2022).

Interviewees mentioned that when performing market analyses, "you have to use the same graphs you have made before, but you can't find them, which makes you lose a lot of time on either remaking the graph or trying to find old ones" (Sophie). Respondents say, however, that automated excel sheets/scripts have allowed them to get more efficient at this. These sheets and scripts are simply not standardised or thought-through enough, to make a significant difference: "sadly, we don't have a very finalised version of something like this" (Tony). For the starters of C&W, it would be "more motivating to have less of these tasks".

4.2.2 Recording transactions

"Recording transactions", also known as "engage transactions" refers to the act of recording details of hotel transactions of a certain region, which include variables such as the price, buyer, seller, rooms, and deal type. Within the team of C&W, employees are assigned certain regions of which they must constantly update new transactions coming in. Transaction details can be obtained through numerous sources, including the news, through clients, and through special websites. The data is inputted and processed by the Salesforce program. These transactions are crucial for a CRE company to understand market dynamics (Griep, 2022).

When investigating what sub-processes of recording transactions are perceived as tiresome by the starters, interviewees mention the act of gathering data from various

sources. Also, a lack of clear guidelines on how to store the information seems to cause confusion and frustration. Finally, the Salesforce program is seen as "user-unfriendly" which leaves employees "confused and annoyed" (Sophie).

4.2.3   Formatting

Formatting, in this context, refers to the act of presenting text, data, and information in the correct format required (e.g. changing fonts, colours, sizes) (Griep, 2022).

Formatting was clearly seen as most repetitive in the Valuation & Advisory and OS departments. It was also most commonly seen as annoying in the Microsoft Word and Excel programmes. Respondents note that "it's quite annoying" that this hasn't been automated yet, as "it is so easy to implement, yet no one has taken the initiative yet." (Sophie).

4.2.4   E-mails, meetings, organisational tasks

The sending of emails was repeatedly mentioned among interviewees. The reason why it was seen as tedious was very one-sided; a significant portion of the employees' workdays goes out to sending the emails. The same was said about planning in meetings: "you constantly have to go back and forth, suggesting new times until you find a timeslot that works for everyone" (Sophie).

4.3   Solutions

To answer the 3rd SRQ: "*What common solutions are proven (un)successful in the field of hospitality CRE companies?*", respondents were asked to mention what solutions they or their company have tried to solve the repetition of tedious tasks.

4.3.1   Automation

A clear frontrunner is the use of automation to decrease the influence of repetitive tasks on job satisfaction.

Automation was said to "save a lot of time" and "make simple things go a lot faster, and make life a lot easier". Automation was mentioned to "give (…) more time to focus efforts on things that matter more in the workplace" (Tony). It allows workers to "invest your energy more appropriately" on "things that are more important" (Tony, Gerrard et al.).

Several programs were mentioned to be useful for automating tasks in the CRM field, including:

- Microsoft Visual Basic
- Microsoft Power Automate
- UIPath
- Workato
- Nanonets

Microsoft Visual Basic is mainly used for Microsoft Excel-related automation, whereas Microsoft Power Automate is used for Microsoft programs as a whole. UIPath is a leading RPA/automation enterprise, offering solutions with their own software. Workato is a general automation software, compatible with various types of programmes. Finally, Nanonets is used to automatically populate documents using artificial intelligence (Lucia; Lewis; Tony; Sophie; Gerrard et al.).

(Potential) disadvantages
Respondents mentioned that for specific tasks, it might be extremely difficult to implement automation as a solution, due to the complex nature of the process. The most outspoken issue was that of different formats being used by various data types, and therefore employees are "always going to need that manual step of figuring out how to put that together and to combine it" (Gerrard et al., 2022).

Opinions are mixed, however. Other focus group respondents mention that in the past, people would have never imagined having the things we commonly use today, such as the use of Excel or other complicated software tools to improve workflow. Despite this controversy among the interviewees, it is generally agreed, that for some specific tasks it would be very complex to implement automation. The main tasks mentioned where this complexity would be present, are the transaction recordings, and the design-related tasks.

4.3.2 Standardisation

Standardisation is lacking at C&W. Interviewees mentioned that "there's too little standardisation, which makes some tasks tedious and repetitive because you don't have standards to go along" (Lucia). Also, more standardisation would "make a lot of things easier", especially when it comes to storing and managing data" (Tony). Standardisation must not be confused with repetition, as standardisation is seen by interviewees as a way to decrease the monotony of tedious tasks.

Focus group respondents mention that "standardised ways to store data (…) work quite well (…) and that is great to save time and make processes run more smoothly". Also, "standardised SOP's (…) would help a lot with the efficiency of our work" (Gerrard et al.). The use of templates as a standardisation tool is also mentioned. Interviewees say that "templates (…) really speeds up the process (…) especially if you have to make a market analysis".

4.3.3 Payment as a mediator

While all respondents would be open to an increase in payment, the increase in motivation it would produce was not very significant. The majority would still find their tasks "boring and tedious" (Lucia). Respondents said it would only make them increase their discipline, rather than their motivation for their work.

5 Discussion

This chapter will aggregate the findings of the qualitative research against evidence found from the scientific literature and practitioners.

5.1 Balance of variety and specialisation

5.1.1 Variety

Several respondents of the focus group interview mention that a variety in their work has helped them to tackle the tediousness and boredom resulting of repetitive tasks. Also, the starters of C&W believe that variety will help to improve job satisfaction on the long term. This aligns with Raso and Olsson's (2019) findings that an increase in variety of work performed, corresponds with a significant increase in employee intrinsic motivation.

Simultaneously, increasing the amount of variety has the side-effect of decreasing the productivity on the short-term, as confirmed by the study of IJSSIR (2017) as well as what respondents mentioned. However, in the long-term, numerous benefits such as a higher productivity and increased job satisfaction are recognised (Ibid).

5.1.2 Specialisation

Interview responses concerning specialisation were somewhat contradictory, and unexpected: while interviewees mentioned that they enjoyed specialising in their day-to-day work, they also mentioned that working on the same tasks repetitively made them bored and tired. This led to the speculation that the tasks that starters specialise in, were not matching their interests and/or skillset.

A study performed by Adeyoyin et al. (2015) examined the relation of job specialisation on employee development. Employee development, as pointed out in the conceptual framework of the literature review, has a significant effect on employee satisfaction. This study theorized the following framework, based on prior literature and a qualitative study (figure 8):

Figure 8
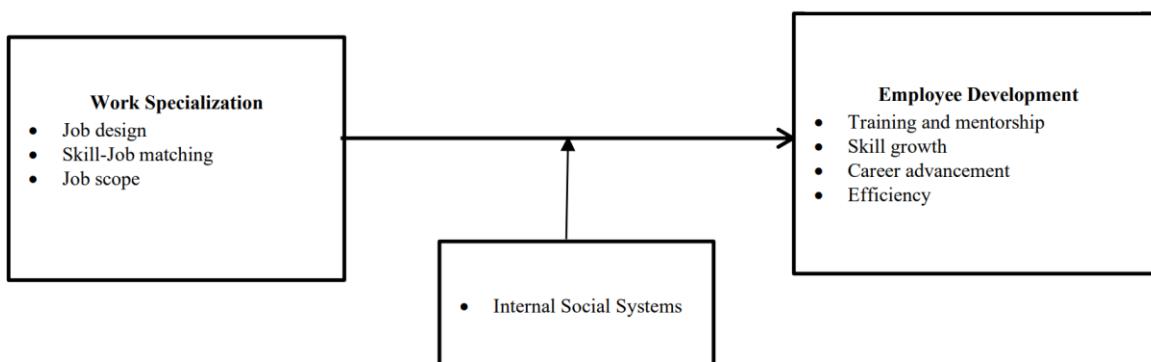
"Internal Social Systems" in this context refers to the arrangement and interrelationship

of the various parts that form an organization. The theory suggests that job design, skill-job matching and job scope are factors that contribute to work specialisation, which in turn contributes to employee development.

A look into the responses of the employees of C&W indicate that these three factors may not be matching their needs:

Lacking factor	Evidence from interviews
Job design	"it could be done by a machine for example. You are simply redoing and rewriting every part of the report, and nothing is different each time you do it." (Lewis, 2022) "there are some other things that are quite time consuming, like transaction records or saving setting up VDRs. And they're not just time consuming, but they're also very tedious and lengthy to do." (Tony, 2022)
Skill-job matching	"It's always a good thing to give your employees autonomy (…) otherwise, they'll start feeling more and more like a machine, like a robot. And eventually, their job satisfaction will just significantly decrease from it." (Gerrard et al., 2022) "Sometimes I feel like I don't get given enough autonomy to change the way things are done, whereas I clearly can see that they could be done in a more efficient and time-saving way. It makes me feel sometimes like they're restricting me from using my full abilities." (Sophie, 2022)
Job scope	See variety section above

This leads to the observation that the employees of C&W likely do enjoy specialising in their work, yet do not enjoy specialising in the tedious tasks that do not match their skillset or job preferences. This lack of tasks that match the skillset of the starters then leads to a lack of job prospects that encourage career development and progression (Bakotiç, 2016). This then results in a lower job satisfaction as shown in the conceptual framework (figure 4).

5.2 Solutions

A survey done by an automation enterprise of global office workers, found that workers would like to see the following tasks automated:

- E-mails (60%)
- Inputting data and creating datasets (59%)
- Scheduling calls and meetings (57%)

(Daly, 2021)

These three tasks are similar to the ones found in the interviews. This suggests that despite the gap in the literature to be found on monotonous tasks and automation in the CRE industry, employees in this industry still struggle with the same things as to other office-type industries.

Many interviewees are in favour of implementing automation and RPA to their work, yet show scepticism about the implementation: it may be too complex, timely or costly to apply in the company. This view on complexity of implementing automation is a recurring issue, according to Pratt (2021). If processes are not well designed prior to implementing RPA, companies risk sprawling technology and added complexity which can magnify problematic processes. However, short-term inefficiencies in implementing automation should not be seen as problematic when long-term results would be significantly improved (ibid). Besides this, automation can be used improve the efficiency of sub-tasks rather than entire complex tasks, for an easier and more cost-efficient implementation of RPA (Yarlagadda, 2018).

There is a lack of scientific literature indicating what kind of automation software is successful in what contexts. A distinction is made between artificial intelligence and RPA, yet not in the specific programs, tools or software used. However, numerous programs were mentioned in the qualitative research performed, which should not be overlooked.

The programs that were mentioned by focus group participants could be used for solving the varying tasks as defined by the interview subjects. Microsoft Visual Basic, combined with the query functions of Excel could be used to automatically generate market analyses based off a few user-inputted fields, by gathering data automatically. It would also be useful for automatically creating graphs, depending on what type of task it would be used for (Tony, 2022; Gerrard et al., 2022; Griep, 2022). Microsoft Power Automate, as well as Workato or UIPath, could be used for numerous automation goals, including generating mass emails, planning meetings, and other organisational tasks (Lucia, 2022; Gerrard et al., 2022). Nanonets seems to be a frontrunner of formatting valuation reports. For recording transactions, the only software that could efficiently tackle the entire process is UIPath (Sophie, 2022; Tony, 2022; Gerrard et al., 2022). It should be kept in mind, though, that the majority of interviewees were sceptical of applying automation to transaction recordings, due to the immense complexity it would bring (Lucia, 2022; Gerrard et al., 2022; Sophie, 2022).

5.2.1 Standardisation

Graupp (2021) mentions that standardisation allows employees to identify more areas for improvement, flattens the learning curve, simplifies the onboarding process, and saves time in the workplace. As the "learning curve for starters is so steep at the beginning in the commercial real estate industry" (Sophie, 2022), a properly designed and consistently used standardisation of the most influential tasks at C&W could reap numerous benefits. This includes a boost in creativity, and higher productivity, which ultimately would improve the job satisfaction of new employees (Ibid).

Standardisation does have its pitfalls, however. Standardisation can also lead to a

reduction in creativity and innovation, when applied to processes that benefit from a varied approach (Niels, 2020). For example, if this were applied to the design of teasers, as mentioned by Tony (2022), it could take away from the creative element needed to market the service to the client's needs.

5.2.2 Payment as a mediator

Interviewees were asked whether an increase in their salary would result in a higher motivation for performing repetitive tasks. As Dobrow and Ganzach (2014) mention, compensation can play a mediating role in the relation of tenure and job satisfaction. Also, as shown in the literature review, compensation is an essential component of job satisfaction.

While it could be used to improve job satisfaction, it does not tackle the problem that was defined, as seen in the responses from the interviewees.

6 Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussion, the defined SRQ's will be answered in this chapter.

6.1.1 SRQ1

SRQ1: Are the starters & interns of C&W satisfied with the level of variety and specialisation?

It was repeatedly shown through the interviews conducted that the starters & interns of C&W are **not** satisfied with the current level of variety and specialisation.

The starters and interns have shown that they are open to more variation in their work, and that they believe it will help them to enjoy their day-to-day tasks more. All respondents have mentioned that they would be open to helping out the different service lines, yet that a lack of initiative or time is hindering this from happening.

Conversely, specialisation is also welcomed by the group. The current form of specialisation, however, is not enjoyed. This is likely due to the job design not catering towards the skillset of the employees, and the lack of systems in place to speed up the monotonous tasks.

6.1.2 SRQ2

SRQ2: What specific tasks of the hospitality team of C&W are perceived as most tiresome and in need of change?

Many different answers were provided, yet four were evidently perceived as most tiresome and in need of change:

- Recording transactions
- Market analyses
- Emails, meetings, organisational tasks
- Formatting

When attempting to uncover what specifically made these tasks so tedious, answers leaned towards unnecessary obstacles and processes increasing time and effort spent on tasks that could have been made easier/automated.

6.1.3 SRQ3

SRQ3: What common solutions are proven (un)successful in the field of other (hospitality) CRE companies than C&W?

A focus group was held to uncover these common solutions. Automation was a clear winner, not only from the results of this focus group, but from the literature as well. It is not the fastest solution, rather one that takes caution and attention to detail in the implementation stages. However, over the long-term, results are shown to be overwhelmingly positive, reaping numerous benefits that contribute to an improvement in

employee satisfaction. Various programs and methods were identified that can automate different tasks.

Besides this, the use of standardisation was repeatedly shown to improve the sub-processes of various tasks, which can help to speed up monotonous tasks. Not all tasks, however, can benefit from standardisation. In certain scenarios, standardisation can decrease the opportunities for creativity in the employees.

7 Solution

7.1 Design

This study was performed to find an answer to the MRQ: "How can the hospitality team of Cushman & Wakefield improve the aspects of monotonous tasks which have a negative impact on job satisfaction among starters and interns?".

Based on the conceptual framework, it became clear that a solution that will solve the defined problem should decrease the amount of time spent on monotonous tasks, and improve the way starters experience the variety and specialisation in their work. This, in turn, improves the creativity, learning and development opportunities, and activity that starters experience in their day-to-day work.

After conducting qualitative research with several starters and interns of C&W and other hospitality CRE companies, several plausible solutions were uncovered.

Hence, using the findings of the research conducted, the following solution is designed, in two parts.

7.1.1 Part one: Empower starters from various service lines to automate and standardise day-to-day tasks

The term "empowering" in this sentence needs clarification. Empowering, here, means to assign one starter per service line (a total of four) to oversee the standardisation of data storage tasks and the automation of key processes.

One employee (non-starter) will be in charge of managing the four representatives, as it is important that someone who understands the various processes can point out the details of how to automate and standardise (Kun-Young, 2018). As double-checked with the commissioner, assigning five employees (one manager and one representative per service line) is feasible, due to the availability and number of employees, and the proven enthusiasm among starters for introducing automation to their work (Nees, 2022b).

As discovered from the qualitative research performed, many starters enjoy the act of implementing automation to develop the efficiency of work with monotonous tasks; it enables them to be more creative in their work (Tony, 2022; Lewis, 2022; Gerrard et al., 2022). However, due to the dangers of applying automation to processes that didn't work in the first place, businesses risk thwarted transformation and added complexity (Pratt, 2021). Therefore, it is crucial for a more seasoned and experienced employee to oversee the implementation of automation in the essential business processes.

To provide clarity and oversight in the solution, a table with the various details of the roles, responsibilities and methods used to implement this solution is made (table 3)

Table 3

Employee no.	Service line	Role	Tasks tackled	Programs used
1	N.A.	Manager of automation implementation	N.A.	N.A.
2	Valuation & Advisory	Automation implementation for Valuation & Advisory	• Auto-populating word documents • Auto-generating relevant graphs for reports • General service line tasks (see below)	• Nanonets • Microsoft Visual Basic/Excel
3	Operator Selection	Automation implementation for Operator Selection	• Automating city/region/country market analyses • Automating and standardizing VDR inputs • General service line tasks (see below)	• Microsoft Visual Basic/Excel • Microsoft Power Automate
4	Strategic Advisory (Research)	Automation implementation for Research	• Automating/standardizing the processes of recording transactions • Automating city/region/country market analyses • General service line tasks (see below)	• Microsoft Visual Basic/Excel • UIPath
5	Capital Markets	Automation implementation for Capital Markets	• Automating and standardizing VDR inputs • Automating city/region/country market analyses • General service line tasks (see below)	• Microsoft Visual Basic/Excel • Microsoft Power Automate

Besides the tasks and programmes mentioned above, there are several tasks that are relevant to each service line (table 4):

Table 4

Task	Programme
Creating a centralised, fool-proof SOP for storing data correctly	Microsoft Word
Sending out regular or mass emails, planning in meetings, etc.	Microsoft Power Automate

Naturally, this is only an outline of what tasks and programmes could be used. Due to the complexity of automating and standardising tasks, as well as the risks mentioned above, it is crucial for all members of this initiative to be aligned, use simple yet effective methods, avoid overcomplexity, and use the power of teamwork to discover the best methods for reducing the time spent on monotonous tasks. The way to enable teamwork in this solution is through regular, productive meetings, as shown in the intervention phase below.

7.1.2 Part two: Improve the sense of variety, and opportunities for learning and development by rotating service lines among starters.

Increasing the amount of variety of the starters is a long-term investment. On the short-term, it will most likely decrease the amount of productivity, which will increase the labour hours needed to achieve the same result (IJSSIR, 2017; Nees, 2022). However, improving the amount of variety will evidently (as shown in findings) significantly improve the job satisfaction among the starters of C&W, leading to a decrease in employee turnover and its related costs, ultimately improving the efficiency and productivity of the company (Tagence, 2021).

Cross-departmental work has been shown to have a positive effect on knowledge creation and organisational performance. The increase in knowledge creation is a tool for improving the learning and development among employees with a low tenure (Wipulanusat et al. 2016).

As mentioned, after the majority of the initial learning curve has been completed by the starter/intern, the perceived joy in specialisation quickly deteriorates. Then, the employee longs for other tasks to further develop themselves.

Therefore, a solution is provided in the form of rotation and varied responsibilities.

For interns

As an intern, instead of being assigned to a single service line to specialise in, your responsibilities switch after four months to a different service line. Four months was chosen, due to the intern having learned enough to become experienced in the initial service line, and able to learn more from a different service line (Nees, 2022b; Griep, 2022).

As the four departments largely overlap in the necessary skills and knowledge to provide them, the intern would experience the rotation as challenging, yet not too difficult. They do not have to learn everything from scratch again; they can use their already-learned knowledge in their new service line (Ibid). Besides this, as there are typically three interns hired and active in the company simultaneously, the rotation would be smoothly performed among the three of them. This way, the interns can also share experiences and teach the

other interns what they have already learned.

Lastly, before the rotation is made, a meeting is held with the intern, the manager of the first service line, and the manager of the second service line. As the work of C&W is very project-based, the intern must be given the opportunity to proceed with some of the work of their initial service line. In this meeting, a spread of responsibilities will be created according to the needs and wants of the three parties involved.

For starters (tenure higher than six months)
Rotating departments is trickier for starters that have already passed the six-month period, as they are starting to become highly involved in their projects and developing relations with clients (Nees, 2022; Griep, 2022). Therefore, a complete switch to another department would be highly inefficient and hinder the professional development of the starter. On the contrary, starters often feel as if they are "missing out" of being included in the activities of other service lines. The possibility is there for starters to join the projects of other departments. However, starters feel as if they don't have enough time in their schedule to start the initiative of doing this.

Therefore, the solution for starters (with a tenure surpassing six months), is to widen the number of employees per project, and widen the decision-making process. Introducing project-focused work units is a way to break down the typical functional lines of a company, and allow for more variety in the job design (MindTools, 2020). Furthermore, widening the decision-making process allows for member from various teams from various skillsets to contribute to the project (Ibid; Wipulanusat et al., 2016).

It is necessary for management to start this initiative. A list of projects where other employees from other departments could be involved must be created. Then, management can accessibly assign roles to the various members of the team and implement the increase in skill and job variety. The way this will be done, is further defined in the schedule created in the [Intervention/Implementation](#) chapter below.

7.2 Intervention/Implementation

C&W hosts monthly breakfast meeting calls, to update everyone on how the team is performing regarding their KPI's. This is done on every 15th date of the month, in a hybrid online/offline manner. Also, a voluntary presentation is given at the end, on any topic which is somewhat related to the hospitality CRE industry.

During this presentation, the first part of the implementation will occur. The presentation will shortly recap the findings of the study (as this has already been done in the dissemination event), show the chosen solution, and pinpoint why it is necessary for this solution to occur. The chosen meeting is on the 15th of December 2022.

The five interested employees will be chosen for the first part of the solution. A preliminary meeting is planned in on the spot. Every other meeting afterwards will be planned in at the end of each meeting, according to the following schedules. A schedule has been made for the two defined parts of the solution (table 5 and 6):

Table 5: Schedule for solution part 1

Mee ting no.	Recurring ?	Purpose of meeting	Meeting participant s	Date/timin g
1	No	Preliminary meeting, to: • Brainstorm for what tasks should be automated, and what programmes should be used • Discuss the requirements for next meeting (2): participants must make a plan for their service line, including the tasks that they will automate, and which programmes they will use for it. This will be presented in the next meeting. Sufficient time is given, to allow employees to thoroughly research their plan.	All five members	After monthly breakfast meeting (e.g. 16th of December)
2	No	Presentations by the various members to show what their approach is for the initiative. Feedback is given to each member, by every member of the team. If the manager believes that the plans will be thorough enough if the feedback is implemented, a go-ahead is given. If not, one more	All five members	Beginning of the year, to provide enough time due to the increase of work around the winter months (e.g.

|				
		meeting is planned in for further feedback. Once the go-ahead is given, two goals/deadlines are created: 1. A rough draft of the automation/standardisation (meeting 4) 2. The final draft (meeting 5) A meeting is then also already planned in for the first goal.		10th of January)
3	Yes, biweekly	A meeting to discuss progress and align where necessary. Opportunity to align and raise any topics if necessary. Flexibility is encouraged; if there isn't a lot to discuss, the meeting can be ended quickly and vice-versa.	The four starters	Every other week, starting one week after meeting 2 (e.g. 17th of January)
4	No	Meeting for discussing the rough draft of their initiatives. Each starter will present their draft, and feedback will be given. A deadline is set at the end for the final draft meeting.	All five members	Six weeks after meeting 2 (e.g. 21st of February)
5	No	Meeting for the final draft of the initiatives. The final drafts are presented, and feedback is given to everyone, from everyone. The presentation of the initiatives during the next monthly meeting is discussed.	All five members	Two weeks after meeting 4 (e.g. 7th of March)
6	No	Monthly breakfast meeting, to share to everyone what the new procedures are that the team came up with. All members show how their initiatives work, and how they reduce time and effort in their specific service line.	Entire C&W hospitality team	During the next monthly breakfast meeting (15th of March)

Table 6: Schedule for solution part two

Meeting no.	Purpose of meeting	Meeting participants	Date/timing
1	Preliminary meeting per service line (total of four meetings), to discuss what tasks of their department can be given to other service lines, and what tasks from other service lines the starters from this department would like to take over. The department manager must take notes of what was mentioned and take them to meeting 2.	All members per service line, including department heads, managers, supervisors, and starters	After the initial presentation, (e.g., 16th of December)
2	Meeting among management to: 1. Discuss the way future projects will be spread out among starters from various service lines 2. Discuss in what fashion the service lines will be rotated among starters (i.e. what service line will be paired with which other service line).	One department head per service line	After meeting 1 (e.g., 22nd of December)
3	Management presents the new manner of spreading out tasks during the monthly breakfast meeting according to what was discussed in the previous meetings (1 & 2). Final feedback is provided. The new way of intern rotation will be applied to the next set of interns, arriving in February.	Hospitality team of C&W	Next breakfast meeting after meeting 2 (e.g., 15th of January).

7.3 Evaluation

To evaluate the effectiveness of the solution, it is first necessary to recap what the solution aimed to achieve. This can be seen in the conceptual framework (figure 9):

Figure 9
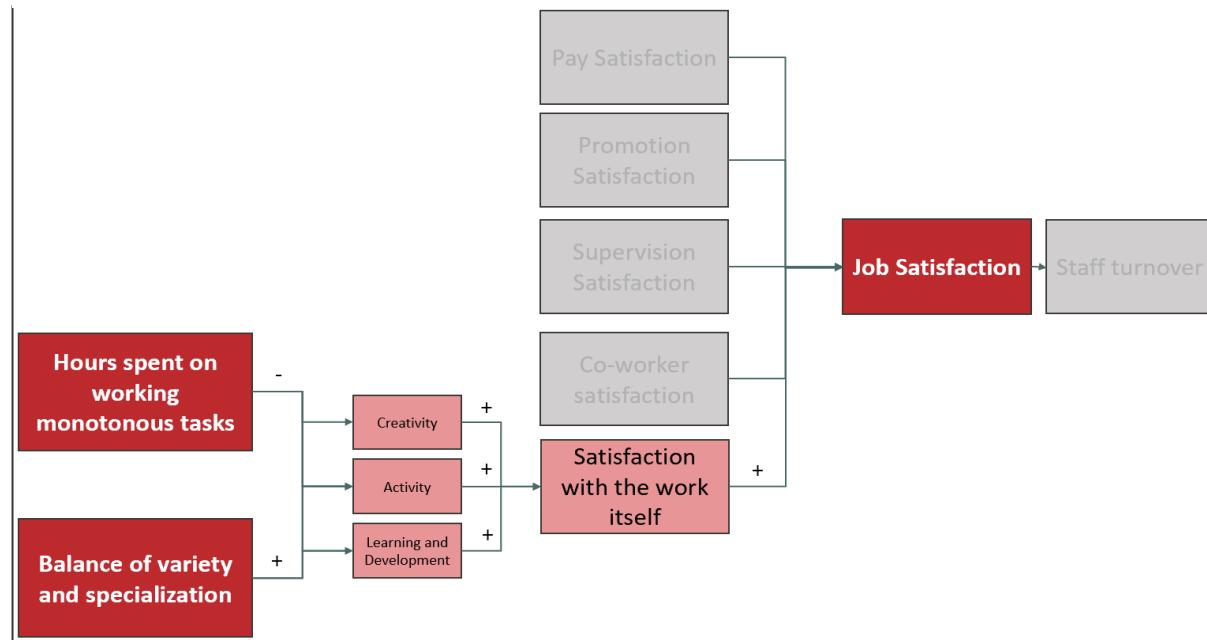
Hence, the solution aims to decrease the hours spent on working monotonous tasks and improve the balance of variety and specialisation of the starters, which will trickle down to ultimately improving the job satisfaction of starters and interns. As seen in the logic model defined in the problem definition, this has a further impact on the staff turnover and its related costs, which then obstructs the company to reach its determined KPI's.

The evaluation of the implementation will be performed in several steps.

7.3.1 Before-after assessment

Due to the limited number of employees in the hospitality department, and due to difficulty of implementing with the use of a control group, a before-after assessment is used. Two groups are therefore chosen (Barends, 2022).

A method is needed to measure the three parameters of the conceptual framework before and after implementation. Due to the qualitative nature of these three parameters, a survey will be conducted prior to, and after the implementation.

The survey will be sent to all starters and interns of the hospitality team. It will include questions that will indirectly and directly question how they perceive the three defined parameters. Questions will be asked by means of a Likert scale, measuring to what extent participants feel satisfied about various aspects of their work. This will be a survey using all five aspects of the JDI measurement tool, including pay satisfaction, promotion satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, co-worker satisfaction, and satisfaction with the work

itself (Colquitt et al., 2020).

The pre-test survey will be conducted before the initial presentation of the intervention takes place. The post-test survey will take place two months after the final presentation of the intervention takes place (e.g. 15th of May 2023), to allow for enough time to adapt to the new methods and procedures.

Before the analysis of the results are examined, it must be controlled whether the intervention was executed as planned. The manager of the automation implementation will have to look back at the solution design and intervention implementation chapters above, and make a clear judgement if the intervention was properly applied. If not, the team must go back to the application phase, and start again. If it has been applied properly, the experiment results can be analysed (Barends, 2018).

7.3.2 Experiment results

The results of the survey will be compiled, and an employee satisfaction score will be derived. The JDI system uses a scoring system from 1.00 to 3.00. Each of the five facets is given a score, with a score close to 3.00 seen as high satisfaction, and closer to 1.00 as low satisfaction (Pratiwi and Welly, 2014). Similarly to the studies performed by Scroggins (2019), and Tavakoli et al. (2018), the results after the second assessment will logically compared with reason and logic to those of the baseline measure. If a clear improvement is seen within the "satisfaction with the work itself" facet, and the overall job satisfaction is above a score of 2.00, the solution is deemed successful.

In the scenario that a significant increase is **not** seen, it must be defined whether this is due to an ineffective solution design, or other external factors. For this reason, the survey will also include questions that measure the other four defined factors of job satisfaction of the JDI measurement tool.

Using the results of the survey, a choice can be made to improve and/or change the implementation/solution, or to start the cycle anew, but with a different identified problem.

To help visualise the evaluation process, a flowchart was created (figure 10):

Figure 10
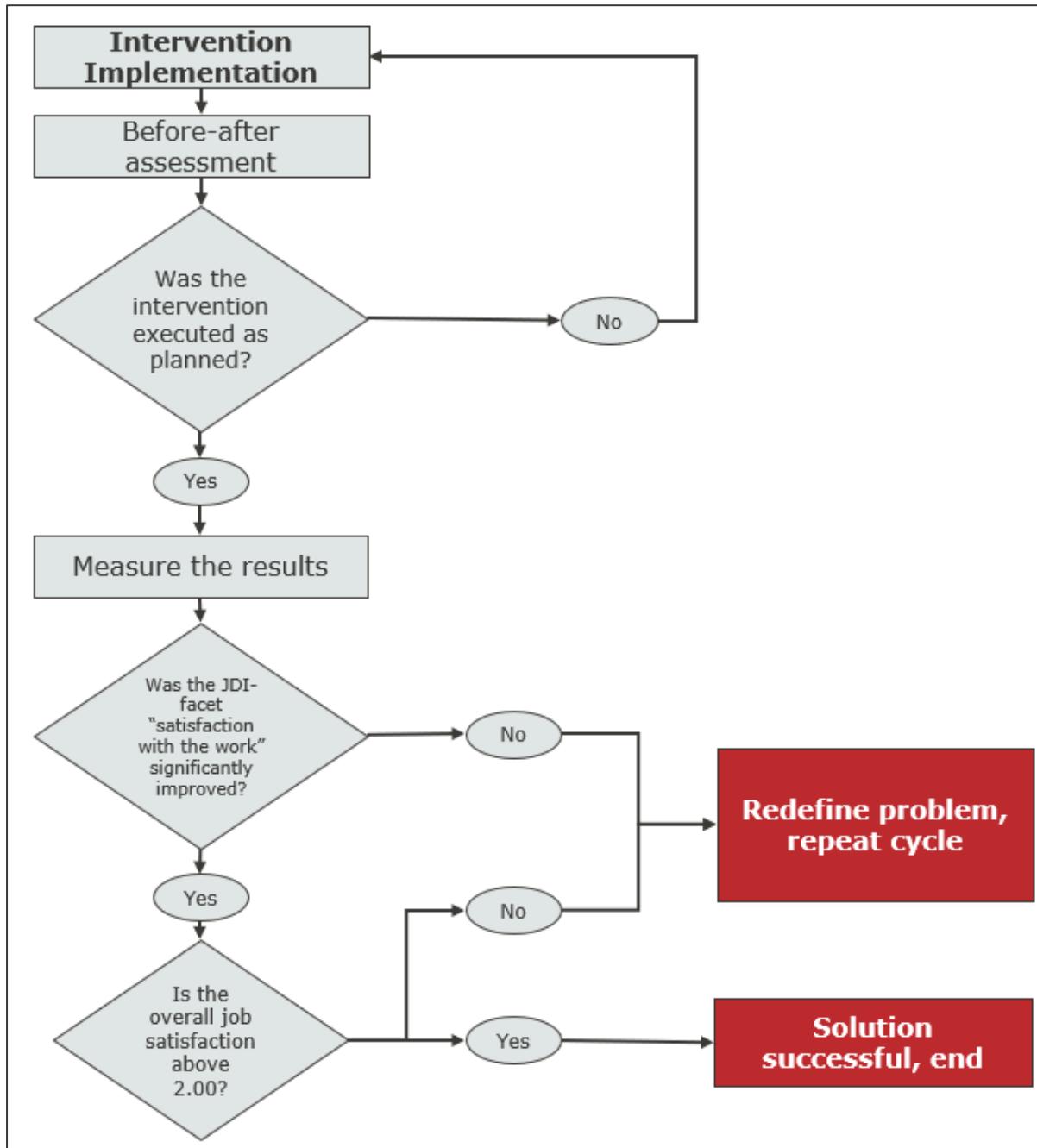
(Barends, 2018)

# 7.4 Timeline

To conclude the solution chapter, a timeline was created for a visual stimulus on the implementation and evaluation of the solution (figure 11). This timeline is suggestive. The actual timeline will be dependent on the individual schedules of the employees at C&W.

Figure 11
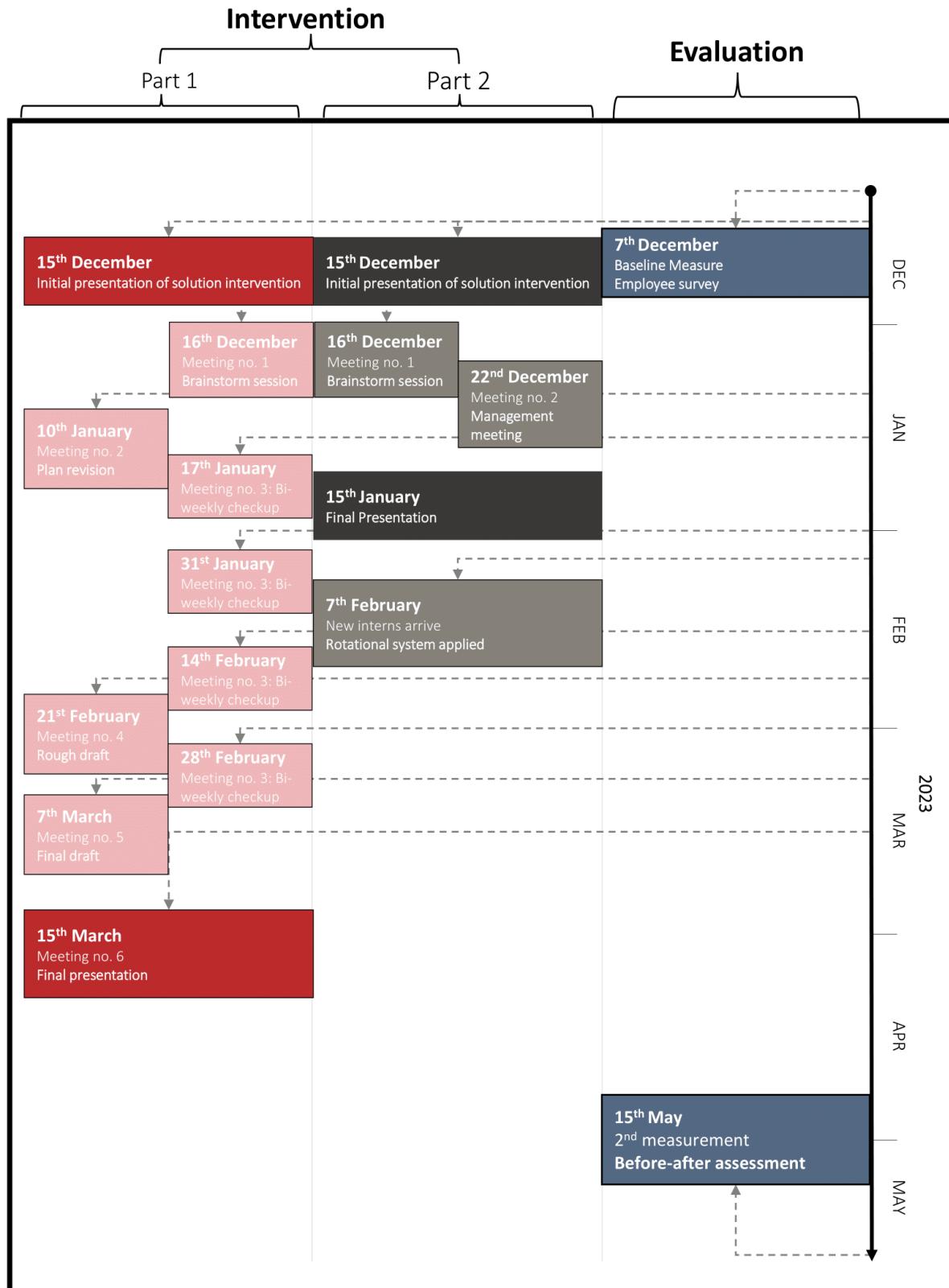
7.5 Stakeholders & Dissemination

7.5.1 Stakeholders involved

The stakeholders have been defined as individuals, organisations or communities which have a direct interest in the outcomes and processes of this study (Vitae, 2022).

Undoubtedly, the main party which will benefit from the research conducted is the **hospitality team of C&W.** The team can reap numerous benefits from the study, including a higher job satisfaction, higher employee retention rate, lower staff turnover, and higher productivity. Ultimately, this will assist in achieving the company's objectives.

Other **(hospitality) CRE companies** can benefit from the study. As the type of work conducted among various companies are similar, solutions and results found from this paper are also applicable to other companies.

Also, **young professionals** looking to make an entrance into the hospitality industry (specifically those searching for analytical positions) can find valuable information on the need and application of RPA in the hospitality industry.

And lastly, company **executives** working in any industry that involves repetitious tasks or office work can benefit from the findings of this study. The findings of the influence of monotonous tasks on employee satisfaction and the performance of a company, can persuade company executives to implement the solutions brought forth in this study.

7.5.2 Dissemination

Presentation

To benefit the main stakeholders, the hospitality team of C&W, a presentation was held during the monthly breakfast meeting. As the researcher is living in Amsterdam, rather than Prague, the presentation was given in an online Microsoft Teams meeting.

The presentation started with a small introduction of the problem, by putting the results of the study in relation to what the global trends and developments were on the topic. This was to give insight to the severity of the problem, not only to the starters of the company, but on the company's future performance as well.

It then proceeded to explain what the results were of the study, and the solution that was designed. It was explained in detail, how the intervention could take place and who would have to be in charge.

The presentation ended with some questions and positive feedback received. See appendix 10.9 for the proof of the presentation.

Post on Medium

To help spread awareness to the young professionals and company executives of the world, a post was created on Medium, a website where people can share their view on work and life-related topics. The post was written in an informal way to spread awareness on the positive effects that automation can have on the well-being of employees and

performance of companies.

To read the post, see appendix 10.10.

8 Academic reflection

8.1 Research topic and industry relevance

After an initial interview with the client, and identifying the problem (mess), an MRQ was defined: "How can the hospitality team of Cushman & Wakefield improve the aspects of monotonous tasks which have a negative impact on job satisfaction among starters and interns?"

After pulling together evidence from practitioners, stakeholders and the scientific literature, answers were found for the three SRQ's.

When aggregating the various sources of evidence, it was remarkable to find that automation was almost always instantly thought of as a solution, yet the initiative for implication was largely missing in the CRE industry. Due to the sheer global size, reputation and presence of companies such as C&W, JLL and CBRE, this came as an unexpected surprise. Evidence from various sources implied that automation could and should be introduced to this industry, and that the industry is starting to fall behind because of it.

Although the context of work and the expectations of work vary per person, time, industry, and countless other factors, it was surprising to see that certain job conditions are still of great importance to employees. The feeling of learning and development, and the ability to unlock one's true potential is a drive that every company should prioritize for their young workers, if they want to retain talent and prevent employee turnover. Recent studies confirm this fact: a survey conducted for global workers shows that a lack of career development and advancement is with 41% the top reason for quitting previous jobs (World Economic Forum, 2022). Many of the responses from the stakeholders interviewed confirm that this sense of career development is crucial for their job satisfaction.

Implementing automation is not only a way to cut down on labour costs and improve the quality and efficiency of day-to-day operations, but also a way to unlock the true talents and qualities of the new generation workforce. Instead of putting young workers in outdated roles that will inevitably be replaced by technological advancements, allow your starters to become part of the movement, and make a change in the industry, company, and their own development.

8.2 Limitations and implications for further research

This study uses a qualitative, inductive strategy to uncover ways to decrease the time and effort spent on monotonous tasks. This is done as it is seen as the optimal way to find an evidence-based solution, given the short timeframe of the study, and lack of funding to go into extensive experimental research methods. Therefore, a quantitative approach using variables such as task time and implementation time would result in a more evidence-based solution for the problem. Furthermore, the participants of the interviews and focus group will have been sampled from hospitality CRE teams in the Czech Republic and the Netherlands. Due to the complex nature of CRE and its dependency on national laws, regulations, and traditions, it would be beneficial to include samples from a larger pool.

Also, this study attempts to uncover necessary solutions for the current landscape of hospitality CRE companies. However, it is highly likely that the current development of Artificial Intelligence can and will make a large impact on the nature of working in this industry. Therefore, it would be beneficial to discover in what ways Artificial Intelligence and related mechanisms can reduce the monotony of these tasks, and how it can drive an increase in job satisfaction among workers.

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10 Appendices

10.1 Proof of word count

10.2 Organisational Chart

```
        ┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
        │ Head of Hotel    │      │ Head of          │
        │ Transactions,    │      │ Hospitality,     │
        │ Continental      │      │ CEE & SEE        │
        │ Europe           │      │                  │
        └──────────────────┘      └──────────────────┘
```

Senior Consultant, Operator Selection & Development Advisory	Associate Director, Head of Hotel Transactions CEE & SEE	Associate Director, Head of Valuation & Advisory	Head of Strategic Advisory & Hospitality Research, CEE & SEE
Operator Selection Analyst/Intern	Capital Markets Analyst/Intern	Senior Consultant, Valuation & Advisory	Strategic Advisory & Hospitality Research Analyst(s)/Intern(s)
		Valuation & Advisory Analyst(s)/Intern(s)	

Link back to project and company context

10.3 Summary of preliminary interview with research commissioner

Interviewee	Felix Nees
Position	Hospitality Consultant CEE & SEE
Summary of interview transcript	The topic of the round-table feedback session is brought to the discussion. Felix gives his insights on why he thinks the starters and interns of the company rated their work much lower than the rest. He says that he thinks this has to do with a few things. He says that the team culture is driven around working long hours is contributing towards this, and als0.o the fact that employees aren't paid for their overtime. I ask him why he thinks this culture is here in the first place. Felix adds that the abundance of small, but repetitive and tedious tasks are responsible for this. As I try to dig deeper, I ask why he thinks all these tasks are seen as tedious. Felix talks about the way data is handled, and that many employees do not follow the guidelines which had been created for data handling, and that many employees also don't know where to find them. I raise the topic of learning and development and ask him if he thinks that there is enough room for it provided by C&W. Felix mentions that the first few months of the job are extremely valuable for learning more about the industry, but afterwards, many employees have the feeling of having reached a plateau. Finally, me and Felix touch upon the culture of the team. Felix acknowledges that the working culture can put a large emphasis on working extra hard and making large overtimes. This can put pressure on the employees (and especially starters), which leads to stress and demotivation. We round up the interview by discussing any other small factors that have an influence on the joy that workers perceive. Felix states that it is a combination of factors influencing it, and that it would be difficult to narrow it down to one cause.

Link back to the problem

10.4 Interview questions

The interview questions have been sorted by the SRQ they will help to answer.

Question #	Question
1.1	Do you feel like you have enough variety in your day-to-day work?
1.2	Do you enjoy specialising in tasks and taking ownership of them?
1.3	Do you feel more productive if you are working on one thing at a time, or if you are working on multiple things at the same time?
1.4	What tasks of your work do you find too standardised?
1.5	What tasks of other departments would you like to include in your schedule?
2.1a	What recurring tasks are unmotivating for you?
2.1b	What aspects of these tasks make it unmotivating for you?
2.2a	Are there aspects of these tasks that you enjoy doing?
2.2b	How could these tasks become more motivating for you?
2.2c	Would these tasks be more motivating if you were paid more?
2.2d	Could these tasks be automated?
2.3	Do you believe you would have more room for creativity if your tasks were automated?
2.4a	What tasks of yours have been automated?
2.4b	Do you like that they are automated?
2.5	What tasks of yours have not been automated (yet)?
2.6	Could you rank your recurring tasks from most tedious to least tedious?
2.7	Have you ever considered raising the topic of automation with someone in the team?
3.1	Which programs are you currently using to automate your tasks?
3.2	Are you aware of any other programs that could be used to automate your tasks?

10.5   Interview schedule

Interviewee 'name'	Position and tenure within company	Interview Round	Service Line
Sophie	Hospitality Consultant, 3 Years	1	Valuations & Advisory
Lewis	Hospitality Analyst, 7 months	1	Operator Selection
Tony	Hospitality Analyst, 1 year and 3 months	1	Capital Markets
Lucia	Hospitality Analyst, 1 year and 3 months	1	Strategic Advisory
To be confirmed	…	2	…
To be confirmed	…	3	…
Etc.	…	Etc.	…

Link back to sampling methods

10.6 Focus group questions

Question #	Question
1	What are the most common struggles in your work from your own experience or colleagues?
2	To what extent do you struggle with repetitive tasks in your work?
3a	What tasks are most tedious in your work?
3b	Why are these tasks so tedious?
4	What initiatives have you or your company taken to address these tasks?
5	What solutions have you implemented or tried implementing to solve this problem?
6	What solutions do you think would help in solving this problem?

Link back to

10.6 Focus group questions

10.7 Interview transcripts

10.7.1 Lucia (Research)

Marco: Alright so thank you Lucia for joining today. Before we start, I'd like to ask you if and just remind you that I will be recording this interview and also I will be transcribing it later into my thesis. However, I will be keeping your name anonymous throughout the entire transcription and if there are any other things, you'd like me to keep out I will gladly do so is that alright with you.

Lucia: Yes, that is alright with me thanks a lot for asking.

Marco: Alright, so to start off I'd like to simply ask you whether in your job at the research department if you have enough variety in your tasks or do you feel like you're doing the same things too often?

Lucia: Yes, I have enough variety as I often work with or for Borik and at other times I work for the French or the UK department which gives me different aspects of things to research.

Marco: Understood thank you. Do you have any tasks in your job where you feel like they are too repetitive and too tedious for you and could you give some examples of those tasks?

Lucia: Yes, of course, there are a lot of annoying tasks such as the designs of the market charts, which take a lot of time. And there are other annoying tasks like the engage transactions, which, yeah, again, are time consuming. I don't like the repetitive and annoying. But I do like my job overall.

Marco: Okay, thank you. And you yourself? Do you enjoy working on many different things at the same time? Or are you someone who likes to finish one thing and then move on to the next?

Lucia: No, I actually like working on different things at the same time, because it keeps my work interesting. And I'm someone who gets bored quite quickly. So, I like the job that I have that has a lot of variety in it.

Marco: And what parts of your work do you think are too standardized?

Lucia: The only thing that really comes to mind here is the engaged transactions, that might be a bit too standardized. But apart from that there, I would rather say that there's too little standardization, which makes some tasks tedious and repetitive because you don't have standards to go along.

Marco: Okay, and are you happy with the amount of time you're working in the research department? Or do you feel like you would like to take over some tasks of the other service lines.

Lucia: I'm quite happy with my research department actually, and the tasks I have there. However, something that I would find interesting with the customer contacts and interactions, particularly in the capital markets, sector, that's just something I'm personally interested in. So I would love to help them out more or be more involved. But realistically seen, there's also no time to do my tasks that have to do for research plus take on tasks from other service lines.

Marco: Great, thanks a lot. Are there any aspects of tasks that are generally unmotivating that you can actually find joy in?

Lucia: Yeah, you know, despite that, let's, let's say get engage transactions as an example. Despite that, they're very annoying, and you have to do so much research to simply put in one transaction. There are actually some nice things, you know, you need to go to news article websites, to figure out what the what the price is, and what the what the parties are in the buyer and the seller. And it really teaches you a lot about the industry as well. And what others deem, like the design, I really enjoy getting better at programs, you know, you know, I'm a little bit of an Excel nerd. So whenever I have the chance to improve my design on PowerPoint, or word, or something like that.
I always kind of like that. So yeah, they're always there are there are some nice parts about it.

Marco: Definitely. Alright, that's great. And how could these tasks become even more motivating for you in your day to day work?

Lucia: Oh, that's a good question. I guess that's what you're studying how to do that hahha. But I'd say for the tasks that can be in a way automated, I'd love for that to happen. And for if they're not automated, I mean, it depends per task really.
But maybe if some of the some of the things where you lose a lot of time as well as if things aren't stored correctly, because then you have to fix them and, and find things. So, I think if there were more standard SOPs for the those kinds of things, that would help out a lot with the efficiency of our work.

Marco: All right, great. And is money for you is an additional motivator? So, do you think you would be more motivated if you got paid more?

Lucia: Yeah, and no. Yes. But not a lot, I think. Yes, because I'm still a starter and my salary is not exceptional. And then on top of that, if I have all these annoying tasks, then I can get a bit demotivating, as someone who's young, a little bit more money would make it a bit more motivating.

Marco: Fair enough. Who doesn't want to get paid more? Right? Um, okay, moving on to something you mentioned just now, you were talking about automation earlier? Could you maybe go into more detail to that? So can tasks be automated? And if so, which tasks would that be?

Lucia: Whoo, tough question. I'd say, yes, there are actually a lot of things that can be automated. And there are also some things which I think are very difficult or maybe

expensive to automate. For example, designing the charts, I think this is something that's quite repetitive. And usually you have all the data sorted out nicely already. So this is something that could be automated quite well, but with the transactions, because you're getting all of the information from so many different sources and from the websites, that will be really difficult and will take a lot of time. And when.

Marco: All right, great. And then on that note, are there tasks in your work field that have already been automated?

Lucia: Yeah. Not in a very advanced way, usually through Excel. But the overview of the transaction volumes has been automated, that's something that comes out engage, the report comes out of engaged and then we put it into the Excel document and everything gets put correctly. Same goes for the supply and pipeline. Also goes into the Excel sheet. And there are a lot of things with valuations that are automated, which makes sense, because it's quite simple reports.

Marco: All right, that sounds great. And judging by that, do you like the tasks that have been automated already?

Lucia: Oh, yes, it saves a lot of time. And it makes me very happy always want to have to do something that's automated, because I like that it simply, you press one button and everything is there instead of having to put in everything manually. So yes, in a utopian scenario, everything would be automated.

Marco: Nice. That sounds great. And then perhaps On another note, could you rank your day to day reoccurring tasks? from most to least tedious?

Lucia: So you mean which ones do I dislike the most? Exactly? Okay. Number one, engage number two. Sending emails to the other teams, to remind them to put their transactions in. And finally, all of the other things. So creating the charts, performing the market analysis, making presentations, things like that.

Marco: Okay. All right, that sounds great. Um, you were mentioning Excel earlier on as one of the programs that's used for automation. Are there any other programs that are used to automate tasks?

Lucia: Yeah. I think valuations is using one, but I'm not sure. I haven't done valuations in quite a long time. But I know they implemented something new recently. And for the rest. We use Microsoft Visual Basic as well in the Excel sheets, to run scripts that will pull data from different sources. And that's pretty much it for the rest, I guess, templates. But that's it.

Marco: All right. And then the last question of this interview actually would be if you have considered raising the topic of automation with someone in the team or supervisor perhaps?

Lucia: No, yes, no, I think it's always a great thing to raise. But with research, I think it's one of those service lines that uses automation. The least I could understand it more for

maybe capital markets or for valuations or operators selection, but I think research I mean, it says it in the name, you have to research things and you can't do that automatically. So I think. Yep.

Marco: All right, then. Thanks a lot for all your insights, and I'll stop the recording here.

Lucia: Thank you.

10.7.2   Sophie (Operator Selection)

Marco: Alright, Sophie. Well, it's great seeing you again. Thank you for joining today. Before we get into the interview, I just like to ask you, and to remind you that I'll be recording this interview and putting a transcription of it into my thesis. However, I will make your name anonymous. And I would just like to ask you if you would be compliant with that?

Sophie: Yes, of course. Thank you for asking.

Marco: Alright, so let's jump right into the questions. The first question I have for you is: do you feel like you have enough variety in your day to day work?

Sophie: Well, I would say it's enough. But I would love to have some more variety. I think OS is a very one sided department where a lot of things are the same each time around. And for me, that takes away sometimes I will be attracted to maybe helping out in some of the other service lines often say, yeah.

Marco: Okay. And besides that would like more variety in your work, do you enjoy specializing in your own department? Do you enjoy specializing in OS?

Sophie: Yes, definitely. The learning curve for starters is so steep at the beginning in the commercial real estate industry, and there's so much to learn that I think it's good to focus on one thing at a time, because if you do too many, then it's just going to get way too much too quick. And now, so that's why I also enjoyed getting very good at OS first, and I can take on some more responsibility later. Of course, it would be nice to try out some different things as well. But I'm quite happy with getting good at doing OS.

Marco: Okay, all clear. And with that in mind, do you feel like you can work better if you're working on different things at the same time, or if you're working on one thing at a time?

Sophie: Um, I'd say I'm definitely someone who likes to have a lot of variety in my work. And in my work, I can work at one thing at a time, but that will get very boring and strenuous quite quickly. Which is why I like to do different things during the day. And yeah, so I'd say definitely doing multiple things at the same time. That's, that's better for me.

Marco: Okay, thank you. And tying into that, could you tell me a bit about whether you what tasks of your OS department do you find are too standardized?

Sophie: Um yeah, I definitely say the creating the Word documents itself. It's extremely standardized to a point where you're doing the same thing over and over again, and just following the same steps can get incredibly boring very quickly. But I'd say in general, this standardization is actually not that bad. If anything, we could use some more in some aspects. One thing though, however, is sometimes I feel like I don't get given enough autonomy to change the way things are done, whereas I clearly can see that they could be done in a more efficient and time-saving way. It makes me feel sometimes like they're

restricting me from using my full abilities.

Marco: Okay, and where do you think you could use more standardization? What specific tasks?

Sophie: Um, well, we're using a program now to automate automatically populate the Word documents, or at least we're trying to implement it, we're really using it for some basic features such as copying the market value into different places into the document, and things such as the clients name, etc. So we only had to fill it in once instead of changing it everywhere. But I know that we can use this for another, this program is very advanced, and I'd love to get better at it and use it more in in our OS exercises.

Marco: Okay, thank you. And now let's dive a little bit deeper into repetitive tasks and what your view is on it. So could you tell me which specific tasks repetitive or recurring tasks are unmotivating for you?

Sophie: Oh, quite a bit, I'd have to say. I'd have to say, simple things, such as writing out a bunch of emails, or creating meetings within the team or with clients, or saving files in the correct spots with the correct name. These things can get very tedious and and time consuming. Besides that, I also really do not like the Engage transactions, just takes a long, long time to put everything in. And Salesforce is quite a user-unfriendly program, which just makes me confused and annoyed when I use it. And I'd say some things like, if you need to make graphs for the OS reports, that takes a long time, and is very annoying, because it's something that can be it's so similar every single time we do it, but we start we make them manually each time. And there is no lined up standardized way to do that. Also, one big one, is making the market analysis for different things. A lot of times, you have to use the same graphs to make your analysis that you have already made before, but you can't find them, which makes you lose a lot of time on either remaking the graph, or trying to find old ones. And finally, of course, the formatting of the Word documents not the graphs, everything like that. That's just quite time consuming.

Marco: Okay. And do you think there are ways that these tasks could become less unmotivating? Or even motivating for you?

Sophie: Yes, I think, I'm not sure how it will work exactly. But since there's so many things that are being repeated the whole time, it will be great if there will be a way to make it all, either more organized or automated, something like that. And well, what specific tasks because I think it's different per task?

Marco: Okay, well, let's say the the formatting of the Word documents.

Sophie: Yeah, so definitely, if we use Nanonets for it, it will be amazing, because then we could just focus on performing the OS and, and doing our own analysis, and not having to worry about formatting the Word document or checking it, because everything will be automatically formatted. But it's quite annoying that this hasn't been done yet, as it is something that would save so much time, and it is so easy to implement, yet no one has taken the initiative yet.

Marco: Okay, and for the transactions?

Sophie: I think that's quite difficult. Because you need to gather the information from different news sources or from emails, etc. So I think though, I don't know how that will be, will be easier to do. Maybe some way that the organization of it does change so that maybe some people do the email transactions and some people do all the but I'm not too sure.

Marco: Okay, and finally, what about the meetings and emails and things like that?

Sophie: I think there are quite some programs which specialize in automating this also because there's almost every company uses Microsoft in one way or another. So I'm sure this exists already. I'm not too sure about what exactly or how it would work. But I definitely know it exists.

Marco: Okay. And you've already mentioned automation quite a bit. Could you tell me if you would like it, if more of your tasks will be automated?

Sophie: Oh, yes, definitely, of course, like I've already mentioned it, of course, but there's so many things, which are very repetitive here and where you're basically just doing the same thing over and over again. And it would be great if there was something to automate all of that.

Marco: You've already mentioned a few tasks which you find annoying. Could you rank them for me for which ones you find most tedious and tiresome?

Sophie: I would say firstly, all the emails and the meetings that I have to make and right, those are probably the most annoying for me, because it simply takes up most of my time. And when you're planning meetings, you constantly have to go back and forth, suggesting new times until you find a timeslot that works for everyone. Then, definitely everything that has to do with formatting. So whether that's the graphs, or if it's the Word documents, or yeah, just things or Excel sheets, or things like that. And finally, I'd say performing, making graphs, not the formatting for making the graphs and gathering the data from different sources. Yeah.

Marco: Perfect. Thank you. Finally, could you think of any other ways for you? To see how could you think of any other ways? Where are these repetitive tasks will become less tiresome and tedious for you?

Sophie: Um, no, not really, I think there are a few things, which could help with making most tasks less repetitive, which really has to do with the way that we store everything, and that everything is organized. It takes a lot of time, every single time to understand from an old project to look into the folders and see who did what exactly. And, in which document means what. And there's some people who just pay much more attention or much less attention to this than others. And this makes it really difficult to find things and costs a lot of time which could have been spared. And if someone would have just stored the file in the correct location under the correct name. And for the rest, no, not really.

Marco: Perfect. And one final question. If you were paid more, would you find these tasks more motivating?

Sophie: In a way, yes, but not completely. I would still find them boring and tedious. But it would definitely motivate me more or give me more of a reason to do them. If I was paid more. Yes. But not not completely. I'd say a little bit it would help a little bit.

Marco: Okay. Well, great. That's all I need to know. Anything you'd like to add?

Sophie: No, I'm very curious what your what you're going to find. And I'm very excited to read it and I hope you send it to us as well.

Marco: Oh, yes, absolutely. I definitely will. You'll you'll see it popping in your inbox for sure. Great, great. Okay, so thank you so much for joining me today and I will stop the recording now.

10.7.3 Tony (Capital Markets)

Marco: Good morning, Tony, thank you for joining me today. It really helps me out with with finalizing my thesis. And I'm very grateful that you're able to join the interview. Before we start, I would just like to let you know that we will be keeping your name anonymous reports of my thesis. And I will be recording this interview and transcribing it later if that is if I have your permission for that.

Tony: That is fine.

Marco: Excellent. So to start off, I would like to ask you, do you feel like you have enough variety in your day to day work at Cushman and Wakefield?

Tony: I would say in general, I do have enough variety, because I am able to help out other in other service lines apart from capital markets, which is where my service line where I work. However, there are two points to that. However, there are two aspects to that variety that I do have, which is for one that it takes my own initiative to help out with other service lines to have that variety in my daily work, I would say. And the second point is even if there are opportunities to help out, I'm often not really able to, because I'm already busy with my own work. So that's a time constraint that keeps me from the variety.

Marco: Perfect, thank you. Next up, I'd like to ask you, do you enjoy with the tasks that you perform in your capital markets department? Do you enjoy specializing in those tasks?

Tony: In general, I would say so, otherwise, I would not have picked the capital markets. However, it depends a lot on the tasks at hand as well.
I personally enjoy getting good at the market evaluations and improving the design of IM's. But there are some other things that are quite time consuming, like transaction records or saving setting up VDRs. And they're not just time consuming, but they're also very tedious and lengthy to do.

Marco: And what are the aspects of those tasks that make it so time consuming and lengthy, like you said?

Tony: I would say the overall reason for the time consumption is the data storage, because a lot of the tasks take a long time. This includes transferring data from one place to the other, you need to find the correct data and where it was stored, you need to transform it into a new format or a different program or a new document that you use. And just as one example; for transactions, you often need to pull data from a lot of different sources and then put it into engage. Managing all of that takes a lot of mental capacity and time as you need to remember where which data and source was. And that makes it time consuming.

Marco: So you would say that the way that the data is stored is affecting the time you spend on these tasks that you're performing?

Tony: Yes, indeed, I would say the lack of streamlined data storage. Just takes away time

was my day that I could spend otherwise if it was done properly and correctly.

Marco: Alright, that's all clear. Moving on to a different topic. You yourself, do you feel like you're more productive if you're working on one thing at a time? Or are you someone who's more productive that you have a variety of different tasks at one period of time?

Tony: I personally have always been someone who likes to focus on one thing at a time, I'm really not great at multitasking. And I'd rather do one thing and get it done properly. Yeah, because allows me to dedicate all my energy towards that one thing I'm working on. And to do that one well. And it also lets me get into a certain flowstate with a lot of momentum, as compared to doing things half-heartedly.

Marco: And you don't have it, if you're working on one thing at a time that it starts to get more boring or tedious for you.

Tony: Um, it really depends on the task at hand, if there are tasks that I truly enjoy doing, and that are interesting to me as well, then time goes by very quickly. However, when the tasks are incredibly repetitive, and don't necessarily match my interests that much, then it becomes boring, repetitive. And yes, it's annoying to do these kinds of things at that time.

Marco: All right, that makes sense. Of course. Thank you. Now, I'd like to ask you, of your tasks that you perform at capital markets, which ones specifically do you find are too standardized?

Tony: I wouldn't really say that there are a lot of tasks that are actually too standardized. I think I've mentioned it a little bit before. I think that there's a lack of standardization, which causes tedious tasks and time consuming. Yeah, just occupations during the day. So yeah, to add to come back to you, there's no not too much that's to standardize, but there's a lack of standardization that would make a lot of things easier.

Marco: And what tasks specifically that you have, do you think, could be more standardized, like you mentioned?

Tony: Um, it's actually mainly the city market analysis and engage transactions that make more sense.

Marco: All right, that's clear. To continue on the topic of variety in your work, are there any tasks of other departments, such as OS, or Research or Valuations that you would like to include in your schedule and combined with your capital markets tasks?

Tony: I think the engagement with operators that the OS department has looked very interesting to me, and perhaps helping to analyse some of the data that research has to do for that, for example, preparing the market bytes could be an interesting task to me as well.

Marco: Right, this question I think we've kind of covered already a little bit. But I'd like

to ask what recurring tasks that you do are unmotivating for you. So I think you mentioned some of the transaction recordings and also setting up the VDRs. Is there anything else? Or would you like to elaborate on why they are on motivating for you?

Tony: Um, yeah, I think you mentioned the two main ones already that are the tasks are unmotivating. And in addition, I would maybe also add, sending out mass emails to investors. And yeah, I've kind of mentioned this before, why it's unmotivating. It's just copying and finding the data is a bit of a brainless task, because time consuming and bit annoying. And having to repeat that process over and over again. Just doesn't give me a lot of energy and motivation to do more of that. And I'd say another aspect of it is having to read through large documents for one particular number for one particular sentence is quite unrewarding.

Marco: And are there any aspects of these tasks that you actually do enjoy doing? Or is it just a complete waste of time for you?

Tony: I think on the last point I just mentioned, whilst reading through large documents, sometimes you'll also come across things that are actually quite interesting, whilst having to look for certain things. And this doesn't only happen in the reports that we're doing. But if I have to research something else that is quite interesting. And along the lines of. But obviously, it's nice to learn more about the industry and to learn more details to know more about this particular cities that we that we are working with. I would say gaining knowledge whilst looking for other information.

Marco: All right, are there any ways you can think of that these unpleasant aspects of the tasks -so the repetitive searching for data and repeating the processes over and over again, like you said- could you think of any ways that this could become less unmotivating for you?

Tony: Absolutely, I think I kind of mentioned it before, though, but if you have more standardization, obviously you have to do less tedious tasks, and then you spend less time looking for things and just find it in one overview. And if there was some kind of way to have a streamlined or automated process, where you're pretty much just taking the city analysis reports, you just have to enter the city, and then you already have all the information there is encouraged. But sadly, we don't have a very finalised version of something like this. And I would find that, more motivating to have less of these tasks.

Marco: Okay. All right. All right. Next question, would these tests be- besides what you just said- would they be more motivating for you, if you had a higher salary? If you were paid more?

Tony: ██
██
██

Marco: And do you think these tasks, do you think they could be automated in a way?

Tony: Absolutely. I think that not saying that I'm able to do it. But it would be quite

complicated. Because there are so many different types of formats that need to be accounted for that need to be streamlined into one place or into one format as before. That will be complicated, but I'm pretty sure there's a way to get it automated if you invest their energy and time into it.

Marco: Right, and if these tasks were automated do you think you would have more room for creative creativity in your work?

Tony: Yes, as mentioned before, the tasks that I usually enjoy are tasks that do not include those tedious and repetitive aspects. So, it gives me it would give me more time to focus my efforts on things that matter more in the workplace, and that I personally enjoy more. For example, attracting clients or performing more research that will make it more interesting if than those lengthy tasks.

Marco: And have there been any of your tasks that have been automated or already have some form of automation, whether it is very simple or quite advanced?

Tony: If I think about it now, I think some aspects of valuation exercises already automized. Let me think. I think that's the markets appendix and the wording in the documents itself. That's the only things that come into my mind right now. So yes, there are some things that are already optimized.

Marco: And do you enjoy that, that they are automated? How is that experience for you working with automation?

Tony: Oh, it's great. It saves me so much time. And as mentioned before, I'm able, because certain things are already in place as the valuation exercises, then you can focus on things that are more important, and you can invest your energy more appropriately.

Marco: And could you rank the tasks that you mentioned, that you find are tedious? Which are the sending out the mass emails, creating the VDRs and putting in the Engage transactions? Which one of those do you think is most time consuming and tedious for you?

Tony: The Engage transactions, I find the most tedious actually. And after that, I would say setting up the VDR's. And then as a last point, the mass emails.

Marco: Have you ever considered taking any initiative to raise this topic of automation with some of your supervisors or with the rest of the team?

Tony: Yes, I have addressed that before. Because as you've probably noticed, by now, it would have saved a lot of time and energy and other things could be done better. And I have addressed it, but nothing ever came a bit, neither from my side, because we're busy with what we're doing right now. I don't really have the time to invest into automating the processes, but nothing came from the supervisor's side.

Marco: Alright, and to finalize it, can you give me some names of the programs that you use to automate the tasks? Like you mentioned, the valuation market attendance, and the

valuation reports.

Tony: It's mostly using Excel's built-in formulas, as well as the Microsoft Visual Basic to write scripts for the sheets. For word, we use Microsoft Power Automate, which allows you to auto-populate most of the required fields.

Marco: And do you know of any other programs that perhaps other companies use or that you've heard of, or that you've read about somewhere, which you think could be implemented at Cushman and Wakefield?

Tony: Yes, I've heard of the company called UIPath, which I believe specializes in using their own program to automate tasks such as these. And then there's also another program which I believe CBRE, yes I think it's CBRE, and that is called Nanonets I believe. Apparently it is very intuitive and easy to setup. And of course, there is the power query tools of Excel, but they can be quite hard to understand.

Marco: All right, perfect. Yeah. Anything else you'd like to add? Anything you were thinking of that you think might be useful for me? Or shall I finalize our interview?

Tony: No, I don't think so. I think the questions you asked are pointing in the right direction. And I think it's very helpful that you're looking into automation of processes that are evolving for everyone who works here. So yeah, thanks a lot to you, and I'm excited to see what's gonna happen with what you come up with.

Marco: Great, thank you, Tony, and I'll stop the recording now.

10.7.4   Lewis (Valuations & Advisory)

Marco: Thank you, Louis, for joining me today. And I'd just like to confirm with you once again that I'll be recording this interview and putting a transcription into my thesis document. But I will make your name anonymous, as requested. Is that alright with you?

Lewis: Yep. All clear.

Marco: Perfect. So, moving on to the first question, do you feel like you have enough variety in your day-to-day work?

Lewis: No, no.

Marco: Could you tell me why, why don't you think that?

Lewis: I feel like once a task is done, you just do the next, the next day you start the same report. Again, once the report is done, you go to the next one. It lacks some variety I would say.

Marco: Okay, so you would want more variety in your work? And what did you imagine, what kind of variety? That will be what you want to help out and other service lines, for example?

Lewis: Yeah. Maybe do a bit of every service line rather than like a focused internship. So we could learn as much as possible, rather than having learned most of it after two months.

Marco: Yeah, makes sense. Then moving on to a different question. Do you enjoy specializing in your work? And if that's unclear, with specializing, I mean, do you enjoy getting very good and efficient at your specific tasks in valuations?

Lewis: I do. But this satisfaction has passed away. So it's like nice to be efficient, like, I'm satisfied for one day, and then that's pretty much it. But it doesn't make the job enjoyable.

Marco: Right. Right. And what specific tasks that you do for valuations do you find tedious?

Lewis: Mainly the report, okay, because once you've analyzed the assets, and you have done your assumptions, regarding potential figures, the boring part comes in, where you have letters to fill up, like, report and write basic things down. It's like I don't need a brain.

Marco: And so it's specifically the populating of the document, filling in the document? Or is it also something else that has to do with the report?

Louis: No it's mainly populating the document, it could be done by a machine for example. You are simply redoing and rewriting every part of the report, and nothing is different each

time you do it.

Marco: And are there any other tasks of the valuations that you find tedious?

Lewis: Not from the valuations itself, but like, yeah, all the
little tasks, like helping others, I would say. Not very interesting tasks, such as renaming the folders. This could have been done better the first time probably. I don't feel like I have learned anything, doing that.

Marco: Right. How do you feel about the amount of standardization? And with standardization I mean, the clear set of guidelines and standards that Cushman and Wakefield gives to perform your job, do you feel like it's too much or too little or too unclear? Also tying into what you said about like the named folders and things like that.

Lewis: It's nice to have a good set of standards, for example for naming thing. I would say to this would optimize some stuff afterwards. It's a bit sad that we learn your job to to this.

Marco: Alright, moving on. How can these tasks and that you've mentioned, starting with the Word document population, become more motivating for you?

Lewis: I don't know how it works, this works. I guess if we apply the same as in Excel, we use some macros, like, fill up all the boring parts and be able to do more tasks and like more spend more time on the interesting parts, like understanding the hotel and how it works.

Marco: Yeah. Perfect. And would you be more motivated for these repetitive tasks if you were paid more?

Lewis:

Marco: Okay. Perfect. And do you think that there can be more automation
of tasks in at Cushman and Wakefield?

Lewis: Yeah, definitely. Basically, we could use macros in Excel for the different graphs, and to import all the data for the market analysis.
Mainly, and this helps a lot and feel a bit more like creative during this than just filling them up yourself.

Marco: And would you say that more automation of these tasks will make you happier or less happy with the work that you're doing?

Lewis: Well, I would spend less time being less happy. So I don't know how you want to take this. Yes.
Marco: Okay. And final question. If you could rank your tasks that you the regular tasks you do at valuations from most annoying to maybe the top three most annoying tasks?

Lewis: Yeah. So yeah, number one was reports for sure. I've done too many.
Also, making the graphs. It feels like it's only the same but
we could be helped by macros. And also yeah, those folders for sure. That's not my day
to day thing.

Marco: Okay, perfect. Anything you'd like to add or ask? If not, I'll stop the interview.

Lewis: No.

Marco: Thank you very much. Perfect. Alright, then I'll stop the recording.

10.8   Focus group transcript

Attendees:

- Tony (C&W)
- Lewis (C&W)
- Gerard (CBRE)
- Hellen (CBRE)
- Josh (JLL)
- Yvonne (JLL)

Marco: Welcome everyone, thank you again for joining today, it is very special to have so many industry professionals from various companies in one meeting! I think this is something that rarely happens. Now, just to start off with, I would just like to mention that this interview will be transcribed in my report and thesis, however, I will be using anonymising all your names. Could I just get a quick confirmation from everyone, just a quick "yes", that you agree with this form of recording?

Josh: Yes

Lewis: Yes

Gerard: Yep

Yvonne: All good

Tony: Yes

Hellen: Yes, that's fine!

Marco: Perfect. Thank you everyone, then let's move on. As some of you may know, I am currently finishing my Bachelor's at Hotelschool The Hague in Amsterdam. And for my thesis, I am investigating what the effect is of repetitive and tedious tasks in the commercial real estate industry, and what its effect is on the job satisfaction of starters, such as yourself. And I'm trying to find solutions on how to make employees happier, and less bored at work to enable more creativity and effectiveness in the day-to-day work. So I'll be asking some questions today to figure out what kind of solutions you have already tried or any solutions that you might think of, which could make your work less tiresome and less boring. So, the first thing I'd like to ask - and feel free whenever I ask a question to answer and I'll be making sure to go along everyone to see what your view is on it, because I'd like all of your inputs in this. So the first question I'd like to ask is, what are the most common struggles when it comes to managing data at your day to day work?

Gerrard: Yeah, I think I can answer that first. So for us, one of the biggest struggles is the sheer amount of data that we use, we have str, of course, we have all the data that we get from our clients. We have the market data to cities, statistics, the tourism data, and keeps going on and on. And to use all of that to put it together and to synthesize it into one thing that really takes a long, long time. And not only with just using all the different types of data, but the way it's stored as well. And the way people use it, to put it in their reports. That's something that we struggle with a lot.

Marco: Perfect. Thank you. That's great. Anyone else?

Josh: Yeah, I think I'd have to agree with this. For us, we have quite some standardized ways to store data. And I think they work quite well. And we have some good, SOPs for new people to understand how to save the client info, and things like that. And that is great to save time and make processes run more smoothly I'd say their consistency of the employees is something that's really difficult. A lot of times people don't know how to store it. So they just put it in one of the folders, and they don't really pay attention to it at all. But nevertheless, I have to agree with Gerrard here and say that just a huge amount of data that there is and having to put that together into one thing that's really difficult. And that takes a lot of time. And it's very tedious. And it's the type of aspects that I don't like about my work. Yeah.

Marco: Understood. Understood. Thank you.

Hellen: Yeah, I'll just jump in, I think I agree with, with what they said as well. But I must say we already use quite a bit of automation here at CBRE to, to make these tasks go faster and more effective. So yes, there's always still the struggle of storing data. But I feel like we've got that covered quite well already.

Marco: Interesting. And Could I could I ask you what type of automation software you use?

Hellen: Yes, absolutely. We use Workato. It's an excellent program. And it really it takes some time to set up and you need to be to set it up you need to be a little bit of an an IT guy so to say. But once it's all set up, it saves a lot a lot of time and it has really helped me and my colleagues as well.

Marco: All right, thank you. Understood. Yvonne, would you agree with everyone are you have anything else to add?

Yvonne: Yeah, no, I agree with everything that has been said already. I don't think I have a lot at like Peter said already. We do use automation software already. And it works quite well. So yeah, not a lot to add. But thank you.

Marco: Alright, all clear, thanks. Let's move on to what specific tasks - or let me rephrase: what specific aspects of these repetitive tasks that you're performing, that may or may not have been automated, do you find the most tedious? And maybe, Gerrard, we can start with you again and make the circle?

Gerrard: Yeah, sure. I have to say. So, as someone who does valuation exercises, the two most annoying things I would have to say, is has to do with putting everything correctly in the document. We all use word here, I think we all use Office. And I think we all understand that. Putting things you know, some pictures can be so annoying, or the way that the font jumps around, or we all know the struggles. That's super annoying. And it takes way too much time to do that the same things for every single project, because essentially, every single valuation document looks the same, but simply the content is slightly different each time. So that's, that's having to do that every single time. That's, really annoying. And secondly, when performing other things, which have to do with

making charts or using Excel, or visualizing data. I think it's been mentioned in the last question already, it's very repetitive, to have to constantly take the data from different sources, and to put it all together into one document. Because when STR comes in an Excel sheet, but the city's statistics are on this specific website, however the client's data is stored in another folder somewhere in a format that they send, whether it's a picture, a PDF, or an Excel sheet, you know, it's just that's very annoying to constantly have to transfer all of that.

Marco. Thank you. Do the rest of you agree with that? How about you, Lewis?

Lewis: Yes, yes, these are definitely things that we struggle with as well. Once again, like, like we said, we do have some programs already which automates all of this, especially with Word, we have a very great solution for this, we use a certain program called Nanonets. And this really helps to, you don't simply have to fill in the content into the program, and it will automatically paste it in the correct format in the Word document, which is amazing. And you don't have to do any of that formatting yourself. And this really, really saves a lot of time. I've worked before this was implemented, we only implemented it last year. And it's really made a huge difference in the way that we work. But yeah, what Gerrard is talking about, about having to use a different data from different sources. That is absolutely something that we that we struggle with as well.

Josh: Yeah. Yeah, I think I can add on that. You know, I think we're working with so many different companies at the same time, we're working with the operators, with investors, with development funds, with statistic companies, research companies, all of these together. They're all using their own formats and their own ways of storing data. And I think in that regard, it's always going to be, you're always going to need that manual step of figuring out how to put that together and to really combine it so to say, and that I don't know if that will ever be changed, so I think there's only to a certain extent that you can automate. But of course you must be researching this so, let us know if you find some magical solution that we could apply as well. But I'm afraid some things will just stay like this forever.

Marco: Interesting to hear, can I ask the rest of you if you agree with Josh's points, what he said here do you think is, it's going to be that some things will be impossible to automate? Tony, what do you think about this?

Tony: Now, I mean, if you look at the amount that is being the significant impact that artificial intelligence is making on, on all different types of industries, I think, of course, it's not going to happen in the next five years. Maybe ,you never know. But at some point, we will not have to manually input all the data, it will happen in a way that will be automated. And this, really, I think it is a little bit fixed way to think, that this will never happen. You know, back in the day, we thought, we could never have a phone fit inside of our pocket. But look at this, now we can have a watch, which can tell us anything we want to do, we can tell our heart rate, they can show us your messages. We can do anything, really. And it's only a matter of time before this, this gets implemented into this industry as well.

Gerrard: Yeah, I'd have to agree with this. As well, I think, of course, it's difficult, but at some point, we'll just look at the implementation of Excel as well, to give another example to what Tony gave here. Before they used Excel, they had to do all of this by hand, on a piece of paper. And within years, the matter of five years, everything shifted to computers. And everything just got way more efficient. And I really believe that this will happen with this type of data storage as well. And with the current trends in big data, I think at some point, it will be automated as well.

Marco: Alright, is there anyone who agrees with Gerrard in this?

Hellen: Yeah, I think I'm kind of in between, because on the one hand, I do understand that, because there are different formats everywhere. And some people send it in different languages even or with different currencies, or in a PDF format, or in the format of a picture, it will be really difficult to program something to take all of those parameters and automatically put it into something else into an excel sheet without mixing up any of the formatting or any of the statistical accuracy. You know, that's the reason why there are analysts in this job, because there are so many things to take into consideration. On the other hand, I do agree with with Tony's point that things have changed so much already. And there's no reason that that shouldn't change in the future as well. And I'm sure that some things will become much easier and much more automated. But maybe some things will be left to manual synthesis as well.

Marco: Thank you, thank you. Our conversation has naturally guided us in towards the realm of automation and seeing that as a solution to everything. Could I ask you, could you think of or has your company used anything else? Or have you thought of raising up any other solution to the amount of repetitive data synthesis that you have to do in your job? Could you think of any solutions? Anything that comes to mind?

Gerrard: Yeah, actually, our company what we've done is we've made a - we call it master data storage file, which is just one big PDF and it will explain you in every single way that you have to store data in our in our drive. And so this is great for the new starters of the company, who don't know exactly, you know, they're new to everything. So it's great that they can, they can use this to put things in the correct location, and the little steps go a long way into making it more streamlined and to really improve everything. And besides that, we use a lot of templates for things, which really speeds up the process as well, especially if you have to make a market analysis. It really helps to do that. And what it does, is it pulls the data from different Excel sheets into one Excel sheet. And based on that, it will create the charts that you need for it as well. And then lastly, one other thing that I can think of right now is, a lot of times when you're dealing with clients, or you're dealing with a project, you have to make these quick and dirty little analyses. So not nothing in depth, just a quick analysis of a certain market or city. And what we use for that is an Excel sheet, which already you simply have to provide the city or region, etc. And it will give you any relevant charts, the most recently available charts, also pulled out of other data sources.

Marco: Okay, thank you. Yvonne, how about you would what do they do at your work? Or do you have any other interesting solutions?

Yvonne: Um, well, we also have a file for standardizing how we name things and put it in in the files. But it's not that extensive, and it's hasn't been updated in quite some time. However, what we do to make things less boring is, what we do is we really give people certain jobs, so to say. So if you're working on one project, one valuation, it's not just going to be you performing everything. One person will do the text in the document, and the other one will have the context with the client. And the other one will do the valuation. And then the other one will make all the charts and do the market appendix. So in that way, we keep it separated and people can really specialize in what they're doing and get that better and faster and more efficient at that.

Marco: Okay, and so this is something that I have been researching in my paper as well. I'd like to follow up on what you just said, Yvonne, and ask you. So you're saying certain people are responsible of certain elements of the project that you're working on? Do you not get bored of repeating the same tasks and having little variety in what you're doing your work?

Yvonne: Well, yeah. On the one hand, yes, I do. Because it can get kind of repetitive, like you said. But on the other hand, you do get much faster at it, and you have to think less. And it takes less energy from you like that. So yeah, I think it's not that bad. Of course, it will be nice to have some variety as well. But this makes things go faster.

Marco: All right. Interesting. Interesting. Could anyone else give me some examples of some solutions that you think could be implemented or that you have implemented yourself?

Hellen: No, I agree with what has been said. It's either going to be automation or some other form of making it less tedious and a bit less boring enough, maybe a bit more exciting. You know, it's always good to come up with creative ways to make your work more fun. There's always going to be repetitive, annoying parts of your job. But in finding ways to deal with it, it's going to be a must in order to motivate yourself.

Marco: Do you have any examples of these creative ways as you make your work more exciting?

Hellen: Oh, no, I think it's really just depends on the situation, you know? Let me, let me think if I can think of an example. So when I need to make a design in some way, instead of instead of exactly copying the template, I like to try to see if I can make the template a little bit nicer. So that next time, when someone uses it, they're pleasantly surprised by how nice it is. Or try to, look outside of the repetitive way of doing things. And instead of just simply doing what is being told, try to be creative in your own way and add your own little twist to things. I think that's always a good idea.

Marco: So based on that, would you say that encouraging your employees from a manager's perspective, to take autonomy and to add their own creative twist on things? Do you think that's a good way to motivate them to repeat these repetitive tasks?

Hellen: Yeah, of course, besides that, I think that it's necessary. In any case, it's always a good thing to give your employees autonomy to improve motivation. But especially when it comes to these tasks, it's great to allow them to give their own spin on it, otherwise they'll start feeling more and more like a machine, like a robot. And eventually, their job satisfaction will just significantly decrease from it. Now I'd just like to add as well, that I think it's a combination of things. And I think for the employee, it's also good to know that there are active measures being taken from management, to see if these tasks can get less repetitive and to see if these tasks that have a negative impact on the job satisfaction can either be made more fun, less repetitive, or automated. I think it's a combination of things which will ultimately improve it and not simply just one thing, because one thing can't tackle everything at the same time.

Marco: Perfect, thank you. I think we've covered everything I wanted to cover here. Would anyone like to add anything still at the end? Any recommendations? Now's your time, otherwise, I will end off the interview.

Tony: Yeah, no, I think. I think it's really a great initiative. Because it's we see here at CBRE as well, that people just leave the company quite quickly. And the main reason for that is that they don't enjoy their work as much. They don't feel like they can join on the front side of the real estate industry as much and they feel like they're too much working in the back office, which takes time and energy. So I think it's truly a great, great initiative. And I'm very curious to hear to read what you've gotten out of it.

Hellen: Yeah, same here. Very interesting. Thank you.

Marco: Thank you guys. Well, that was all thanks a lot. Please feel free to send me an email if you have any questions or a message. I'm always happy to talk a little bit more

about what I'm doing, and I'll be sure to send all of you an email with the results and the solutions and everything. So thanks a lot, everyone for joining. I hope I didn't take too much out of your busy work schedule today!

10.9 Dissemination: Proof of presentation for C&W team
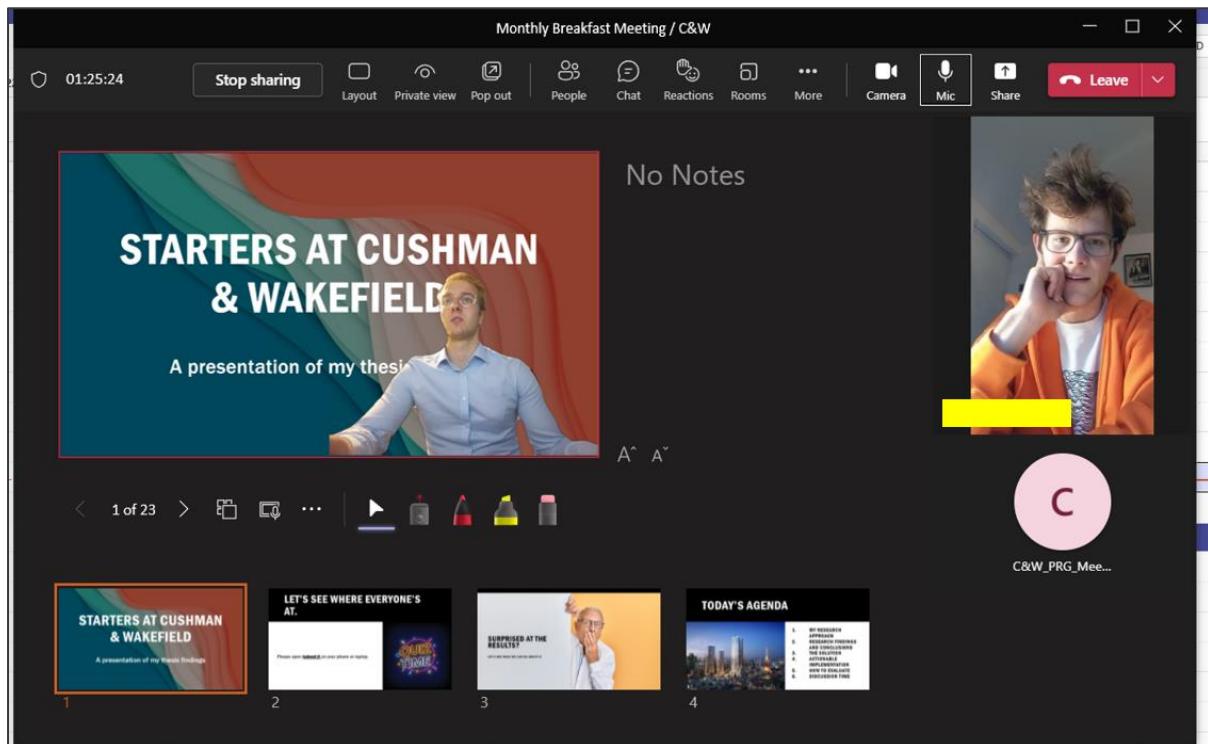
Presentation was given after the normal monthly breakfast meeting. The C&W team was gathered in a meeting room, which is the member called: **C&W_PRG_Mee...**.

The name of the other online participant has been removed for ethical reasons (see ethical considerations).

10.10 Dissemination: Post on Medium

M Marco Griep
Nov 17 · 3 min read · ▶ Listen

The power of automation

In a recent survey performed by a global automation entreprise, it was uncovered that **over 66%** of global office workers feel crushed by repetitive tasks at their workplace.

Similarly, in a study performed by Mckinsey, it was found that the top reason for employees leaving their jobs is a **lack of career development and progression.** Closely after this came job compensation, uninspiring leaders, and lack of meaningful work.

At the same time, the market for, AI, RPA, and other automation tools are growing exponentially by the year. The AI market is forecasted to grow with a CAGR of **38.1%** from the years of 2022 to 2030:
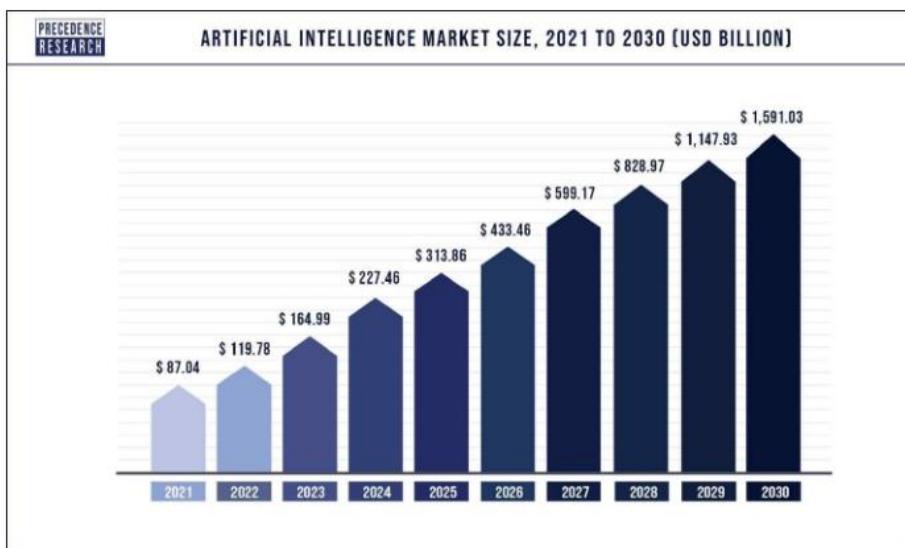
Source: Precedence Research, 2022

Damn.

Think about that for a second, a **thirty-eight percent** compound annual growth rate. If I would have 10 dollars at a CAGR of 38% over 8 years, I would be left with 130 dollars at the end. That's **thirteen times higher.**

With all that in mind, consider the fact that countless multinationals in all types of industries are still hesitant to implementing automation as a part of their corporate business strategy.

Pfff.... Sigh.

As a near-graduate of one of the leading business schools in the Netherlands, and an ex-employee at one of the largest commercial real-estate firms of the world, I have written my dissertation on the effect of repetitive and tedious tasks on the job satisfaction of young workers (young in age, and in tenure). Needless to say, the results demonstrated a significant relation between the two.

Picture this: a 20-something-year-old goes through numerous selection rounds to join a renowned global consultancy company, in the hope of using their bright technical and analytical skills to make an impact. Instead, they get thrown in front of Excel, copying data from countless different sources into an empty sheet to hand in their report after a 60+-hour workweek, knowing that everything they just did could've been done by a computer.

And seniors wonder why their new talent is leaving their company with frowns on their faces after six months.

Using automation is not only a way to make your employees happier, it is a **necessity to keep up with the competition.**

Because besides getting rid of monotony among your labour force, automation can save countless man-hours which can be spent on something more productive. Implementing it into your company has never been this cheap and easy as it is today. And guess what: your competition is probably already busy implementing it.

So to the executives confused about why your college graduates are leaving for the company across the street, I say this:

Invest into the future workforce of your company, introduce automation to your business before the competition outruns you.

I am interested what others have to say, I encourage everyone to share your opinions with me!

10.11 Grading rubric and feedback of LYCar Proposal

LYCar Proposal Grading Rubric
v.1.1 (Version LYCar 2020; 16 February, 2021)

Student Name:	Marco Griep	**LYCar Coach:**	Mr. Govender
Student Number:	781520	**Primary PLO:**	3
Date Submitted:	14-10-2022	**Secondary PLO(s):**	6 & 9

Note: All boxes with red border to be filled by student

Preconditions (required for assessment)	Yes	No	Comments
Checks content and completeness			
Executive Summary is present, concise, can be read independently, contains information about process and content, focuses on results and outcomes	✔	☐	
LYCar Proposal meets formal reporting criteria (according to e.g., LYCar Reading & Writing Guide)			
LYCar Proposal is written in English and is professional, including common basic components such as Intro, ToC, Conclusion etc.- see Reading & Writing Guide	✔	☐	
LYCar Proposal is max. **5.000 words** (counting after Table of Content, incl. text in tables) **-** visual proof of wordcount is included in Appendices.	✔	☐	
Harvard Referencing Style is used consistently, referencing to primary sources only, List of References is well presented	✔	☐	
Check (technical) formalities and submissions			
Ephorus upload	✔	☐	
LYCar Proposal incl. Appendices are uploaded in Osiris	✔	☐	
Ethics and data management			
Ethical, integrity and data management requirements	✔	☐	
Entitled to assessment? (All yes above required):	✔		

CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD

DD1: The student has demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that is supported by advanced textbooks

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
1.1 Use of literature and knowledge of the field	Student uses in-depth literature and knowledge of the field throughout the report. The report contains no mistakes and factual incorrectness.	Student uses in most cases literature and knowledge of the field in the report. The report contains some mistakes and factual incorrectness in a limited part of the report.	No sufficient or correct use of literature and knowledge of the field in the report. The report contains mistakes and factual incorrectness.
1.2 Intellectual depth and abstract thinking	Student takes all significant factors into account and looks from different perspectives, sees patterns, relates situations to concepts in order to solve larger problems. The reports show excellent thinking capacity of the student. New unique insights presented in the topic and depth of understanding displayed. Excellent linking between the elements and the underlying issues within the case situation.	Student takes different perspectives into account. The report shows intellectual depth (taking into account all significant factors and looking from different perspectives) in most parts of the report. Some patterns are clear. Some links have been made.	The report lacks intellectual depth (superficial and merely descriptive) in some parts of the report. Patterns are not sufficiently made clear.

Student Feedback: Pass ✔ / Not Yet ☐

I made sure to prevent any large assumptions everywhere by underpinning my findings with valid sources. My literature review is varied yet precise, and I make sure to cover all necessary aspects to create a solid foundation for the research that will be conducted. All sections of the proposal are linked well and explicitly referenced.

Assessor Feedback: Pass ✔ / Not Yet ☐

Clear understanding of key concepts and the relationships between concepts which was displayed through discussion of relevant literature. Discussion was narrow at times and literatute could emphasize academic sources to a greater extent (largely industry blogs used). RPA was not defined.

DD2: The student can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and has competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining feedback and solving problems within their field of study

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
2.1 Application of theories/models to situations at hand	Student uses a range of theories/models appropriate to the problems in the case skilfully and able to add their own unique perspective and insight. They own the model(s).	Student mentions a range of theories/models appropriate to the problems in the case and applying some of them in the correct way.	Mentioning models and theories but not using them in a correct way.
2.2 Possible impact and meaning of own work - dissemination of research	Student plans evaluation of impact and meaning of own work in relation to business and industry with sound underpinning. Identification of all stakeholders and acts of dissemination. Plan on how to effectively disseminate knowledge through different channels fitted for a variety of audiences is also presented.	Student formulates criteria for evaluation. Student describes possible impact and meaning of own work. Identification of stakeholders and planning of dissemination through at least one valuable channel with an audience is presented.	Student fails to describe criteria how to evaluate impact. No identification of stakeholders or realistic plan on dissemination of knowledge through at least one valuable channel with an audience.

Student Feedback: Pass ✔ / Not Yet ☐

There are numerous models in the report which all have an impact on the creation of the methodology and sub-research questions (and inevitably, the solution design). Dissemination is stipulated and explained (to the extent in which this is currently possible).

Assessor Feedback: Pass ✔ / Not Yet ☐

DDI theory used as theoretical framework and a conceptual framework was developed based on concepts covered in the literature review. Two forms of dissemination who identified for specific stakeholders.

DD3: the student has the ability to devise data gathering events, gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
3.1 The Design Based Research Process	Student sets the research process up in a systematic and well organised way. Student makes sense of a problem mess, analyses a (complex) problem and formulates feasible solutions by using a design-based research approach. Logical flow from Problem definition to Analysis to Solutions Design/methods are well chosen and motivated,	Student analyses the problem, and formulates possible solutions underpinned by literature using a design-based research approach. Methods motivated and mostly logically chosen	Insufficient problem analysis and methodology, research cycle not used.
3.2 Analysis and evaluation of data	Student plans analysis and evaluation of data/information well using appropriate (digital) tools and makes data-driven decisions. All statements are underpinned with facts and figures and/or referencing. The appropriate tools are used in all steps. Analysis is sufficiently complex with use of information from more than 2 different dimensions (practioners, scientific literature, the organization and stakeholders).	Student plans analysis and evaluation of solutions clearly, with some flaws or unclarities. Some statements are underpinned with facts and figures and/or referencing, some lacking underpinning. Analysis is sufficiently complex using data from at least one dimension and sufficiently backed up with literature.	Plan of analysis and evaluation of solutions is not clear. Statements are mostly not underpinned with facts and figures and/or referencing; some are contradicting. No tools are used. Lacking or no analysis and not backed up with literature.

Student Feedback:	Pass ✔ Not Yet ☐	I clearly follow the first three steps of the DBR cycle. Chapters are organised well and logicly, to make it a readable and understandable story. Data analysis is cleary described.
Assessor Feedback:	Pass ✔ Not Yet ☐	Clear research methodology with good rationale for selecting specific research methods. Could have placed RPA under the Solution Design aspect. Different sources of evidence were used. Although it is clear from your writing that there is an idea of what implementation and evaluation will look like, a plan for implemenation and evaluation as seperate sub-headings in the document is missing.

DD4: the student can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
4.1 Communication to audience making use of professional (business) English	Student divides information effectively in paragraphs/chapters. No noticeable errors in English usage and mechanics. Use of language enhances the argument and avoids abbreviations. Sentence structures are well varied, and voice and tone are highly suitable for the specific audience/s. Style and content complement each other into an appealing, high quality story. Highly skilful organisational strategy. The logical sequence of ideas increases the effectiveness of the argument and transitions between paragraphs strengthen the relationship between ideas. Sub-headings are employed effectively and the links between different sections are reinforced through linking expressions. Shows attention to detail in all parts of the report.	Student divides information in paragraphs/chapters. Errors in English usage and mechanics are present, but they rarely impede understanding. Use of language supports the argument. Sentence structures are varied, and voice and tone are generally appropriate for the intended audience/s. Generally, a clear organisational strategy. The sequence of ideas in most cases supports the argument and transitions between paragraphs clarify the relationship between ideas. The report is mainly comprehensively written and lacks some attention to detail in some parts of the report.	Distracting errors in English usage are present and they impede understanding. Use of language is basic, only somewhat clear and does not support the argument. Word choice is general and imprecise. Voice and tone are not always appropriate for the intended audience/s. Basic organisational strategy, with most ideas logically grouped. Transitions between paragraphs sometimes clarify the relationship among ideas. The report is not comprehensively written and lacks attention to detail in most parts of the report.

Student Feedback:	Pass ✔ Not Yet ☐	My english is professional. I make sure to use the third-person view when necessary. My use of grammar and vocabulary is proper. The structure of the report makes for a readable story, guiding and flowing into each new chapter.
Assessor Feedback:	Pass ✔ Not Yet ☐	Professional academic writing.

DD5: the student has developed those learning skills necessary to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy

	Excellent	Pass	No Go
5.1 Plan on IQ development in PLO: Reflection on product(s)	Student has clear plans on what will be delivered and uses different relevant theory to underpin own work and reflect on it.	Student has a plan on what will be delivered and uses theory to underpin planned own work and reflect on it.	No clear deliverables mentioned and almost no theory to underpin own work and reflection.
5.2 Plan on AQ & EQ Self development	Student devises excellent ability to critically reflect on own developmental goals and demonstrates real growth mindset for life-long learning. Student proposes a demonstration of being able to self-direct, taking initiative in unpredictable situations. Student shows different metrics that can demonstrate development in terms of their EQ/AQ.	Student shows developmental goals and demonstrates growth mindset. There is a plan on how to reflect on values, attitudes and behaviour. Starting levels and desired end levels are described and measurements are provided.	Developmental goals are not concrete, there is no demonstration of growth mindset. Plan on how to reflect is vague and does not give enough substantiation to show growth.
5.3 Plan on EQ Social development	Student provides a plan on how to construct a multitude of proof that shows development as an Intercultural Hospitality Leader. Excellent ability to contribute to the global society/local community as a responsible citizen. Excellent analysis of diversity of people the student will deal with. Possible effective collaboration with all stakeholders in different cultural settings. Hospitality is key to the project or work the student does.	Student provides a plan on how to prove development as an Intercultural Hospitality Leader. Plan on how to contribute to the global society/local community as a responsible citizen. Proposing ideas on how to collaborate with different stakeholders in different cultural settings. Hospitality is a differentiator in the students' project or work.	No clear plan on development as an Intercultural Hospitality Leader. Plan on how to contribute to global society/local community is missing. Ideas proposed on collaboration or hospitality are not sufficient.

Student Feedback:	Pass ✔	Of course, as I have done my internship already, this part is slightly difficult to assess: I have done my best to use my CLP and extract my goals that I had back in that time into this report.
	Not Yet ☐	

Assessor Feedback:	Excellent ☐	Career portfolio requires more detail and plan for development. Development goals should link directly to scores on AQ EQ scores.
	Pass ☐	
	Not Yet ☐	

Overall Assessor Feedback

Clear problem definition, literature review and research methodology. Please add in a basic plan for implementation and evaluation.

LYCar Proposal Outcome

Pass	✔	All qualitative criteria awarded a "Pass". "P" registered in Osiris. Student can continue with LYCar execution.
No Go	☐	One or more qualitative criteria graded as "Not Yet". "F" registered in Osiris. Student re-writes LYCar Proposal with incorporated feedback.
Pre-Condition NY	☐	Pre-conditions not met. Student resubmits LYCar Proposal. No grade or feedback provided to the student.

10.12 Client evaluation forms

HOTELSCHOOL THE HAGUE
Hospitality Business School

Evaluation Form Company Research

Name of student:	Marco Griep	Student number:	781520
Name of company/organization:	Cushman & Wakefield	Department:	Operator Selection
Name of company tutor/research commissioner:	Felix Nees	Position of company tutor/commissioner (if applicable):	Senior Hospitality Consultant
Project and/or Deliverable: (please specify)	Research into the low levels of job satisfaction among starters at the hospitality team of Cushman & Wakefield in Prague.		

During the first (unofficial) evaluation the set-up for the project and end deliverable(s) is discussed. For this final evaluation the project has been delivered by the student and is thus evaluated. This is taken into consideration for the final assessment of the student.

Page **1** of **3**

CATEGORY 1: EXPERTISE/KNOWLEDGE OF THE FIELD				
Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
9/10	In-depth use of relevant literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable shows excellent thinking capacity of the student (considering all significant factors and looking from all different perspectives).	Use of relevant literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable shows mostly intellectual depth (considering significant factors and looking from different perspectives).	No or incorrect use of literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable lacks intellectual depth.	You can tell from the report that Marco put in a substantial amount of work and time into it. Everything is well underpinned with literature, almost no assumptions are made in the report.

CATEGORY 2: KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION/SOLVING PROBLEMS				
Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
7.5/10	The theories and models are skillfully applied, and the student can translate this in a unique solution and implementation. The student can relate situations to concepts that results into a solution that adds great value to the company's overall strategy. The creative solution is/can be implemented and evaluated and is solving the problem.	The student uses theory, models, and shows understanding of the issues at hand. The solution is realistic and implementable for the company. The solution is/can be implemented and evaluated.	Mentioning theory and models, but not using them in the correct way. The student cannot convince of the possibilities to implement and evaluate. It is not solving the problem.	Marco makes great use of theories and models, to combine it with what he found during his interviews. I very much like the first part of the solution, I think it will mean a lot to the company. The second part is good, but can be a bit vague at times.

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CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD

CATEGORY 3: INFORMED JUDGEMENTS				
Rating	**Excellent**	**Good**	**Room for improvement**	**Comments**
9/10	The research process is done and explained in an excellent way. All statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the students and/or referencing. The analysis is very substantial.	The research process is done and explained well. Most statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the student and/or referencing. The analysis is substantial.	Weak problem analysis, research question not clear enough. Data collection and/or methodology is insufficient. Weak analysis, use of data from one dimension and not backed up.	Great work on this, despite the complex theories and models, it is easy to read for the reader and everything is well underpinned.

CATEGORY 4: COMMUNICATION AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE				
Rating	**Excellent**	**Good**	**Room for improvement**	**Comments**
8/10	Excellent ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to all stakeholders involved. The deliverable adds great value to the main stakeholders. Initial and creative channels have been actively used to share outputs and knowledge.	Good ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to stakeholders. The deliverable adds value to the company. Existing channels have been used to share knowledge	The deliverable could have been better delivered to the stakeholders. The deliverable could have added more value, if better delivered. No active communication of outputs and knowledge.	I thoroughly enjoyed the use of the focus group as a source in your report. The dissemination acts were excellent. I would've liked to see the use of management of CW as a source in the report.

CATEGORY 5: INTERCULTURAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP				
Rating	**Excellent**	**Good**	**Room for improvement**	**Comments**
9/10	Student can lead the project by themselves. Student is self-critical towards improvement and takes feedback to heart. Student deals with a diversity of stakeholders in an intercultural competent way. Hospitality mindset is seen in project or work in a very distinct way.	Student can lead the project with little help. Student is critical towards improvement and listens to feedback. Student deals with different stakeholders. Hospitality mindset can be seen.	Tasks performed are described and not critically analyzed. Student is not too critical towards own learning and can listen better to feedback. Student does not know how to deal with differences in stakeholders. Hospitality can be improved.	Marco makes sure to display his hospitality skills in the writing of the report.

OVERALL COMMENTS:
Well done, your hard work has paid off in a well-written and useful report.

STUDENTS' COMMENTS:	
Comments on evaluation:	I appreciate the feedback and am delighted to hear the positive reaction. I also fully understand the feedback on the second part of the solution, this could've been underpinned more.

DATE & STUDENT'S SIGNATURE:	COMPANY SUPERVISOR'S/RESEARCH COMMISSIONER'S SIGNATURE:
18/11/2022	18/11/2022

THE COMPLETED FORMS (ON ALL DELIVERABLES AND PERFORMANCE) NEED TO BE EMAILED TO THE LYCAR COACH AND PUT IN THE APPENDICES OF THE CAREER PORTFOLIO.

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