



THE JOURNEY TO MARKETING AND SALES EXCELLENCE

HOW BUILDING THE CAPABILITIES OF DSM'S MARKETING AND SALES TEAMS CREATES SUCCESSFUL GROWTH

CONTENTS

Executive summary	2
The organisations involved in this project	3
The challenge	4
Building a partnership	6
How the learning journey evolved	7
Results	11
Looking to the future	15
Word count	15

Executive summary

In 2010, Royal DSM completed a divestment programme and announced a new strategy to focus on their established businesses in life sciences and material sciences. They set ambitious growth targets and started to shift from a technology push to a marketing pull approach. To achieve these goals, they had to build world-class marketing and sales capabilities.

The company partnered with Vlerick Business School to create and launch a bespoke, sustainable learning journey for its marketing and sales teams. Together they introduced a series of learning and development initiatives designed to change the attitude and skillset of the marketing and sales teams at DSM around the globe.

The result is a new way of working that prioritises continual professional development, accelerates career progression – and that critically, has helped DSM achieve its aggressive targets.

The partnership has succeeded in taking DSM's marketing and sales capability to the next level. It has built an accreditation programme that keeps the best in sales and marketing talent within the organisation. And it has transformed the way DSM markets and sells its products and services.

The development programme has been so successful, it is now expanding to include other areas of the organisation.



The organisations involved in this project



ROYAL DSM

Royal DSM is a global life sciences and material sciences organisation active in health, nutrition and materials. It develops innovative products and services that range from food and dietary supplements, medical devices and electronics through to life protection, alternative energy and bio-based materials. With around 25,000 employees in 50 countries, DSM has annual net sales of approximately €10bn and is listed on Euronext Amsterdam.



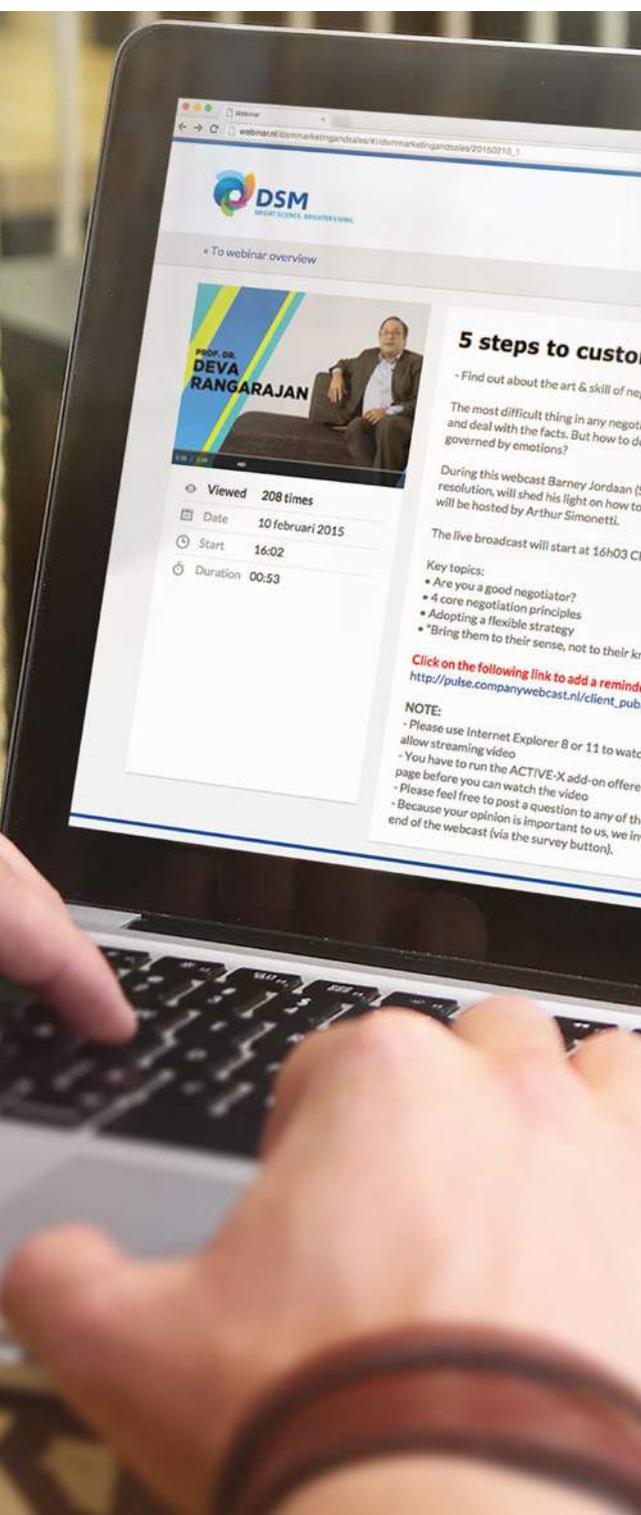
VLERICK BUSINESS SCHOOL

Vlerick is a triple-accredited, international business school that's consistently ranked among the best in Europe. It's a place where people and organisations come together to challenge themselves and the world around us. Vlerick's reputation is built on the design and delivery of innovative learning journeys that create business impact.

The challenge

Royal DSM started its 115-year history as a government-owned coal mining company. But it's reinvented itself many times – from privatisation in 1989 to becoming a global player in chemicals.

Its latest evolution began in 2007 with the arrival of Feike Sijbesma as CEO. He spearheaded a transformation that would reposition DSM as a life sciences and material sciences company. To pave the way from bulk chemical supplier to innovative science organisation, the company had to rethink its approach to customers. It launched a new strategy: **DSM in motion: Driving focused growth.**



CHANGING DIRECTION

This strategy was designed to turn a volume-oriented organisation into one centred on customers. With its new focus on life sciences and material sciences, it set ambitious profitability and organic sales growth targets. To make the transition, DSM knew they would need world-class marketing and sales capability.

Traditionally, the company's marketing and sales teams had performed a largely transactional role – focusing on communication and selling technical innovations at high volumes. But the strategic shift meant their role would have to become customer relationship-driven. Marketing and sales teams would now have to capture customer needs and place them at the heart of the business.

The challenge for the marketing and sales department was clear – it needed to upskill its people and broaden its view on the marketing profession.

ESTABLISHING A BENCHMARK

In 2010, a detailed benchmark assessment by McKinsey highlighted a number of areas where marketing and sales could improve. One of the most important priorities was enhancing capability and professional development. This formed the basis of a long-term improvement programme, headed by DSM's Marketing & Sales excellence centre.

To close initial gaps, DSM introduced a series of training initiatives through a variety of providers – including face-to-face sessions, e-learning and coaching.

By the end of 2013, around 1,000 marketing and sales professionals had gone through some form of training. Although the knowledge of individual trainees improved, DSM realised this was not enough to increase the skill level of the entire marketing and sales department.

FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER

Even though a reassessment by McKinsey in 2014 showed progress, it also highlighted new challenges that demanded a fresh approach:

- DSM needed to build a culture of creative, ongoing learning and professional development
- Senior marketing professionals needed to understand and adopt the latest trends and developments in their field
- The organisation needed a vehicle to accelerate the career progression of sales and marketing professionals

DSM wanted to instil a culture of creative, ongoing learning – and needed a partner who could develop a comprehensive, long-term learning journey. They wanted to ensure that DSM vocabulary and best practices were part of the design and that it was relevant to participants' working environments. The journey also had to share best and latest practices from the industry.



I embrace every opportunity for learning and development – and the Vlerick DSM B2B Marketing & Sales Programme delivered 110%. I've been out of the academic environment for quite some time, so it was refreshing to focus on marketing and sales best practice in such a collaborative and informative space. The focus on B2B was critical – the insights we gained into our audiences, influencers and decision-makers helped to develop customer journeys and digital roadmaps. Understanding DSM's value chain has already led to improved recommendations for promotional and channel selection. And the opportunity to connect with colleagues in other business groups has exposed new ways of working together to help the wider organisation. I was delighted to contribute new ideas, and likewise, come away with many more.



Tara Armstrong
Senior Digital
Marketing Manager
DSM



Building a partnership

Arthur Simonetti – DSM’s Global Marketing Director responsible for the development of 2,200 marketing and sales professionals – turned to Vlerick. The business school’s global reputation, proven strengths in B2B marketing and vast experience with industrial companies made it an ideal choice. And because both organisations share values of pragmatism, action and speedy implementation, it was a great cultural fit too.

DSM wanted more than a training programme. They needed a flexible approach – and Vlerick has a global reputation for bespoke corporate programmes. Another reason for the partnership was that Marion Debruyne, now Dean of Vlerick, had recently published a highly regarded blueprint for success – **Customer Innovation: Customer-centric strategy for enduring growth**. DSM wanted to benefit from her insights and expertise.



Our collaboration with Vlerick is an example of a true B2B partnership built around mutual respect. Vlerick practise what they preach. It was great to experience the synergy between the latest scientific insights, provided by Vlerick, and the pragmatism of the daily use and application of these insights. I am proud that we created a frontrunner capability development programme that will attract and develop Marketing & Sales talent.



Arthur Simonetti
Global Marketing Director,
DSM

Both DSM and Vlerick were keen to develop a collaborative, equal partnership right from the start – to draw on the expertise and experience of both organisations. This resulted in an intense, trusted and constructive way of working which gave the co-development an extra dimension. DSM’s CMO endorsed the entire initiative – and a project team of four Vlerick faculty and four senior DSM marketers worked closely to develop a programme.

IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The 2014 McKinsey benchmark report identified priority areas for improvement and senior DSM managers highlighted further gaps. Because DSM had repositioned entirely, the role of the marketing and sales teams had shifted. Where they’d previously focused on market communication, they now had to engage with customers and capture their needs. The learning and development initiative needed to move the marketing and sales teams from a transactional to relationship-driven approach.

MAPPING OUT THE JOURNEY

Marketing and sales are dynamic disciplines – and organisations need to adapt quickly to stay ahead of the game.

So rather than set out and implement a rigid five-year plan, Vlerick and DSM took a more agile, organic approach. They started small, tested, got buy-in, built momentum and expanded the programme incrementally. This gave the project team the opportunity to test and tweak materials, gather feedback and build trust. They also benefited from short lines of reporting which meant they could quickly reassess and refine.

The programme structure has become more formalised as it has proven its value – and the scale, budget and scope have all increased.

How the learning journey evolved

STAGE I INSPIRING AND GENERATING CURIOSITY

The first target group were senior marketing professionals that weren't eager to attend formal training. The challenge was to get this group up to speed with the latest developments and make them aware of the new trends in the marketing and sales profession. To get people interested and on board from the start, the project team developed a series of webinars that covered the latest B2B marketing trends – such as strategic marketing planning, value pricing and customer experience management – and produced an optional one-day master class.

The initial objectives were to give marketing and sales teams the latest insights from their fields – and to start building a shared vocabulary and understanding. But the webinars also served as a launchpad for a more formal learning platform.

The webinars highlighted best practice and new trends from across the industry and presented them in a concise and compelling format. This inspired experienced marketing and sales people and made them curious to get involved and find out more. People began to see the effectiveness of the learning materials and the need – and appetite – for further learning initiatives became clear.

STAGE II BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE HUB

The team's next step was to develop an online learning portal that would store DSM's marketing and sales best practices – complemented with the latest relevant insights from the field and peers and academics recommended by Vlerick. This portal would go on to become the cornerstone of the entire learning journey.

Vlerick and DSM drew on insights from both the McKinsey report and senior DSM managers to compile a suite of training modules. There was a rigorous process – Vlerick faculty headed by professor Steve Muylle and senior DSM marketers headed by Jeroen te Koppel worked closely to put together a comprehensive overview of the main subject areas – and collected the latest insights, models and theories on each. To make each module as relevant and practical as possible, they incorporated real examples from both DSM and peers within the industry. And before a module was added to the portal, it had to be approved by a review team led by the CMO.

The modules – along with webinars, articles and videos – form a valuable library of resources that any member of the marketing and sales teams can access at any time.



The portal stores all of DSM's training materials in three suites:

REFRESH

For employees who have limited sales or marketing experience – or who have experience but are new to DSM. It covers marketing fundamentals like customer understanding, market research and product management – and sales topics including pricing strategy, customer management and sales management.

ENRICH

Where more experienced employees can explore the latest theories, ideas and practices in B2B marketing and sales. Modules include Digital Marketing and Sales and Customer Centricity.

EXCEL

Designed to turn senior leaders into state-of-the-art sales and marketing professionals. Excel offers advanced courses and webinars such as “How to turn Societal Value into Business Value”.

THE LEARNING PORTAL EXPLAINED



SHOWCASING SUCCESS

In 2015 Vlerick and DSM co-created a case study on the rebranding of DSM. It was published by Ivey Publishing and is now used by other business schools as an example of how a major rebranding reinforces the corporate strategy development process.

MAINTAINING A GROWING RESOURCE

By the end of 2015, the portal had become a fully customised point of reference for DSM sales and marketing teams. It now includes more than 300 individual learning assets across themed areas of interest, and is updated regularly.

Sales and marketing professionals can access the portal 24 hours a day to stay up-to-date with their professional development. Because the portal is bespoke, DSM teams have a shared understanding of the company's terminology and processes. They all speak the same language, use the same frameworks – and work towards the same objectives.

A bi-weekly newsletter – *Excellence in M&S Update* – encourages people to visit the portal, discover what's new and get inspired.

STAGE III

DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS

DSM wanted to cultivate a sustainable culture of learning and development in marketing and sales to help individuals excel in their roles – and the portal went a long way to achieving this. But the company also wanted to introduce a form of assessment to make the promotions process more objective – and to produce future leaders who have a robust understanding of the latest marketing and sales developments.

So once the learning portal was up and running, Vlerick and DSM started the next phase of the learning journey – an internal assessment and accreditation programme initially called *License to Fly* and later launched as *M&SP1* and *M&SP2*.

Whereas the learning portal is a knowledge hub open to all DSM sales people and marketers, the M&SP programmes are invitation only. Leadership teams nominate individuals who are eligible for promotion. They then prepare for an online test – and if they pass it, they join a three-day customised programme on a Vlerick campus.

TURNING KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION

The face-to-face programme is an intensive, hands-on learning experience. Because participants have already passed a knowledge test, Vlerick adopts a flipped learning approach – devoting classroom time to applying theory to real business situations.

Before the programme starts, all participants submit their goals and a description of a project they want to work on. The next step is an intake interview. These interviews help faculty to understand a participant’s business context. They also give faculty key input so they can further customise future editions of the programme.

During the programme, participants explore topics within the context of their role and everyone has the opportunity to get feedback and recommendations on their own business case and discuss business implications.

There are two complementary learning paths, depending on an individual’s career level:

- **M&S Professional One (M&SP1):**

For professionals with 5 to 10 years’ experience (levels C40/C41 to C42/C43) who are looking to move from a “Fundamental” to “Advanced” job profile.

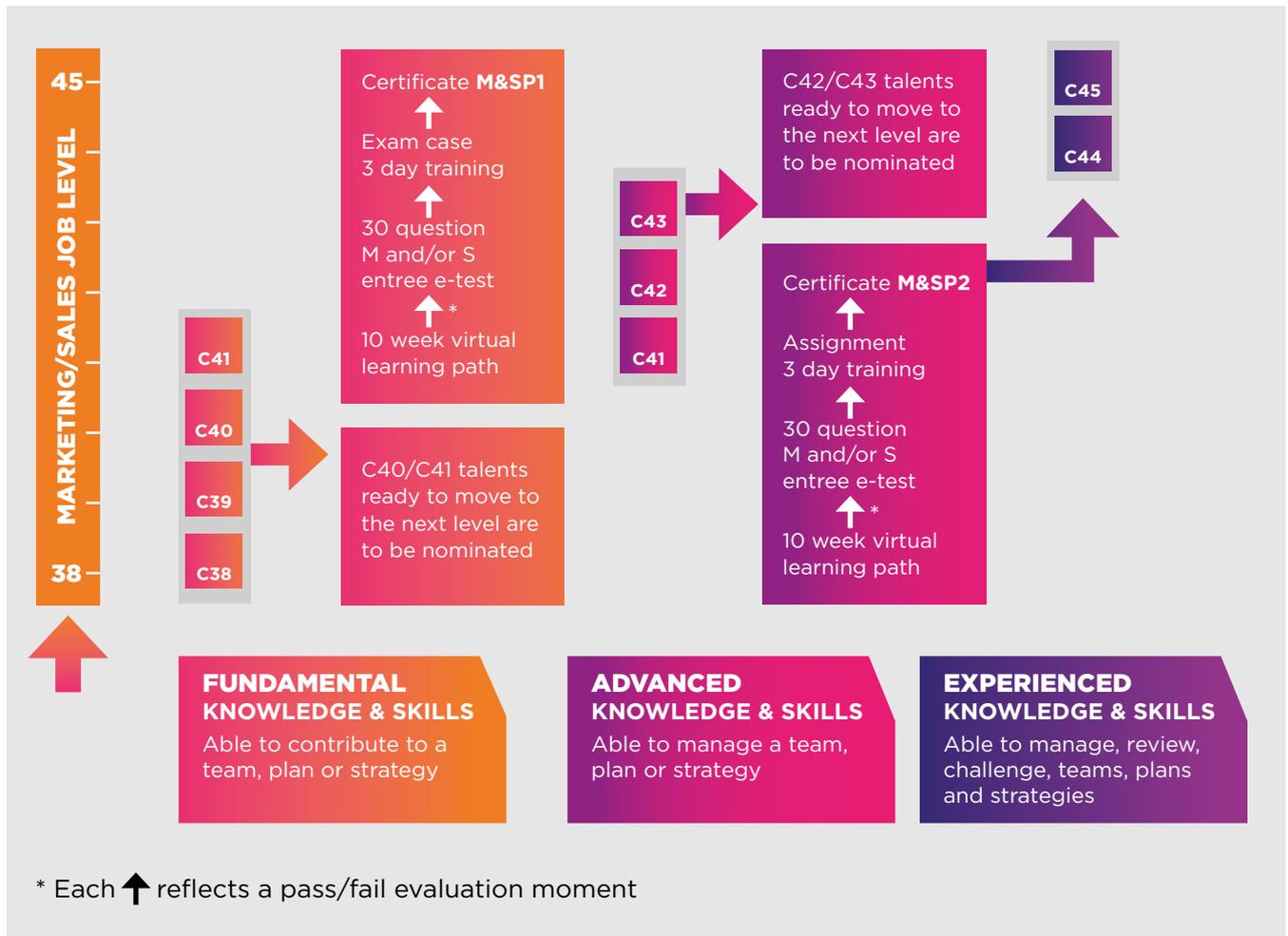
- **M&S Professional 2 (M&SP2):**

For professionals with 15 to 20 years’ experience (levels C43 to C44/C45) who are looking to move from an “Advanced” to “Experienced” job profile.

	M&SP1	M&SP2
Step 1: Nomination	Nominated for the programme by the business group	Nominated for the programme by the business group
Step 2: Intake calls	Discuss ambitions and personal project	Discuss ambitions and personal project
Step 3: Self-study	Follow a 10-week learning path through the Refresh and Enrich levels of the portal	Follow a 10-week learning path through the Enrich and Excel levels of the portal
Step 4: Knowledge test	Pass an e-test with a minimum score of 60% to progress	Pass an e-test with a minimum score of 60% to progress
Step 5: 3-day programme	Take part in a 3-day face-to-face programme at Vlerick then pass a case study exam	Take part in a 3-day face-to-face programme at Vlerick then present a vision statement of the future of marketing and sales at DSM
Step 6: Certification	Receive accreditation	Receive accreditation

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER CERTIFICATION?

When M&SP1 and M&SP2 participants pass their exams and get accredited, they're in a strong position to be promoted when more senior roles open up. DSM aims to make the accreditation a mandatory part of the promotion process in the future.



Results

The impact of this programme has been remarkable. The learning portal, face-to-face programmes and certification have transformed the marketing and sales teams at DSM.

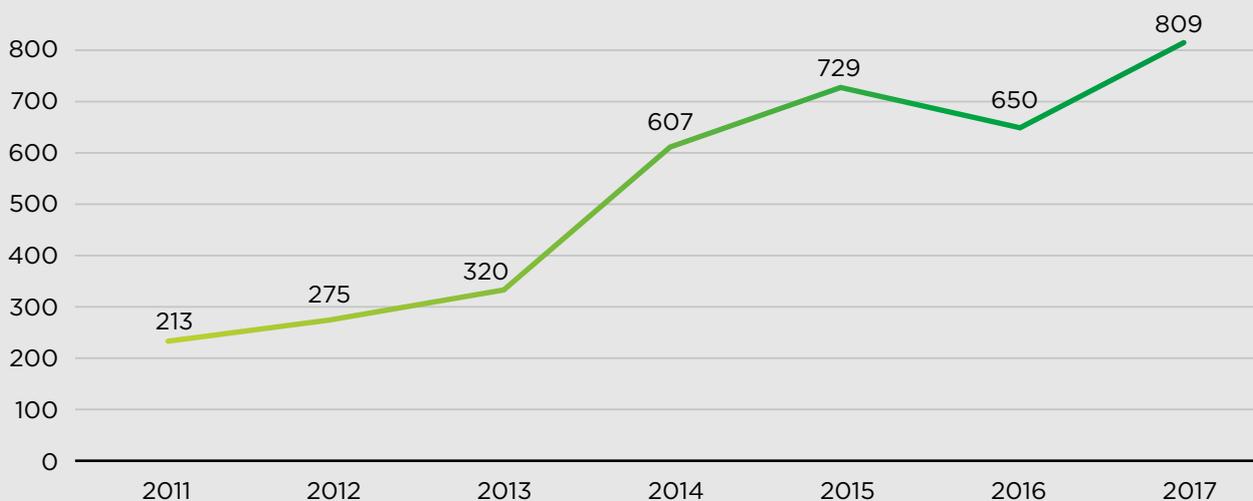
The company has measured the impact of its learning and development initiative in a number of ways:

- Impact on the organisation – brand value and Net Promoter Score (NPS)¹
- Impact on marketing and sales professionals – including their development and career progression
- Feedback from M&SP1 and M&SP2 participants

BRAND VALUE HAS INCREASED BY A HUGE 153%

DSM's brand value increased by 153% in four years – from €320m in 2013 to €809m in 2017².

DSM BRAND VALUE X € MILLION (as measured by the Brand Finance brand valuation methodology)



THE RELATIONSHIP NPS³ OF THE COMPANY HAS INCREASED BY 10 IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS⁴

YEAR	NPS
2013	29
2015	36
2016	38
2017	39

¹ Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a management tool that can be used to gauge the loyalty of an organisation's customer relationships. It serves as an alternative to traditional customer satisfaction research and claims to be correlated with revenue growth. More info: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Net_Promoter

² As valued by Brand Finance – for information on the methodology please visit brandirectory.com/methodology.

³ Relationship NPS is designed to assess a business's relationship with its customers. Most businesses send relationship NPS surveys at standard intervals, such as once every quarter, once every six months or once annually. Because relationship NPS surveys are sent on a scheduled basis and aren't tied to any specific event, they're ideal for generating feedback on the strength of your working relationships with clients and customers.

⁴ Sources: Company documents

M&SP1 AND M&SP2 ARE VEHICLES FOR CAREER PROGRESSION

	M&SP1	M&SP2
Number of people certified in 2016 and 2017	49	49
Number of certified people promoted within two years	16 (33%)	8 (16%)

People who receive M&SP1 or M&SP2 certification are more than three times as likely to get promoted than people who haven't participated in either programme.

	PROMOTION RATE FOR NON-CERTIFIED PEOPLE	PROMOTION RATE FOR CERTIFIED PEOPLE
Levels C40 and C41	9%	33%
Levels C42 and C43	5%	16%

MANY MARKETING AND SALES PROFESSIONALS HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE LEARNING PORTAL

A total of 33% of all marketing and sales professionals have registered on the portal – 493 out of 1,513 team members.

And 397 professionals have spent an average of 7.3 hours online – totting up a total of 2,881 learning hours across the company.

TOP 5 LEARNING RESOURCES AND TRAINING COURSES

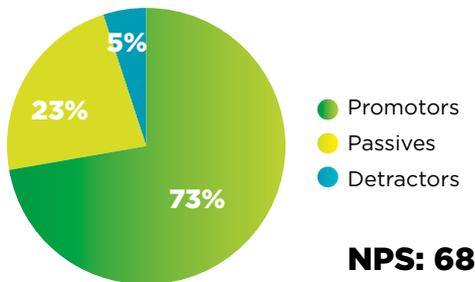
TOP 5 COURSES			TOP 5 LEARNING RESOURCES		
	258 HOURS Pricing strategy	1		243  Market understanding (version 2)	1
	220 HOURS Market understanding	2		190  Customer understanding (version 1)	2
	190 HOURS Customer understanding	3		189  Quick reference card	3
	156 HOURS Customer marketing	4		188  Value Chain (version 1)	4
	147 HOURS Customer Management	5		187  Welcome to your learning portal	5

PARTICIPANTS HIGHLY RECOMMEND M&SP1 AND M&SP2 TO THEIR COLLEAGUES

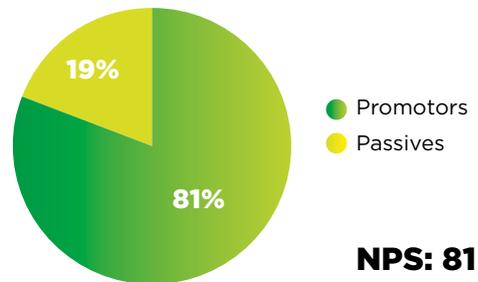
DSM uses NPS methodology to evaluate its face-to-face programmes.

Respondents answer the question: “Would you recommend this learning to your peers?” on a scale of “1 – absolutely not” to “10 – absolutely”.

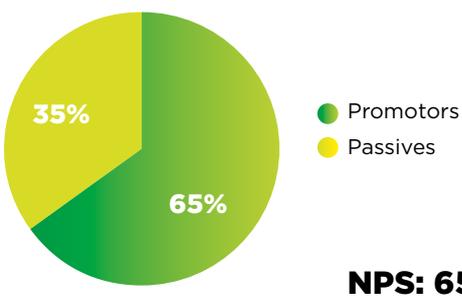
M&SP1: NPS 2016



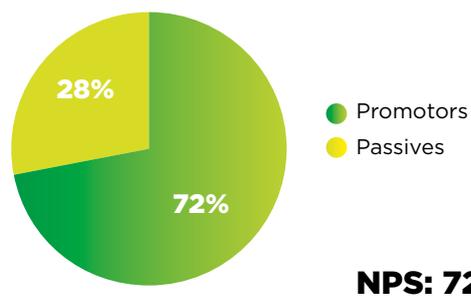
M&SP1: NPS 2017



M&SP2: NPS 2016



M&SP2: NPS 2017



All NPS scores are high and continue to increase, reflecting the enthusiasm to embrace the culture of continual learning and improvement that Vlerick and DSM have established.



M&SP2 is a great programme – from the day your nomination is accepted it keeps you on your toes. The programme setup forces you to plan well in advance what you want to get out of it and how you will get there. The exhaustive preparation and test meant we could hit the ground running in the classroom. The fact that everyone had the same level was really valuable – there was no time lost on basic explanations. Throughout the programme we were exposed to so many different marketing and sales topics. This meant I could analyse my business challenge from many angles.

And discussions and feedback I got from colleagues helped me find new ways to tackle my challenge. The aim of M&SP2 is to prepare you for your next career step – and in my case it definitely fulfilled its purpose. I participated in M&SP2 at the end of 2017 and now I’m starting my next assignment in DSM.



Rossana Rodriguez
Marketing Expertise
Manager
DSM



I learned so many things on the programme – too many to talk about in one short paragraph. But there were two areas that really stood out. First, understanding value chain – I now know how to structure the businesses for each country in my territory and how to clarify the value proposition. This is really important as I'm responsible for the APAC market.

Secondly, digitalisation. Digital technology is rapidly innovating in terms of communication and advertising. I now understand how vital it is that we stay ahead of the curve, so we can use digital effectively when we communicate with our customers.



Yusuke Saito
Regional Director -
Personal Care
DSM

THE LEARNING PORTAL IS AN INVALUABLE TOOL

Participants really value the learning portal when preparing for the face-to-face programmes. They give it average scores of:

- 4.39 out of 5 for usability
- 4.50 out of 5 for quality of content

AND PARTICIPANTS RATE THE FACULTY HIGHLY

On a scale of 1-5, they gave the faculty an average score of 4.47.

	2016	2017
M&SP1	22 respondents rated the faculty 4.50	26 respondents rated the faculty 4.39
M&SP2	23 respondents rated the faculty 4.51	24 respondents rated the faculty 4.49



The online platform was a user-friendly, flexible and high quality content tool to help us learn at our own speed. It was a great review of all topics from market understanding to sales strategy – with detailed cases.

Laurent Daligault
Global Marketing Manager Powertrain

Looking to the future

DSM has already seen a strong return on its investment in learning and development. The partnership with Vlerick is now in its fifth year – and shows no sign of slowing down.

The project team regularly updates the learning platform to meet the evolving needs of the organisation – making sure there's plenty of fresh, relevant content to keep teams up-to-date and feeling inspired.

And now the programme is expanding beyond marketing and sales. Other teams – including finance and HR – can now access the learning portal and benefit from the insights it shares. DSM hopes to open this to even more areas of the business very soon.

“ What separates good business from great business? Exceptional sales and marketing. Teams who are always passionate and always inspired. Who keep their skills up-to-date and are ready to adapt in today's VUCA world.

This is our vision. And in Vlerick, we found a fantastic partner who not only supports this vision but also translates it into credible, relevant learning programmes. Together we developed the Vlerick DSM learning portal – a place where all of our marketing and sales professionals can enhance their knowledge and explore new business models, customer centricity and digitisation. We also co-designed and now co-deliver our bespoke M&SP1 and M&SP2 programmes. They help us to future-proof and secure the best DSM marketing and sales talent.

It's been fantastic to witness the value we've created by combining Vlerick's academic excellence and DSM's applied science expertise. I couldn't recommend it enough.”

“ In today's digital age, the design principles for learning journeys centre around relevance, personalisation, versatility and putting theory into practice. We successfully built these principles into the DSM programme because both sides were willing to co-create. Our faculty were delighted to work with a partner who challenges our thinking, contributes real-life cases and is open to collaboration.”



Sucheta Govil
Chief Marketing Officer
DSM



Marion Debruyne
Dean
Vlerick Business School