

CASE STUDY

From Training Function to Talent Engine

A turnaround of a Sales Training & Development function supporting 2,200+ sales and customer service employees: rebuilding trust with commercial leadership, connecting capability development to business performance, and expanding the function into talent assessment and leadership pipeline creation.

CLIENT	SCALE	GEOGRAPHY	MY ROLE
Leading national telecommunications and digital services company with 15M+ customers	3,400+ total employees Sales & CS organization: 2,200+ Revenue: hundreds of millions, USD	National operation, multiple regions	Head of Sales Training & Development - reporting to CSO

I was brought in when the Sales Training and Development function was in visible decline. Training teams operated in silos across four departments - Retail, Field Sales, B2B, and Call Center - with inconsistent standards and no clearly shared operating model. Feedback from sales leaders and frontline employees at every level was poor. The annual attestation had become a heavy, formal exercise disconnected from development or business outcomes. The function was viewed as administrative rather than strategic, and it lacked the credibility to influence the commercial organization it was meant to serve. The mandate was to turn it around.

The Transformation System

01 Function Turnaround & Strategic Partnership Rebuild	02 Capability Development & Performance Integration	03 Talent Assessment & Leadership Pipeline Creation
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Function Turnaround & Strategic Partnership Rebuild

CHALLENGE

The function had lost stakeholder confidence at every level. Sales leaders across all four departments — Retail, Field Sales, B2B, and Call Center — questioned the value of training initiatives. Feedback was consistently poor from frontline sales experts through to Heads of Regions. The function carried a poor image and had no strategic partnership with commercial leadership.

Training teams worked in isolated silos with varied standards, no cross-departmental collaboration, and minimum connection to business priorities. The function lacked role clarity and a credible career path: there was no pipeline of people wanting to join it, and no reason for high performers to consider it.

SOLUTION

- Redesigned operating standards and the role architecture across the Training & Development organization, clarifying ownership, broadening trainer responsibilities, and aligning seniority levels to the company's leveling system.
- Aligned learning priorities with commercial objectives across all four departments, replacing calendar-driven activity with needs-based planning grounded in business performance data.
- Rebuilt relationships with leaders across Retail, Field Sales, B2B, and Call Center operations, shifting the function's positioning from reactive service delivery to proactive strategic partnership in talent capability development.
- Eliminated operating silos: established cross-departmental collaboration standards and a unified capability model across the full 40-person Training & Development organization.

BUSINESS RESULT

4

commercial departments re-engaged as strategic partners

40

training professionals unified under one operating model

0 → Strong

internal pipeline: high performers seeking to join the function

18 months

full transformation delivered

The function regained credibility and became a trusted partner to commercial leadership across all four departments — a reversal from poor feedback at every level to active strategic collaboration.

High-performing sales experts began actively seeking opportunities to join the team, signaling a fundamental shift in reputation and perceived value.

The 40-person organization moved from fragmented, siloed delivery to a unified capability model with shared standards, cross-departmental practices, and a clear operating logic.

WHAT CHANGED

The function shifted from fragmented service delivery and low trust to a respected business partner contributing to performance improvement, capability building, and talent decisions. Sales leaders who had given poor feedback from every level became active partners in the function's work. That shift in relationship was the precondition for everything that followed.

Capability Development & Performance Integration

CHALLENGE

Learning activities were largely disconnected from business performance. Programs were generic rather than targeted: not differentiated by department, performance level, or identified skill gap. The annual attestation consumed significant organizational effort while delivering limited value: a compliance ritual rather than a genuine capability measure, with results unconnected to development planning, performance appraisal, or any other process.

Simultaneously, the organization was navigating a post-M&A brand transition, requiring sales and customer service standards to be realigned across all four departments and embedded into every operational system, from scripts and checklists to SAP modules and training materials.

SOLUTION

- Revamped on-the-job development standards across all departments, grounding them in field audit results, performance data, and attestation findings rather than inherited assumptions.
- Redesigned the annual attestation: replaced the heavy, disconnected compliance process with a meaningful capability assessment connected to performance appraisal, development planning, and career progression.
- Tailored classroom programs for different target groups based on audit findings, performance data, and attestation results, making development needs-based and operationally relevant.
- Reviewed and aligned service standards across Retail, Field Sales, B2B, and Call Center to post-M&A requirements; integrated updated standards into employee manuals, scripts, checklists, SAP modules, and training materials.
- Embedded the redesigned capability model into annual planning, headcount, and budget structures, giving the function operational legitimacy and sustained resource alignment.

BUSINESS RESULT

90%→98%

attestation pass ratio from first attempt

4.2→4.8

average attestation score (out of 5)

+15%

retail activations and upgrades to higher-tier service plans

#1 Call Center

best in Ukraine among all mobile operators

Capability development became directly connected to business performance. Commercial teams received targeted support based on actual capability gaps, resulting in measurable operational improvement.

WHAT CHANGED

Learning evolved from a formal compliance activity into a business capability system. Attestation became a meaningful development checkpoint rather than an annual burden. Standards that had existed informally were documented, approved, and embedded into the systems people used every day, making the improvement durable rather than dependent on individual effort.

Talent Assessment & Leadership Pipeline Creation

CHALLENGE

The organization had no structured mechanism for identifying future leaders. Promotion decisions relied heavily on manager judgment and performance metrics, with no behavioral assessment or structured development pathway to bridge the gap between individual contributor and people manager.

At the same time, leadership potential across the 2,200+ person commercial organization remained largely invisible. The HR function lacked the capacity to assess talent at scale, while the Training & Development team had the business expertise but not the assessment capability.

SOLUTION

- Designed and delivered the structured Assessment Center - a multi-method capability evaluation for identifying sales experts ready for line management roles.
- Upskilled the team of 18 trainers in assessment methodology, qualifying them as assessors and expanding the function's professional capability beyond training delivery.
- Invited the 276 highest-scoring experts across all four departments to participate in the Assessment Center, ensuring talent identification was merit-based, cross-departmental, and transparent.
- Established a formal talent pool of 150 high-potential employees; designed and activated Individual Development Plans for each participant.

BUSINESS RESULT

276 top-performing experts assessed across all 4 departments	150 employees placed in formal talent pool with Individual Development Plans	18 trainers upskilled and qualified as assessors	1st Assessment Center of such a scale designed and delivered in- house
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BUSINESS RESULT (in words)

The organization gained its first structured, repeatable methodology for identifying future commercial leaders, replacing informal promotion conversations with evidence-based assessment across the full sales organization. 150 high-potential employees entered a formal talent pool with structured development plans, creating a visible and managed succession pipeline.

WHAT CHANGED

The function expanded its contribution from capability development into talent identification and succession planning, becoming a strategic contributor to the company's leadership agenda.

What This Work Created

Three interconnected streams - a function turnaround, an operationally integrated capability system, and the organization's first structured talent pipeline - transformed a declining support function into a capability and talent engine for one of the largest commercial organizations in the country. Performance, development, assessment, and leadership readiness became a single integrated capability system supporting both commercial results and future leadership supply.

Business Impact

The integrated business effect of the transformation streams

- **Strategic partnership restored** with commercial leadership across all 4 departments: from poor feedback to active collaboration
- **Attestation: 90% → 98% pass rate**, average score 4.2 → 4.8 (out of 5): from compliance ritual to meaningful capability measure
- **+15% retail performance**: activations and higher-tier upgrades directly linked to targeted, performance-integrated training
- **Call Center ranked #1 in Ukraine** among all mobile operators for service excellence
- **276 experts assessed; 150 in talent pool** with Individual Development Plans - first structured leadership pipeline in Sales and CS Organization history
- **18 trainers qualified as assessors**; internal candidates actively seeking to join the function: from zero pipeline to strong demand

WHAT CHANGED

The organization entered this engagement with a low-credibility training function, fragmented standards, siloed teams, and development activities disconnected from business outcomes. It emerged with a unified capability system connecting learning, assessment, talent identification, and leadership development, recognized by commercial leaders as a strategic partner and by high performers as a destination. What had been viewed as an administrative support function became a trusted business partner contributing to commercial performance, leadership quality, and long-term organizational capability.