Design of a quality control process for Dealgecco GmbH

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Contents

ILLUSTRATION LIST

ANNEX LIST

GLOSSARY

Blackout dates: dates in which the deal is not valid for redemptions.

Lifecycle: a progression through a series of differing stages of development.

Merchant: entity responsible for offering the service a customer obtains when purchasing a voucher. In the case of Dealgecco a merchant is frequently a hotel.

SEC remuneration: amount of money a SEC receives when selling one Dealgecco voucher.

SEC: selling company for the deals. A SEC features deals taken from Dealgecco on their respective platforms and sells them to their end customers.

SOC: sourcing company for deals. A SOC designs deals together with the merchants and uploads them to the Dealgecco platform where the SECs can find the offers.

Voucher list: includes all codes of the vouchers sold by an SEC.

ABSTRACT

Dealgecco is an e-commerce company designed as a B2B market place for deals and offers where deal platforms and shopping clubs from around the world can exchange their deals.

Aiming to increase the satisfaction of their partners, the necessity of creating a quality assurance process appeared. This quality assurance system has as its main task to verify that all processes are conducted according to established standards, offering a better service and fulfilling the expectations of the customers.

In this project, five intermediate objectives were set to obtain the general objective of designing a quality assurance system. The steps taken to do this started with obtaining relevant information from primary sources like the employees involved in the process and the constant observation done by the writer. This information was the basis to determine the status of all processes, a necessary task when designing a quality assurance system. From all this information, an extensive list of issues was obtained. This list was then depurated into another one that included the most relevant issues that affect the correct development of the deal lifecycle. This led to dividing the issues in four groups; team, process, product and information. Once this was determined, the task consisted in offering solutions for these problems by developing useful and simple tools. These tools were designed having in mind the different parties that are involved in the deal lifecycle and trying to improve the processes that give shape to the product that in this case is a service. This service starts when partners review the deals on the platform and continues when customers arrive at the hotel; this is why partners, merchants and end customers are relevant actors in the company's workflow. In this stage the quality manual that contains the quality assurance process was presented. Finally, the system was implemented –due to the lack of time- in only one of the processes; the customer support department, in which its effects could be analyzed.

The results of this project are represented in the tools designed to improve the deal lifecycle. The process and tasks manual provide a basis to improve, follow-up and develop the processes in the future. The tools that are designed for merchants and partners will improve their perception of the deal lifecycle and ideally reduce the time many of the team members dedicate to solving small issues related to processes. The quality manual and quality assurance system are meant to develop a culture of self-diagnosis and continuous improvement in the company aiming to satisfy the internal and external clients.

KEY WORDS:

Quality assurance system, E-commerce, Quality process, Process definition, process diagnosis.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the development of high quality processes and products has become one of the main goals of manufacturing and service companies.

Customers became more conscious of their role in product selection when a broad number of options and possibilities were presented to them for the same type of product. This situation led them to look and demand for better quality in the products and services they acquire which reflected in the companies' success.

The primary goal of a quality assurance system is that all requirements and customer expectations are fulfilled by the processes and products developed within a company. With this purpose, several tasks are set along the process to guarantee that all relevant steps are taken according to the defined quality goals, this is what differences it from a quality control process in which only the outputs are controlled.

Dealgecco is an online B2B market place in which deal platforms and shopping clubs from around the world exchange travel deals and offers. These deals are then featured by the partners in their respective countries offering customers access to great travel offers and helping hotels obtain their desired occupancy levels.

Dealgecco works through a platform in which partners can browse through a complete selection of offers being able to see all relevant information regarding prices, booking information and deal features, pictures and media files. The partners can select the deal on the platform and then feature it on their own website. The platform and the account managers then guide the partners through the process of running a deal.

The main objective of this Project is to develop a quality assurance system for the deal lifecycle process. This lifecycle starts with the search of contact information for potential merchants and ends when an offer is finished on the Dealgecco platform. In the meantime this deal goes through a negotiation phase and a quality assurance check after which it is uploaded to the platform and promoted by the account managers. When a deal is bought by a customer the service experience is transferred to the hotel who offers its services under its regular operating standards.

In order to accomplish the objective set for the project, five intermediate objectives were proposed. Each of these provided the information required for the design of the quality assurance system.

The initial steps involve different techniques to obtain information about the processes done within the company. It is very relevant to understand the workflow and describe the processes. The daily observation and a semi-structured interview conducted with the team members involved in the deal lifecycle are the basis of the information research.

A required step for the design of the quality assurance system is the establishment of the current status of processes. The processes and interactions are analyzed in this stage and a SWOT matrix for the deal lifecycle process as well as a current overview of the quality assurance related activities are provided for the reader to review.

Once all this information is in place, there is ground to define and determine the issues encountered in the process. These issues are divided in four relevant areas; product, process, team and information. In this step the use of an Ishikawa diagram was important in order to connect the causes and effects of the problems.

After the definition of the issues, several tools are designed to tackle them in an effective way. These tools aim to provide solutions in the relevant areas that were previously mentioned. The design of process manuals is the first basis for the development of the quality assurance system that is presented in a manual as well.

The final step of the project is to verify the effects of the implementation of the quality manual which is done taking into account the processes led by the customer support team.

1. PROJECT PRELIMINARIES

1.1.1 Problem context and characterization.

E-Commerce is basically the trading of products and services using the internet, these products and services are paid for using electronic means, such as credit and debit cards.

Catalog sales were the predecessors of e-commerce; they allowed companies to have access to markets that were not reachable because the customers were located far away from the commercial locations or were simply not interested in visiting them. Furthermore it offered the advantage of purchasing goods without going through the –frequently uncomfortable- process of product selection. This system was innovative and successful, but the appearance of the internet was the key to open the doors that allowed companies to reach to clients from all over the world.

The main characteristics of e-commerce are:
- Ubiquity: it is accessible from everywhere.
- Global Reach: clients from all over the world can be reached
- Enriched experience: the purchasing experience is richer compared to previous not on-site shopping, since text; video and audio messages can be integrated.
- Interactivity: technology allows you to interact with the user.
- Density of information: technology allows you to send targeted messages to the right type of clientele.
- Social technology: it allows users to share and create contents, making shopping a social experience.

One of the branches of E-commerce is known as flash sales or group buying. This model is based in offering a product or service at a "never seen before" price during a short period of time that ranges from 24 hours to a week. Originally, there were shopping clubs which offered exclusive deals only to their members and in order to become one of them an invitation was required. One day offers were used for fashion companies that normally offered products at very high prices and had excess inventory which they could sell by offering them with high discounts ranging from 50% to 90%. The model has evolved and now each country has several platforms offering these discounts openly so everyone can have access to them. The deals usually include trips, restaurants and health and beauty treatments.

In November 2008, Groupon entered the market and became the second fastest company from the internet industry to obtain a billion dollar valuation, which lead to the appearance of more and more flash sales companies. This phenomena lead to a scarcity of offers both in amount and in quality. The flash sales companies started to face difficulties in order to find deals to offer to their clients and from this need, Dealgecco was created. The

company is located in Berlin, Germany, it is a startup that works in the B2B E-commerce industry obtaining travel and product deals from around the world in order to offer them to its partners located in different continents, who later publish them in their platforms where the end buyer has access to them. Dealgecco is striving to become a strong sales force that provides its platforms with high quality products and services at a price never seen before. The company is currently structuring its processes and has found the need to establish procedures that can guarantee the quality of both the deals and the productive processes. The company has a sales team, an account management team, a legal and HR department as well as accounting and IT departments. All the different areas of the company are lacking clear quality assurance processes leading to frequent errors that are hard to trace back. The management is interested in implementing a quality control system for both the operations related to the deals (Sales and account management) and the deals in order to increase the quality of the products and client satisfaction.

1.1.2 Problem Formulation

Within the sales and account management departments, the activities that generate the most value to the company are being carried out, these activities as well as the interactions between them are not regulated by quality standards leading to errors that are difficult to trace back. One of the main problematic situations in the company is the variable quality check the offers are run by, since it results in very few bookings by the company's partners.

1.1.3 Antecedents

"The growth of electronic commerce (e-commerce) has been inhibited by consumer fears and concerns about risks. The quality assurance in e-commerce and the enhancement of consumer's trust and acceptance should be a combination of self-regulation, technology, and legislation. Regulations similar to those for traditional businesses could be applied to the e-commerce environment to protect consumers with the assurance regarding the existence of business entities and define the related liabilities to consumers." *(Nguyen, Gray, & Kira, 2000)*

"Quality control is critical to the success of e-commerce. Rapidly growing complexity of integrating, deploying and managing information systems for quality control in e-commerce overwhelms the capabilities of software developers and system administrators. This has motivated our research to develop a flexible, adaptable, extensible, and robust system to monitor and manage quality on a 24x7 basis. We have developed a new multi-agent architecture for quality control. The new multi-agent architecture is designed with consideration of the principles of autonomic computing." *(Pour, 2004)*

"Quality is an important business strategy in the economic and technological environment of today. To achieve high product quality, it is important to take explicit account of the cost of quality, and to use this cost as another management control. A new direction for achieving   a   cost-effective quality management   system   is

to design statistical process controls so as to directly incorporate quality costs. Because of its simplicity in application the semi-economic model should gain greater acceptance by practitioners for the design of process control techniques." *(Montgomery & Storer, 1986)*

"To build customer trust and loyalty, and keep customer retention, e-tailers must shift the focus to e-service quality before, during and after the transactions. This has become especially important in the global e-commerce environment. When consumers conduct a purchase across the border, they will have more concern as to whether they will receive quality services from a "foreign" e-tailer. Therefore, e-service quality and e-satisfaction should be issues covered in the future" (Wang, 2003)

"Despite the recognition of service quality as a major advantage in service industries, the travel agency sector in Taiwan has lacked any service quality certification that could optimize service provision or reduce transaction costs. This study argues that firm responsiveness to a new institution depends on two motives, rational and normative, and that such relationships are contingent upon CEO's background and market conditions." (Pao, Wu, & Pan, 2010)

Inbound call centers is a growing business practice, with the promise of enhanced revenue generation and customer retention. The study advances understanding of ambidexterity at the employee level. A CSR's locomotion orientation facilitates ambidextrous behavior and interacts positively with an assessment orientation. Ambidextrous behavior increases customer satisfaction and sales performance, decreasing efficiency. Nevertheless, the overall performance effect is positive. (Jasmand, Blazevic, & de Ruyter, 2012)

Having solely loyal customers is an aspiration for service providers. One loyalty indicator is a consumer's evaluation of the quality of service they receive. Research reveals that solely loyal customers give, on average, 10% more positive service quality evaluations than customers of the same provider who also use others. The implication of this finding for is that service quality scores can be moderated by the distribution of solely loyal and multiple-provider users in a given sample. (Bogomolova, 2011)

The authors develop a model that examines the influence of quality control on service quality in a b2b setting and export performance. They consider quality control initiatives that address service employees' performance and customers' coproduction as well as firm characteristics of such initiatives. Results show that export customer-oriented training, customer coproduction instructions, and work process standardization have a positive influence on relative service quality, positively affecting export performance. (Sichtmann, Selasinsky, & Diamantopoulos, 2011)

Customer requirements are the foundation of quality control. The corresponding model-oriented Quality Characteristics Processing Unit (QCPU) is proposed, which consists of describing and formulating customers' requirements, and decomposing and transforming QCs, optimizing QCs or sub-QCs, and analyzing and validating QC results. A process

model combined with quality tools for decomposing and transforming of the QCs is put forward. (Tang, Wang, & Wang, 2007)

The article develops an orientation system for measuring customer satisfaction, revealing dimensions of satisfaction experienced by retailers. It confirms that these are verified according to empirical criteria and quantified in respect of their contribution to delivering satisfaction to retailers. It identifies approaches on which to base activities, allowing suppliers of branded articles to give their customers greater customer satisfaction. (Schellhase, Hardock, & Ohlwein, 1999)

The article states that more attention shall be concentrated on service delivery through electronic channels. Finding evidence that indicates that service is critical to online customers and that it is generally poor. The main point of this article is to understand how the customer evaluates electronic service quality in order to improve delivery. This article discusses the definition, conceptualization and measurement of electronic service quality. (Zeithaml, 2002)

Findings indicated that electronic recovery service quality had a positive effect on customer loyalty and also indicate that electronic recovery service quality had no effect on perceived value and customer satisfaction which were two significant variables in the relationship between electronic service quality and customer loyalty. The study also found that electronic service quality had an indirect positive effect on customer satisfaction for consumer electronics e-tailers. (Wu, 2011)

The article focused in developing and validating a conceptual model that incorporates the relationships among service orientation, quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. This model indicated that customers' perceptions of service quality fully mediate the effect of employees' service orientation on customer satisfaction and that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between customers' perceptions of service quality and their decision to remain loyal. (Kim, 2011)

1.1.4 Justification

The development of this research Project will be very enriching for all the parties involved.

For me, it will provide the opportunity of applying the knowledge I acquired throughout these years at school in a real working environment, allowing me to keep on building this knowledge base with actual experiences. Quality management and assurance is one of the main competences of industrial engineers, that is why enriching my wealth of knowledge in this field shall be regarded as a great opportunity.

The fact that Dealgecco is a young and dynamic company is a great advantage for this project since it will be a wonderful learning experience to be in the core of the development and structuration of a successful e-commerce startup.

For the company, it will be of great value to define and structure their processes, since the everyday work sometimes takes a lot of time and effort that can therefore not be invested in the design of a quality assurance structure.

Quality is one of the principal factors in order to build a successful company; this is why any step taken towards the improvement and assurance of high quality products, services and process is a great gain in this path and creates great value for the company.

The perspective and insight of someone who has been involved in the daily work of the company will be of high value for the project, since it will facilitate the visualization and structuration of the different processes.

A quality assurance process will certainly save the company a lot of time and efforts and will make the daily work much more productive, it will also create stronger and more trustworthy relations with its partners which will increase the value the company can offer to actual and future interested parties; If Dealgecco offers products and services with high quality standards this will be reflected in an increased number of revenues and new partners, making the company much more solid.

For the EIA this project will allow a direct connection with an international, innovative company that is at the hub of European start-ups. Having a student in this position, will open a lot of doors for other students, teachers and for research projects in general, making this experience profitable for the institution.

The sum of all these points is an important source of value for all the parties involved; empowering the student to improve and implement her knowledge while the company grows and builds a more solid structure, and allowing the university to obtain new international contacts and future successful partnerships.

1.2   OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 General Objective

To design a Quality control process for the activities carried out throughout a deal's lifecycle at Dealgecco GmbH.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

- To identify and analyze the principal processes and interactions between the different areas involved in the deal's lifecycle.

- To determine the current state of the processes and their quality standards regarding the deal lifecycle.

- To define the principal problems within the processes and interactions, identifying and prioritizing their causes.

- To propose a solution to the encountered problems.

- To implement a tool of the quality assurance process as a Proof of Concept (POC) and analyze the obtained results.

1.3 REFERENCE FRAME

1.3.1 Contextual Framework

1.3.1.1 The Company: Dealgecco.

"Dealgecco is an international B2B market place for deals, connecting suppliers and sellers of deals on a global scale

Typical deal suppliers are hotels and travel agents, who are able to increase revenues and exposure through the global network. The same holds true for product suppliers with excess stock and those looking to move into new markets.

For deal platforms and shopping clubs, Dealgecco is able to offer a great number of fantastic deals - the main success factor in this industry. Deal platforms are also able to exchange deals amongst themselves, helping them raise revenues from over-capacities.

Dealgecco is connected with over 150 daily deal sites worldwide, reaching 22 million newsletter subscribers and 5 million daily unique visitors from over 52 countries.

Allowing its partners to gain global exposure, or build a strategic campaign working with individual partners in different countries.

Founded in September 2011 in Berlin, Dealgecco started as part of Rebate Networks and quickly gathered deep hands-on experience in sourcing international deals for companies in Asia, Europe and South America. Building on these initial successes, Dealgecco now offers its platform and services to selected Daily Deal companies around the world that want to boost their revenues." *(Dealgecco)*

1.3.1.2 Daily deals and relevant trends of the industry

Daily deals are offers that can be found online at a discounted price for a limited amount of time. These offers became very popular when the company Groupon started promoting them on their platforms around the world. They are targeted to impulsive buyers that have enough resources to buy them quick and as they come but also to bargain hunters who

are searching for the right deal. The daily deal industry is present in many of the goods and services that are used by many people in day to day life; if you go to a daily deal website you can meals in the restaurants located in your area, vacation packages, spa packages, electronics, vouchers and many others at heavily discounted prices. The use of daily deals has been widely spread in all continents and it has become a relevant marketing tool for merchants.

Some trends in the daily deal industry:

Daily deals have changed the perception of bargain hunters, people always want to experience more and now paying less and finding offers has given them the chance to share their experience with friends through the very popular social networks.

Consumers now feel confident in getting the right price for the product or service they want nevertheless, this involves research and constant awareness of what is offered on the market.

Another angle for daily deals is consumer's needs. Before, consumers bought their 'wants' through the deal sites, now thanks to vouchers and special offers from pharmacies, supermarkets and others, consumers are looking for their needs with the help of daily deal sites.

Several chains are using daily deals for their own benefit without the need of a 'middleman' it is more common every day to find daily deals on the websites of renowned brands for their own products

1.3.2 Conceptual Framework

1.3.2.1 E-Commerce:

B2B E-Commerce is the activities regarding electronic commerce between two businesses and not end consumers. This creates a marketplace in which several parties can interact in order to obtain goods or services from one another which they then provide to the end consumer.

It is obligatory that all decisions can be done via online so they can easily turn into binding agreements. This creates the need for the website to provide the customers with all the required information and features that will allow them to make a decision and to acquire the good or service in an easy manner. This information includes; quality assurance guarantees, product specifications, easy payment methods, etc. When a marketplace is able to offer this, it creates an advantage.

One benefit of E-commerce marketplaces is the possibility of creating global trading networks; this allows people to source products from around the world without engaging in relevant expenses like mobilization.

E-commerce platforms can be open or restricted. In open platforms, any person who is interested can join and interact with buyers and sellers that are present in the platform; this gives the benefit of easy access, but creates further problems, like the reliability and trustworthiness of a party. All sorts of entities with illegal or dangerous purposes can take part in the trade creating a problem for the other parties involved. Restricted marketplaces give the parties a relative peace of mind, since everyone involved goes through a screening phase that should raise alarms if necessary.

There are also different sorts of goods/services being offered and traded, some platforms offer the actual good to the platform while others just supply them with quotes or information that allows them to make a final decision.

1.3.2.2 Quality assurance and quality control

Quality assurance refers to the systematic activities included in a system in order to guarantee that an end product will satisfy all the properties that were previously defined as inherent product characteristics. These activities are used to compare the product's characteristics to previously defined standards and therefore detecting and avoiding mistakes. On the other hand Quality Control focuses on the outputs basically removing products with defects from the production lines and discarding them at the end of determined operations.
Quality assurance is a powerful tool for increasing competitiveness and productivity as it ensures that the goods and services produced by a company are being delivered to the end customer with high quality standards.
Quality assurance is based on identifying and removing the source of the defects. The quality assurance theory started in the 60's and companies from Japan like Toyota played an important role in the development of it.
Quality assurance requires a very well rounded view of the company processes and should therefore include all of them.

1.3.2.3 Quality assurance in E-Commerce

According to studies conducted within the e-commerce branch, there are basic principles that need to be considered in order to achieve an appropriate quality assurance.

- The amount of resources invested in web development and support make a statement that gives the customer an idea of the quality of a determined product or service. These investments are not only the money but also the commitment shown with the availability of human resources. The bigger the investment, the more likely it is to assure quality in the company.

- Expenses regarding web marketing also play an important role in 2 different ways. When a website looks inexpensive and mediocre, it will be hard for the customer to believe that the quality of the product they are about to buy is as good as promised, this leads to the product being frequently undervalued. On the other hand when the websites look fancy and more expensive than what they actually are, they can

mislead the customer into thinking the quality of the product is better than what it actually is. If the consumer acquires the product and has a bad experience with it, he/she will feel deceived and will most likely not become a repeat customer.

- The lack of confidence from the customer is a big factor affecting the growth of e-commerce. When the customer does not trust the company for one reason or another, quality of products or services, security of the transactions, etc. it is very unlikely to find a steady flow of customers.

- The price a new customer is willing to pay for a product or service is directly influenced by his/her expectations. The expectations of consumers vary radically between one and the other, leading to one being more likely to buy an identical product than the other.

- When a customer is exposed to a product for the second time, the likelihood of an actual purchase happening depends highly on the experience the customer previously had, both with the product/service and the actual transaction. This means the quality of the transaction needs to be ensured just as much as the one of the product/service. A satisfied customer will most likely bring repeat business while an unsatisfied one will find a new provider.

- In E-Commerce some of the most important variables to create a quality vector are; the quality of the website, the quality of the payment systems and the quality of the technology used.

- In order to create an appropriate level of expectations within customers, a web strategy shall be cautiously designed.

"A Quality Management Framework in the context of e-services has the following components: e-service as object (entity), e-service development and delivery process as process, business and consumer as users, specific service request as request as requirements, evaluation and measurement of the e-service to determine its quality.

E-Service quality management process uses surveys and questionnaires to evaluate the following qualitative aspects of the e-service:

• Awareness – the degree of which users are aware of the e-service existence and its features.

• Expectations – what users think that the e-service offers.

• Accessibility – the degree of which all individuals can access service regardless of education, age, sex, culture, religion or the existence of any physical handicap.

• Driving reasons for use – what made the user access the e-service instead of using the traditional method.

• Use preventing reasons – what prevents the user from using the service.

• Feedback on additional features needed – what users are requesting in order to enhance their experience while using the e-service

• User impact – how e-service changes user's routine

• Overall satisfaction – how satisfied the user is with e-service, overall.

Qualitative characteristics of the e-service are helping to construct an image of the current level of quality. They do have the disadvantage though that they can't be used in calculations, that they are difficult to compare or aggregate, can't be used trending analysis and targets can't be set-up for them.

The quantitative metrics of the quality management framework eliminate the disadvantages of qualitative evaluation. The following are metrics that can be included in the QMF for e-services:

Accuracy represents the percentage of the number of times the e-service has provided accurate results to users' requests.

Repeated consumers represent the percentage of users that have used the same e-service more than one time.

Awareness represents the percentage of targeted users that are aware of the eservice existence and its features.

Cost represents the fee that has to be paid to access the service. It can be expressed as per-use cost or per-membership cost. Per-use cost implies that the user is going to pay a fee every time he is accessing the service, where per-membership cost implies that the user pays a fee once a period, usually in advance, and gets access to the e-service for that period" (Batagan, Pocovnicu, & Capisizu, 2009)

1.3.2.4 Quality Control Tools

There are 7 standard quality control tools that help improve and follow quality processes. These 7 tools were designed by Kaoru Ishikawa, a Japanese engineering teacher in the University of Tokyo. Ishikawa is partly responsible for the development of the Japanese industry after World War II. He also created the circles of quality that aimed to train all levels of an organization in quality-assured processes.

Mr. Ishikawa determined the following 7 tools for controlling quality oriented processes.

1. Pareto Chart: the Pareto principle was developed by the Italian Vilfredo Pareto and then retaken by Joseph Juran and applied to quality assurance. This useful tool helps

determine which causes generate the vastest amount of problems. The concept indicates that 20% of the known causes will regularly account for 80% of the perceived problems. This tool is a chart where information is organized in descending order according to the priority and concentrates in the gravest effects.

2. Flow Charts: these tools are used in most processes to describe them and get a better understanding of their functioning. It helps visualize the different steps between them as well as identify if there are steps that could potentially be removed or modified.

3. Control chart: these charts are also known as Shewart charts. These charts display data taken over a period of time that allows the observer to recognize variability within processes. These variations can be normal or due to unexpected causes. Within the charts there are 2 limits, a high and a low. In a normal process most data should be within the limits, otherwise it is considered that the process is experiencing a problem.

4. Histograms: these are bar graphs that show frequency distributions. These diagrams take continuous and discrete variables and show their distribution. These diagrams are useful to find patterns and help in the improvement of processes and products.

5. Cause and effect diagrams: these diagrams are also known as fishbone or Ishikawa diagrams. It is a well-known brainstorming tool and very useful to connect items leading to the discovery of underlying causes in a problem.

6. Scatter Diagram: this diagram is used to determine correlations between data. In quality it specifically applies to problems and it is useful after a brainstorming session when relations are needed to be found.

7. Check lists: these are prearranged formats that are used to compile and collect data for a specific process. This data is analyzed and used as valuable information for the control of processes.

1.3.2.5 Processes and Process Management

Processes have always been present in all sorts of productive activities and therefore have been defined in many different ways through the years. Sometimes processes have also been confused with other terms such as procedures. It is important to start by differentiating these two very important terms.

According to the ISO 9001:2008 Quality Manuals a process is "*a set of interrelated resources and activities that transform inputs into outputs with the aim of adding value. Resources include personnel, facilities, equipment, technology, methodology and finances. The aim of adding value if quality related.*" (Bizmanualz, 2002)

A Procedure on the other hand is defined by the same manual as "*A particular way of accomplishing something, an established way of doing things, a series of steps followed in a definite regular order. It ensures the consistent and repetitive approach to actions.*"

It is clear now that a process is a group of activities that are interconnected and always should create value and a procedure is the way how these activities are developed in order to produce the intended value.

There are two main types of processes; workflow and information flow processes.

In process management, a very important factor is to include control systems. In service oriented companies these systems are the people who supervise the work. The control points are very important when changes are to be introduced and play a huge role in the goal of obtaining a high quality output.

Processes are interconnected structures that have been used as the vital production bases for any service or product. For process to provide high quality outputs, they should be properly managed. A process should have determined standards that reflect the needs and requirements from customers, and all people involved in the process should know these requirements well. The process should also have a properly defined objective that leads to reaching the overall object of the company as well as having qualitative and quantitative objectives and indicators that measure the accomplishment of the process' mission. Someone must take responsibility for the development of the process; this person should be a leader within the team and will control the process and make sure the respective goals are reached. There should be limits for the start and end point of the process as well as enough and appropriate resources for its operations. The process must have measurements that allow its control and efficiency and it should include control and check points. Proper documentation has to available for each process and the interactions with both clients and other internal processes should be clear.

In process oriented companies, when a problem occurs the first activity led to tackle this problem is to use process improvement tools to solve it. The teams involved lead the majority of process analysis.

The process management focus plays a very important role in the implementation of quality systems. In order to implement quality compliant processes it is very important to obtain relevant information from both internal and external clients to analyze the current state of processes and the further actions required to develop and implement process improvements.

A very important step to implement quality assurance plans is to determine the functioning of processes in order to learn about all the steps between them and interactions with internal and external clients.

In order to guarantee satisfaction through quality assurance processes the ISO encourages the process management focus as it generates an efficient and interconnected way to reach customer expectations.

A powerful tool to be implemented in process-focused environments is the PDCA cycle that stands for the four steps defined by William Edwards Deming one of the precursors of quality control methods. These four steps are: Plan, Do, Check and Act.

The PDCA cycle is a tool designed for continuous improvement in processes. Contrary to the previous aim of designing flawless processes the PDCA concentrates in improving processes continuously to be able to better adjust to changes in the environment, the process or the organization.

This tool allows empowerment for employees involved in the process as it is them who are in a big part responsible for the functioning of the cycle. This empowerment leads to a faster and more efficient way to find flaws in the process as well to more accurate plans to improve these flaws. Both temporary and permanent changes and improvements can be achieved through the use of the PDCA cycle.

The "Plan phase" consists of designing, planning and programming the different activities that will be led to implement a change or process.

The "Do phase" is the implementation phase of the processes that were planned in the previous stage.

The "Check phase" is the step in which the activities that were done are verified and checked to make sure they have been done appropriately and as was expected and specified in the "plan phase". It is also necessary to check that the objectives that were set are being achieved appropriately.

If a project is not successfully finished, the cycle starts again from the plan phase and even if it is taken to term successfully it should be always continued in the PDCA methodology.

2. METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the general objective by reaching the specific objectives, the following methodology has been designed.

- *To identify and analyze the principal processes and interactions between the different areas involved in the deal's lifecycle.*

In order to reach this objective, thorough information and knowledge of the whole lifecycle of a deal are required.

In this case primary source information was required; this information came from exploratory interviews conducted with the sales team, the account management team and the managing directors of the company.

The interview was conceived as a semi-structured interview with a predetermined list of questions for each team that considered their specific field of action and their contact point with the deal. Nevertheless the opportunity for open questions was given as the people being interviewed brought up related and relevant topics that were not included in the first version of the interview. The questions that were added during the interview are also included in the interview format (Annex 1).

The interviews were conducted on an individual and personal basis. Each Interview was developed with the question list at hand and the questions were asked in the same order for each interviewee.

All the persons interviewed were recorded for the whole length of the interview process. At the same time notes were taken.

After the interviews, the recordings were transcribed to the interview format that appears detailed for each interviewee in the annex section of this document.

The interviews were later re-read and analyzed in detail.

There are three stages that were monitored and analyzed in order to have a general overview of the process.

These three stages were:
- Process preparation
- Negotiation stages
- Process in Account Management

Once the necessary information has been gathered, the investigator will start an observation process; the intention of this is to verify the previous information and to add further relevant data, this way a broader and impartial overview of the processes can be obtained.

After these two stages all the information will be analyzed and organized using process diagram tools such as:
- o Flow charts and diagrams: this tool will be used for mapping the processes, the activities and sequences within them. The diagram will provide a clear view and understanding of the process.
- o Activity diagrams: the activity diagrams give a clear vision of the main activities within the process and the routes the product needs to follow.

By using these tools the processes will be clearly defined and analyzed.

For the identification of the interaction a similar process will be followed. The activities that have interactions will be defined with a process and interaction description. Finally the activity definition will be completed with the use of process interaction diagrams; these diagrams show all the required parts and interactions of an activity within a process.

- *To determine the current state of the processes and their quality standards regarding the deal lifecycle*

Using the information obtained in the interviews and the charts and diagrams created in the previous process, a thorough diagnosis of the actual processes can be conducted.

Furthermore the interaction between processes and teams are defined, described and analyzed.

A SWOT analysis that shows the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the process, will be used to put the different findings in perspective.

Looking to establish the current state of quality requirements, the last section covers this topic.

- *To define the principal problems within the processes and interactions, identifying and prioritizing their causes*.

Using all the information encountered in the interview and observation phase, all the main problems that can be found throughout the process shall be defined with their causes. In order to do that a Fishbone diagram will be used. A Fishbone diagram is a causal diagram that shows a problem next to its cause.

- *To propose a solution to the encountered problems.*

According to the information found on the previous objective, solutions to the problems and its causes shall be proposed.

Once the possible solutions have been found and stated, a clear implementation plan shall be designed.

This implementation plan will be designed as a quality control system, stating a clear process flow with defined checkpoints and checklists that will provide the right guidance in order to obtain a high quality deal.

- *To implement the quality assurance process as a Proof of Concept (POC) and analyze the obtained results.*

The new quality assurance Process will be run as a proof of concept for a determined time. During this time, the people involved will be working under the new system, using checklists that will allow them to track the development of the deal, the improvements of the process and the items to be improved.

At the end, an evaluation session will be carried out in which the people involved will be able to compare the processes and highlight the improvements, difficulties and suggestions for the newly implemented quality assurance process.

After the evaluation, the results and opinions obtained throughout the Proof of Concept will be gathered and analyzed.

Due to the lack of time for a full implementation, the proof of concept will be run in the customer support department only.

3. DESIGN OF A QUALITY CONTROL PROCESS FOR DEALGECCO GMBH

Dealgecco is an international B2B market where daily deal platforms from all over the world can exchange offers and deals. Dealgecco is a closed platform to which only registered users have access.

Two different types of users exist on the platform; these are selling companies (SEC) and sourcing companies (SOC). SECs take deals from the platform and feature them on their own websites. SOCs upload deals to the platform which are offered to the SECs.

The deals are divided in a travel and product section, the deals that are displayed come from the SOC companies and from Dealgecco. The users can browse through both these sections to find the offers that are appropriate for their specific market.

Each offer includes all relevant information regarding the location, the booking or shipping procedures, the benefits and conditions. The deals also include all media the platform may require to post the deal on their own websites; this includes pictures, videos, relevant websites and information.

Dealgecco also has a sales team that sources deals to include in the platform, making Dealgecco also an SOC. The aim of this sales team is to source deals that have a higher complexity when it comes to their acquisition. The deals sourced by Dealgecco are usually those located in the "most wanted" European cities, with a good discount and attractive benefits.

To complement and fulfill the needs of both SECs and SOCs, there is an account management team that supports the companies in the search for appropriate offers and the use of the different features of the platforms.

The other teams that are part of the company are the administrative team that is in charge of the accounting and human resources and the IT team. The IT team develops the ever-growing features for the platform which is a basic tool for the business and trading processes at Dealgecco.

In order to design a quality assurance process for Dealgecco GmbH several activities and steps were taken. These activities are mentioned in detail in this chapter.

3.1 IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPAL PROCESSES AND INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT AREAS INVOLVED IN THE DEAL'S LIFECYCLE.

This section will be an introduction to the processes carried out in the lifecycle of a deal.

The initial part includes a description of all the processes, their activities and requirements as well as a section that describes and analyses the interacting processes within the lifecycle of the deal and between the different teams involved in it.

After this point, the process flow chart and individual flow charts for relevant sub-processes will be introduced.

Thirdly, there is a semi-structured interview that was conducted with the members of the teams that are involved in the processes. This interview provided a broader overview of the teams' perspective regarding the processes and situations that surround the lifecycle of a deal. The findings that will be presented with this interview represent the opinions of the team members involved in the process and are therefore a primary source of information but under no circumstances a problem diagnosis.

3.1.1 Description of the processes within the deal lifecycle

- Lead Sourcing:

  This is the first process in the deal lifecycle. The leads for the sales team to contact are sourced according to the current season, interest of the company or requests by partners. The leads have to fit specific criteria that come from the quality assurance department. These criteria are:
    - At least three stars in the country's star rating.
    - At least a 3.5 TripAdvisor rating (www.tripadvisor.com). TripAdvisor rates the hotels on its website from 1 to 5 circles, being 5 the best possible level. If the TripAdvisor rating is not available, the hotel shall have at least a 7 in the Booking.com rating (www.booking.com). Booking.com rates hotels from 1 to 10, being 10 the best rating.

  The process consists of getting the relevant information for each contact and putting this information into Salesforce, the customer relationship management (CRM) software the company uses. In Salesforce each lead has to be assigned to the correct sales representative depending on their language skills and knowledge of a region, etc.

  The information included in the lead sourcing list is the following:
    - Hotel name
    - Hotel website link
    - Hotel's telephone number
    - City

- Country
- Hotel stars
- Booking.com and TripAdvisor rating
- Number of rooms

- First Contact with potential merchants:

  The sales representative contacts a lead from Salesforce according to the current needs of the company or the season among other factors.
  This first contact can last from five to 15 minutes depending on the potential merchant.
  The aim of this first contact is to introduce the concept and benefits of Dealgecco to the merchant, the basic topics that are discussed are:
  - The concept of daily deals
  - How Dealgecco works
  - Benefits for the hotel
  - Potential packages the hotel would be interested in featuring

  After discussing these points with the merchant a callback date is settled with time and date to further discuss packages and details if the merchant is interested.
  If the merchant is not interested the process is dropped at this point.
  All information obtained in this activity shall be inserted in Salesforce in order to document the deal.

- Package Design:

  During the callback that was scheduled with the merchant, the sales representative and the merchant must create together the right deal package for the end customers.
  These packages can include extras such as a dinner, a massage or an excursion, but they can also only include accommodation. The package should be designed taking into account the quality assurance requirements that are known by the sales representative, otherwise the deal will most likely not be approved by the quality assurance (QA) team and therefore will need to be renegotiated.
  The packages are based on the amenities the hotels can offer, the price they are willing to give and the season or requirements of the customers.
  If they agree to a deal package they proceed to the next step, if the package cannot be agreed on it is likely that the process would be dropped at that stage or would be revisited at a later point.

- Creation of the deal ticket and merchant agreement

  If the merchant agreed to the package, the next step will be to fill in the necessary documentation.
  In this case these are the deal ticket and merchant agreement.

The deal ticket is an excel document that includes several tabs. The sales representative should fill in the internal tab; here all the relevant information for the deal should be included, this includes the benefits, the accommodation details, reservation contacts, etc. This document also includes a tab that is used for the clients (ANNEX 2) and a tab where the quality assurance process is done.

The second document is the merchant agreement (ANNEX 3), this document is the general contract signed between the merchant and Dealgecco and is valid for other potential deals, in this case the sales representative will have to enter the required company information in the document.

- Quality Assurance

The quality assurance process consists of the control of the deal before it is finalized. It starts when the sales representative sends the QA team an email with the link to the deal. As previously mentioned, there is a tab in the deal ticket that includes the 10 points that should be checked and passed by a deal in order to be accepted. These 10 points are:
  - Location
  - Discount
  - Ratings
  - Price
  - Star rating
  - Length of validity
  - Blackout dates
  - Deal ticket version
  - Completeness of information.

If all criteria are passed the sales representative receives the deal ticket in PDF after it has also been approved by the managing director. Otherwise the deal has to be renegotiated according to the recommendations of the QA team.

After this, the sales representative sends these documents to the merchant who should sign and send them back. Once it is received it is signed by the managing directors and archived.

- Deal Handover

There should be a handover of the merchant from the sales to the account management team who will as of that moment take care of the account and keep the merchant updated regarding all bookings, features of the deal, voucher lists and general developments.

Currently there is no defined process for the handover. Some of the sales representatives send an email to the merchants welcoming them to Dealgecco and introducing them to their account manager but the account manager doesn't receive a report about the merchant or the deal, making a smooth transition difficult.

- Deal Upload

  Once all documentation is available, a notification is sent to the managing directors who then set the SEC remuneration; this is the amount of money the selling platform will get per deal. After this is done, they send a notification message to the upload team who immediately uploads the deal to the platform, all information for this is taken from the deal ticket.
  Once the deal is uploaded it is sent for quality assurance and if QA approves, the managing directors have a final look at it and then it goes live on the platform.

- First contact between account manager and merchant

  Once the deal is live, the account manager contacts the hotel and explains them how the deal will go through the different stages on the platform. The contact between the account manager and the merchant will continue every time there are updates for the deal such as bookings, voucher lists, etc.

- Bookings from SECs

  The SECs on the platform will be able to see the deal and book it if they find it interesting. All the booking process is done through the platform; here they will define how many vouchers they will sell and when they will promote it. One day before they feature the deal they will send the quality assurance team a preview that will be revised and approved otherwise the relevant corrections will be requested.
  Once the deal ends on the platform, the SEC will upload the list of vouchers they sold, this list is a preliminary list as clients have 14 days to claim for a refund, after these 14 days a new, final list is uploaded by the SEC.

- Payment process

  Once the final list is uploaded and approved, the accounting team prepares the respective payment information for each deal. This means they create an invoice and send it to the SEC for the amount they have to pay to the SOC. The SOC also receives an invoice that reflects the amount due for marketing services and handling fees. The SEC shall transfer the money immediately to the SOC according to the payment information.

- Deal renegotiation

  At the end of the deal validity or according to the feedback from the accounts, a new deal will be renegotiated with the merchant. This will be done by the account manager and will go through the same process that was explained in the package design.

3.1.2 Process flow chart

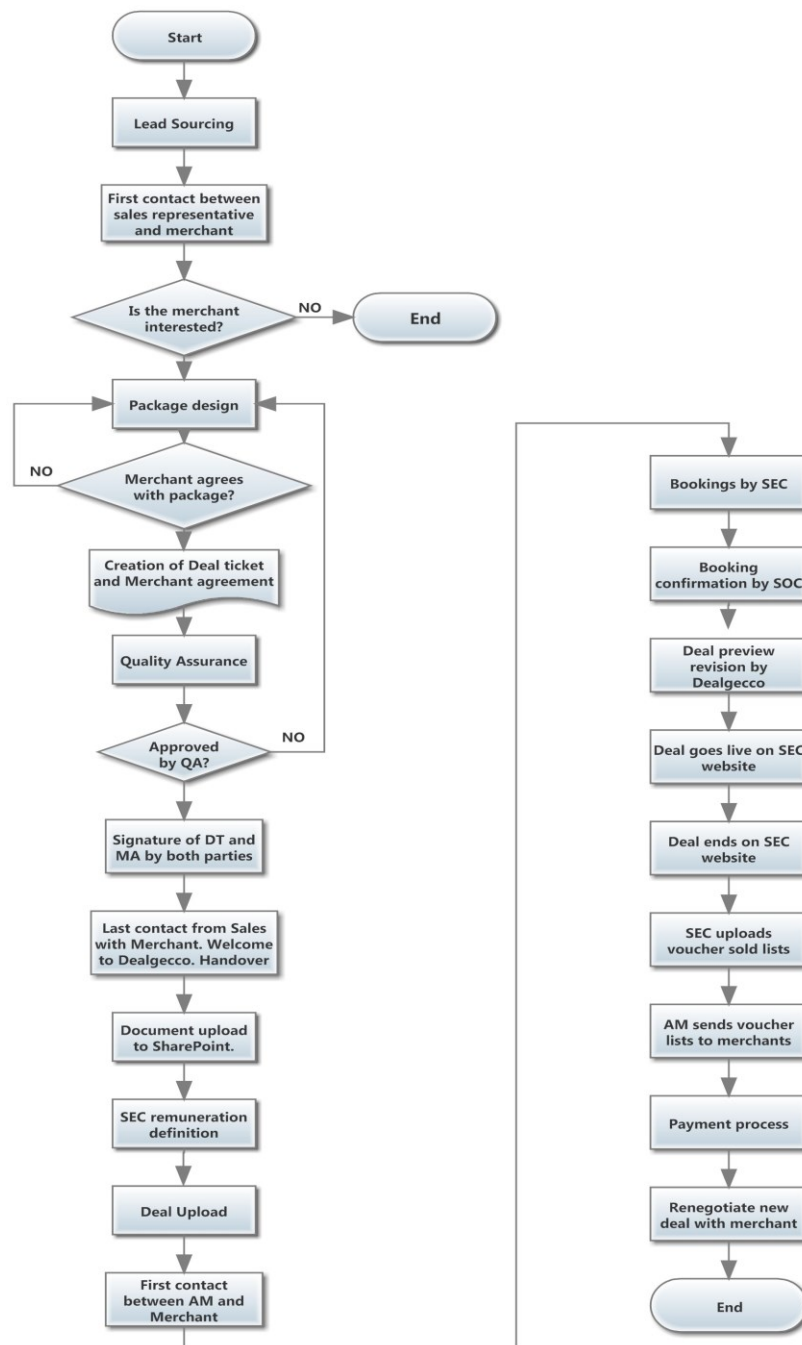The following chart represents the process workflow in the lifecycle of a deal.

Figure 1: Process Flow

3.1.3 Deal lifecycle sub-processes

Some of the processes within the deal lifecycle include a sub-process within. These sub-processes can frequently include several activities and therefore should be described individually.

First contact between sales representative and merchant
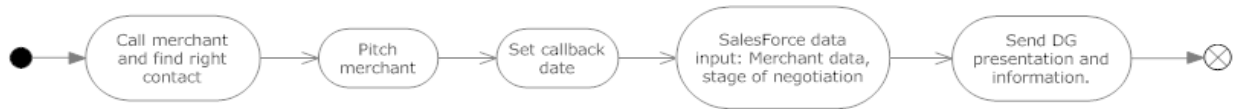

Figure 2: Sub process 1

Creation of Deal ticket and Merchant agreement

Figure 3: Sub process 2
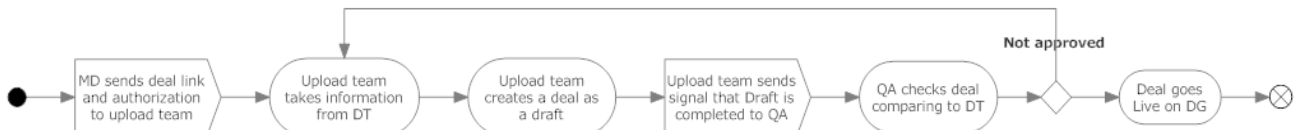
Quality Assurance

Figure 4: Sub process 3

Deal Upload

Figure 5: Sub process 4

SEC remuneration definition

Figure 6: Sub process 5
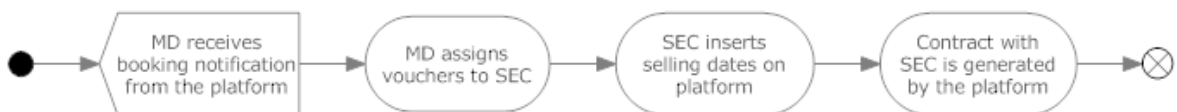
Booking confirmation by SOC

Figure 7: Sub process 7
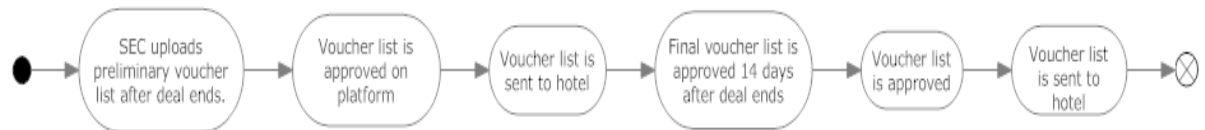
Voucher Sold lists Upload

Figure 8: Sub process 7

Payment process
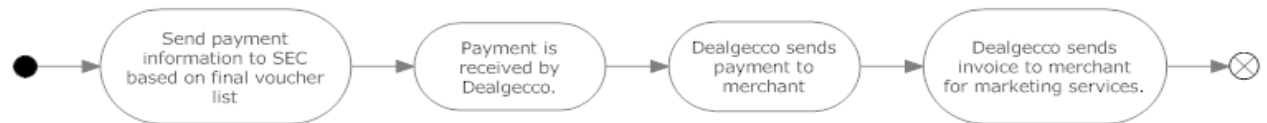
Figure 9: Sub process 8

3.1.4 Description of the interacting processes

The areas within the company have different tasks and follow different processes within the lifecycle of a deal, this division was done intending to create order and a division of tasks that would allow each area to maximize their ability to create and bring value to the company. Nevertheless, some activities require the input of several areas.

The processes in which several areas interact are described in this fragment and their interactions will be analyzed in the following chapter.

The importance of correctly defining the interacting activities is quite high when creating a quality assurance process as all the inputs, actors and actions affect the quality of the final product.

- **Lead Sourcing**

    Interaction: the process of lead sourcing alone has no interaction with other teams within the company. Nevertheless the input for this process comes from the account management and management teams. The interaction is done through a weekly meeting where the management and account management teams define the target locations. The leads that are available for the sales representative on Salesforce should be located in the cities defined in the weekly sales - account management meeting.

Figure 10: Lead sourcing

- **Package Design:**

  Interaction: currently the process of package design presents a strong interaction between the sales team and the quality assurance team. The sales team frequently sends the quality assurance team requests for package design, so the quality assurance team has to design the package. The package shall be designed by the sales team and the merchant without input from the quality assurance team as this generates difficulties for the final deal checks.
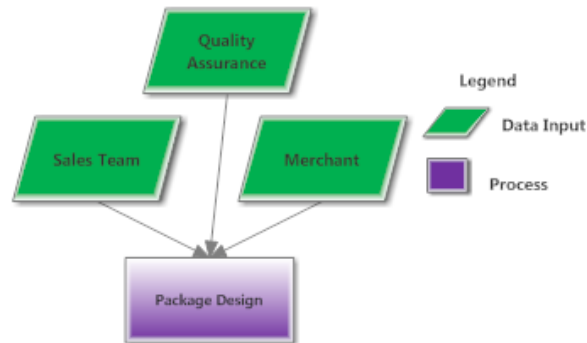
Figure 11: Package design

- **Quality Assurance:**

  Interaction: in the quality assurance process, 3 parties normally intervene; the sales representative, the quality assurance team and the management. The sales team shall create a deal ticket and send the link to it to the quality assurance team. The quality assurance department checks 10 quality points that were previously defined and are part of the deal ticket. If these points are not fulfilled, the QA team goes back to the sales representative with feedback about how to fulfill them. If the deal complies with quality standards the link is sent from QA to the managing directors who give the final approval. Once it is given, the QA team creates a PDF version of the "Client Deal Ticket" and sends it to the sales representative who forwards it to the merchant.
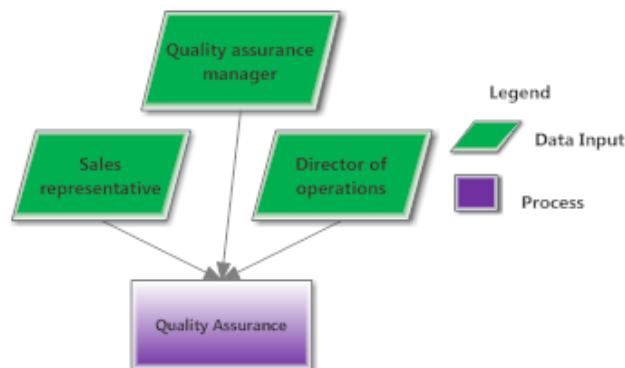
Figure 12: Quality assurance

- **Last contact between sales and merchants:**

   Interaction: three parties intervene in this process; the sales manager, the account manager and the merchant. The sales representative sends a final message welcoming the merchant to Dealgecco and puts the account manager on copy and introduces him/her to the merchant as the new point of contact in Dealgecco. As of this moment the sales representative shall not interact with the merchant any longer.
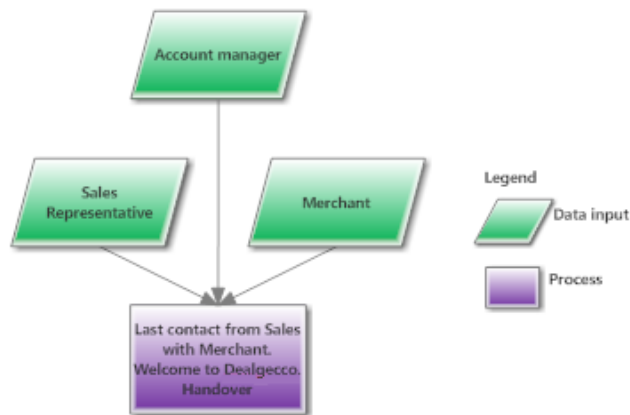
Figure 13: Deal handover

3.1.5 Exploratory interview in the sales and account management teams

3.1.5.1 Design of the interview

The questions were designed in a way in which the interviewees could describe the process of the lifecycle of the deal but also encouraging them to talk about the obstacles and problems they find with the deal lifecycle's process.

The interview was divided in two stages for the sales team; these stages are the preparation and the negotiation process.

For the process preparation it was important to obtain all the criteria that the company uses in order to complete the previous research used by the sales team to prepare before a call. The people involved in this process were enquired about the usability of the software, the quality of the leads and the research required before approaching a prospective partner.

The second stage is the negotiation stage where the sales team discusses about possible partnerships with the hotel. At this point the commission, the packages and conditions are clarified. In order to obtain a clear overview of the process the second stage of the interview was carried out.

The sales team interview was conducted with the 3 members of the team: Scott Dunbar, Niklas Mascher and Claudiu Hurban.

The account management team interview was conducted with 5 of the team members: Elena Kirova, Antonia Hammer, Nina Walters, Tommaso Tidei and Stefan Pieprzyk

The formats for the sales team and account management team interviews can be found in the annex section as ANNEX 1. The additional questions asked to some of the interviewees are in the bottom part of the format.

3.1.5.2 Result consolidation for the sales team interview.

Stage 1: Process Preparation

Question 1: How do you find the quality of the leads you are given?

Findings:

- The first step in the process is always looking for leads in Salesforce; everyone in the team follows this step.

- High quantity of leads, there are always enough leads to contact.

- It is considered that there is no knowledge regarding which leads work and which not. Although the team would like to have a direction in this sense, none of them can find a pattern from their previous experiences. They have different perspectives regarding this; some think big hotels are more likely to agree to a deal, some do not contact high end, luxurious hotels, some consider there is higher success likelihood with 3 and 4 star hotels.

Question 2: What major problems do you encounter with the leads?

Findings:

- The Salesforce software is not very intuitive or easy to use for the team.

Question 3: Do you do any previous research before contacting a lead?

Findings:

- There is not much research being done by the sales team before contacting the hotel. From the information given by them it is understood that they only look at the website in the majority of the cases.

Question 4: What kind of information do you require before contacting a lead?

Findings:

- The most relevant information is the link to the hotel's website, the number of rooms, the rating of the hotel on booking.com and a direct line to the reception.

Stage 2: Negotiation Process

Question 1: Where do you find obstacles when trying to negotiate a deal?

Findings:

- In most cases it is related to the price and the discount.

- Some hotels have done flash deals before and had bad experiences.

- Some hotels are small and do not offer extras so they do not think it suits them.

- Central hotels with a reduced number of rooms are the harder ones to get.

- Many hotels do not understand the concept and what Dealgecco can do for them.

- The validity period, as some hotels only want to have the offer for a limited time.

Question 2: What elements do you think make a deal successful?

Findings:

- The price

- The location

- Some think the extras are important, also because they increase the discount. Other opinions are that extras may not be as relevant as we do not really know if customers are interested in using them. If extras are included they should be appealing and of relevant value.

- Deals should offer the customers unique experiences.

Question 3: Which do you think are the reasons for some deals not to be booked by our partners?

Findings:

- The match between partner and deal was the most common answer.

- Seasonality affects the bookings and the number of sales for each deal.

- Having a lot of deals in the same destination affects the number of bookings for each and also the sales as the customers have a lot of options to choose from.

Question 4: Do you have any suggestions to improve our deals and/or the interaction between the sales and account management teams?

Findings:

- The process should be faster. After the client agrees to run a deal, the process slows down until they receive the contracts to sign. The last approval takes the longest during the process.

- The sales team would like to know more about what goes on in QA before the deal goes life in order to understand what they are looking for.

- Online forms should be available for the end customers. These can be the online deal ticket where clients can fill in all the details related to the hotel. Another type of formulary could be one that allows the hotels that are interested in working with us to create a deal where they can see how it will look, how much money they will receive, etc.

- Having a direct feedback from account management regarding the development of the deals and the relationship with the merchant as the sales team loses contact with the deal once they do the handover.

- Some consider the QA process is very rigid; specifically for the discount and validity period points. Also it is very strict as it requires all information to be correct such as reservation data, and marketing slogans.

- Another point that came up is handover shouldn't be done as it gives a bad impression to the end customer.

- Sometimes the sales team members feel that their position is weak when going into a negotiation and feel that more information to strengthen their position should be given.

- The deal ticket should be more informational, anticipating and answering questions.

- The communication between the sales team and account management team should be improved.

- It would be good to have profiles from the accounts to know what they should exactly be sourcing

Additional questions in the sales team interview:

Question 1: From your experience, do you know which type of Hotels is most likely to agree to a deal?

Findings:

- Bigger hotels (with more than 20 rooms) are more likely to agree to a deal as they have more space available.

- Hotels that are not in the most central areas of a city as they are not so desired among tourists as the central hotels who can always get clients on their own.

Question 2: In which stage of the process do the negotiations usually die?

Findings:

- Most merchant acquisition processes end after the second call.

- The hardest obstacle to overcome is the understanding of the company's business model. Once companies like it, they are more likely to run a deal.

3.1.5.3 Result consolidation for the Account Management team interview.

Question 1: Can you describe the process a deal goes through in the account management department?

Findings:

- The first time the account management (AM) team is in contact with the deal is when it is uploaded as a draft to the platform. Here it goes through a final quality check in order to make sure all information included was correct.

- The account managers get an email when the deal is life and this is how they find out about it. They also see it when they receive the deals of the day.

- Once the deal is life the account manager for merchants contacts the hotel to introduce him to the account; how bookings, payments and other relevant issues are handled and also to introduce themselves as their contact and support point at Dealgecco.

- Once the deal has been booked, the AM contacts the merchant again in order to tell them about the current bookings or issues regarding the deal. The

communication since that moment is permanent and both sides get in touch with each other frequently.

- When the deal is live in a partner platform the account manager's QA team receives an email with a link to the deal, at this point of the process they do a preview check to make sure all the information included in the partner's website is correct, if there are any wrong details they will ask the partner to update it.

- When the deal ends in the partner platform, the partner must upload a preliminary list with the voucher codes he sold, 14 days after that he uploads a final list. Every time a list is received, it is sent to the merchant by the account manager, this way the merchant can verify the voucher codes when taking reservations.

- Renegotiation takes place usually around one month after the deal is live, this way the account manager can see if the deal is selling well or if some things can be improved in the deal, this usually is the price or some modification in the package. It also depends directly on the deal and its features.

Question 2: How is the handover done? Are there things that could be improved?

Findings:

- There are many details that were part of the negotiation that are also important for the communication with the merchant afterwards. Currently this information is not being given to the account manager so there are voids in the information and expectations the merchant has at the time he is handed over to the account managers. A better description of the merchant, their features and expectations would improve the handover.

Question 3: How do you promote a deal to our partner platforms?

Findings:

- The deals are promoted to the partners based on a profile that the account managers have for each of their accounts, this profile is informal and developed by working with the accounts and learning about their preferences. The idea is to match the deal that fits the right platform.

- It is always useful to have extra information to promote the deals in the best possible way. Transportation info is one of the most important things. Partners want to book deals in locations that are easily reachable and offer cheap travel connections.

- Every certain time some AMs send their accounts a list of deals that could be of interest for their specific profile

- It would be useful to have business intelligence reports that allow the AMs to know which deals sell well and which not in order to better match a deal to their profile.

- It is important to really know the deal so the most sellable characteristics of the deal can be exposed to the partners, this way they are better showcased and create more interest.

- Some AMs use the deals of the day to inform the platforms about new deals. They consider this tool to be a good summary of the new deals in the platform and a good way to inform their partners about them.

- It is not very frequent but some accounts also go into the platform to book deals on their own. This would be the ideal.

Question 4: What elements do you think make a deal successful?

Findings:

- The price is the first relevant feature of a deal and it is already 50% of the success chance of a deal. The price of the deal should be low in general and not only low compared to a specific hotel.

- Location is very important, attractive cities but also attractive zones within the city are a plus for a deal

- Good transportation connections to reach the hotel. It shouldn't be far from train stations and airports.

- When the deals offer something unique they also attract a lot of attention. Innovation and novelty make a difference.

- Benefits that make sense and are not only there to increase the value of the package.

- Long validities attract more customers. 4 to 6 months is perfect.

- The discount also plays an important role on the deal. The discount should be a real discount and not fabricated from the benefits.

- Commission is very important to get bookings, the more the platforms can get, the more they will book.

- The hotel rating is important because it makes the customer more or less attracted to stay at the hotel.

- People look at the price and what they are getting for that price in order to see if it is worth buying.

- Being able to add and take extras away will give the partners a broader choice and further satisfy their necessities.

- Pictures make a big difference in sales and bookings, the quality of the pictures should be controlled.

Question 5: Which do you think are the reasons for some deals not to be booked by our partners?

Findings:

- There is too much competition and options for the customers therefore they become pickier and they only book the very best deals or wait until the right deal for them comes along.

- Some platforms just want to try out what works and what doesn't so they book offers that do not necessarily fit their market, this creates a bad match and therefore no vouchers are sold.

- The main reason is the partner-deal combination. Some platforms do not have enough reach; others just do not aim to the right market and do not know their end customer so they do not book the right deals.

- The more statistics we have, the better matching we can make.

Question 6: Do you have any suggestions to improve our deals and/or the interaction between the sales and account management teams?

Findings:

- For the leads, it would be good to look into regional booking engines in order to find more hotels that could be willing to work with Dealgecco.

- The deal tickets should be written in a more end-customer oriented manner. The information in the deal tickets is transferred to the platform. It would be ideal if it could be directly transferred but normally it is written in a very superficial way, this takes time for the QA process and the deal upload.

- A database with the most relevant information for the regions where Dealgecco has deals would help us give the platforms more interesting information to help them better showcase their deals to the end customer.

- The handover between sales and account management should improve; the information should be more complete and relevant, not leaving any details out. Currently it is very superficial and this reduces the quality of service the account managers can offer the merchants, it also makes the company look unprofessional as they perceive there is no inner communication.

- Merchants should be made more aware of the process in general, how Dealgecco works, how do they get their payments, how bookings are done, etc.

- There should be more encouragement for the merchants to communicate the information about the deal that will be on Dealgecco so all the staff at the hotel is aware. This will reduce the amount of problems that currently exist with merchants and surely will increase the amount of repeat business the merchants have.

- All the processes in the platform should aim to be more automated, so the account managers do not have to guide the platforms through the processes every time they want to go into the Dealgecco platform.

- The communication between teams should improve as currently the interaction between them is not very efficient.

- The general knowledge of the platform from all parties should be better; everyone should have an idea of how to work with the platform, what is new in it, who are the main partners and what is the role in our company.

- Leaner processes within the company would improve the productivity of the account management team.

Additional questions in the account management team interview:

Question 1: Do you know if the merchants get repeat business from our deals?

 Findings:

- So far it is too early to determine if they get repeat business as less than one year has gone by since we are fully operative and people usually do not travel so many times within a year.

- The hotels should be reminded of their responsibility in this matter. They should offer their guests a great experience so they look forward to come back and pay full price.

- Direct contacts in the hotel are necessary to have a more accurate communication, sometimes the contacts are the revenue managers who are not really present at the hotel and can therefore give a reduced amount of information in comparison to a person who is permanently at the hotel

Question 2: What impressions do you get from the merchants regarding their experience with Dealgecco?

Findings:

- Some merchants are happy with the processes at Dealgecco even if they do not have so many sales. Others have different expectations compared to what really happens so the process becomes confusing for them.

Question 3: Could you briefly describe what you think the profile of our end customer is?

- Predominantly couples between the ages of 20 to 40 years old.

- It can vary from platform to platform; some platforms are directed to specific types of customers. There are for example platforms for mothers with young children or platforms for sports fans.

Question 4: Do you find any problems when promoting the deals?

Findings:

- The most frequent problem is that they do not respond to emails sent suggesting possible deals. It is not possible to know if they saw the deal or not and why they didn't book it.

Question 5: What objections do you find when offering a deal to a partner?

Findings:

- Most commonly is the price of the deal as they consider it is too high.

- Many platforms also see benefits as free things and do not realize they also affect the price but create a more appealing package.

Question 6: What other information do you think would be useful to promote the deals?

Findings:

- Information regarding cheap airlines and the ability to reach the destinations.

3.2 DETERMINATION OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE PROCESSES AND THEIR QUALITY STANDARDS REGARDING THE DEAL LIFECYCLE.

The design of a quality system is based on the current activities done within the company and their state at the moment of the design. Therefore it's important to lead a thorough process diagnosis as it allows an overview of what is being done correctly and what not and of the steps that can be implemented to improve the process. With this objective, a detailed process diagnosis and a SWOT matrix will be included in this chapter.

Also in this chapter, there is a description of the current state of the quality assurance processes in the deal's lifecycle.

3.2.1 Process diagnosis.

Diagnosis is the process of understanding a system's current functioning. It involves collecting pertinent information about current operations, analyzing those data, and drawing conclusions for potential change and improvement. (Worley & Cummings, 2008) In accordance with this definition, the main source of information for this diagnosis will be the one obtained in the previous chapter through the interview with the employees, the writer's observation and the flow and process diagrams.

Each relevant activity in the process was analyzed and diagnosed including this criteria:

Team members: who are the teams working on the activity.

Positive aspects: which aspects are currently done correctly and should remain this way.

Task clarity: wether the task and its requirements are or not accomplished in the process.

Aspects to improve: aspects that can be included improving and obtaining a more regular process and a succesful end to it.

The activities that were analyzed are the following:

- Lead sourcing
- The first contact with the merchants
- Package design
- Creation of deal ticket and merchant agreement

- Quality assurance
- Merchant handover
- Deal upload
- Account management (Bookings)

Activity:	Lead Sourcing		
Team members:	The sales support team is integrated by one person.	**Goal:**	To supply enough leads for the sales team to contact in the specifically defined cities.
Positive aspects	Good availability of leads to contact.	**Task Clarity:**	There is a good knowledge of what should be done according to the guidelines that have been given.
Aspects to Improve	• Inclusion of a contact name from merchant (If possible) • Lead categorization. • Better knowledge regarding the Salesforce software. • Include regional websites for lead sourcing		

Activity:	First Contact with merchant		
Team members:	All three members from the sales team	**Goal:**	To introduce the merchants to the Dealgecco business model and concept.
Positive aspects	The pitch and presentation together solve most potential questions from the merchants and present a good overview of Dealgecco.	**Task Clarity:**	The task is clear for the sales team
Aspects to Improve	The activity is done according to the expectations set for it.		

Activity	Package Design		
Team members	All three members from the sales team	**Goal**	To design an appealing package for the end customers with the input of the sales team and the merchant.
Positive aspects	Some of the packages are very appealing, offering valuable and interesting extras.	**Task Clarity**	The task in this case appears to be unclear as it is done different than expected.
Aspects to Improve	• The research done by the sales team before going into the package design stage is rather poor. • The package design is not done jointly by the sales team and the merchant; usually it is only the merchant who creates the package, lacking the expertise and advice of the sales representative. • The QA team is intervening a lot in this process, even creating the actual package which develops into a difficult situation when checking the deal and reduces the objectiveness.		

Activity	Creation of deal ticket and merchant agreement		
Team members	All three members from the sales team	**Goal**	To properly create and save the deal documentation (merchant agreement and deal ticket)
Positive aspects	The activity is always completed and all deals have the appropriate documentation in the deal folder.	**Task Clarity**	Although the task is clear, there are frequently incomplete deal tickets sent to QA.
Aspects to Improve	• The deal tickets are very frequently incomplete and have to be completed by the quality assurance team. • There is no attention to detail when creating the deal ticket and merchant agreement.		

Activity	Quality assurance		
Team members	Quality assurance Team	Goal	To guarantee that the deals sourced by the sales team comply with the specified quality requirements.
Positive aspects	The teams recognize the QA process as an important and valuable step inside the process.	Task Clarity	The task is clear and performed according to the specifications.
Aspects to Improve	• The sales team would like to be more involved in the QA process and in its outcome. • For specific periods and seasons the QA points can be more flexible for deals with high demand.		

Activity	Merchant Handover		
Team members	Sales team/ Account manager for merchants	Goal	To completely and efficiently do the handover of accounts after the deal negotiation process is finalized.
Positive aspects	Some of the sales representatives introduce the account manager to the merchant so they know who their contact point in Dealgecco is.	Task Clarity	There is no clarity about this task or an established process for it.
Aspects to Improve	• The lack of a handover process is affecting the relationship with the merchants as many details are lost in the middle. • All information about the merchant should be given to the account manager; this includes their expectations, negotiation style and specific details. • The sales team also wants to get further information regarding the deal and its development after the handover is done.		

Activity:	Deal Upload			
Team members	Account Management Support	**Goal**	To upload the deals according to the details found on the deal ticket.	
Positive aspects	This process works very well and according to the process guidelines.	**Task Clarity**	The task is clear and is done appropriately within the process.	
Aspects to Improve	The process runs well, therefore there are no improvement suggestions.			

Activity	Account Management (Bookings)			
Team members	Account Management	**Goal**	To offer deals to the partner platforms and obtain high quality bookings from them.	
Positive aspects	The account managers create a profile for their accounts according to their experience with them and advise them on which deals to book.	**Task Clarity**	The task is clear and done according to the specifications.	
Aspects to Improve	• Some bookings result in no vouchers being sold; one of the reasons for this can be the mismatch between the site and the offer. • The sites frequently need to be pushed to book a deal and the process should be automated. • The account managers lack some useful information when pushing a deal to a platform, the more information they have regarding the deal and the area increases the likelihood of a high quality booking.			

3.2.2 Analysis of the interacting processes in the lifecycle of a deal

- **Lead sourcing**

Analysis: the interaction within this process is vital as it is the first direction towards value generation in the process.

The leads are the first input on the deal lifecycle and therefore should point to the desired targets, in this case the desired cities. The meeting where these targets are defined is done in a weekly basis and the list of cities comes from what the platforms request from the account managers, therefore deals in these cities have a high likelihood of selling well.

The interaction in this process is done properly and has a positive effect on the process.

Potential issues: frequently the sales team also wants to have an influence on the decision of the locations where the leads are sourced, this is how it was done before but it created a lack of constancy and locations were randomly changed without following the correct process, this led to negotiation processes being improperly handled or finished without coming to a conclusion.

- **Package design**

Analysis: currently the interactions in this process are not being done properly. The only parties interacting here should be the sales representative and the merchant but there is a lack of interaction with the merchant because either each party designs the package alone or the package is designed by the quality assurance team. In both cases the process is not being properly done.
The interaction should be limited to only the merchant and the sales representative in order to obtain the best results in the package design process.

Potential issues: there are several aspects that are affected by these interactions. If the package is designed by the quality assurance department, there is a strong chance that the quality checks are done less thoroughly and there is more room for mistakes as the person who created a package will be less objective when judging it.
The other potential issue is that the merchant and the sales representative by not negotiating the deal together are missing the chance to get the whole potential from it. The sales representative has the expertise to advise the merchant regarding the best-selling points a deal can bring to the platform and this experience is valuable when designing a package. On the other hand the knowledge from the merchant is a valuable asset when designing the deal; the merchant knows everything the property has to offer, what the customers enjoy and appreciate the most at the hotel, the profile of the customer that visits the property and other important information. The mix of the two views will lead to a successful deal but the lack of them can lessen the sales of a particular offer.

- **Quality assurance**

Analysis: the interactions within this process work according to the defined standards. This is probably the process where most people interact and give input to the activity. It is very valuable for the sales team to receive feedback from both the QA department and the managing directors when the deals are not approved. Therefore it would be very useful to

create an intermediate process that gives official feedback regarding the reasons why the deal was not accepted. This will allow the QA team to keep records of approved and declined deals and it will allow the sales representative to work on the specific features of the deal that are not satisfying.

Potential issues: as it was mentioned before, one big issue arises when the QA team works on deal packages as the required objectiveness cannot be achieved. Another issue that has appeared is that the QA team has to take a large amount of time to finish the deal tickets as they are sent incomplete; it is the task of the sales team to finish the deal ticket. All the information in the deal ticket should come from the merchant and should be included in the deal ticket by the sales representative in order to have direct and verifiable information in order to assure a correct use of the deal by the end customers.

- **Last contact between sales and merchants:**

Analysis: this process currently has no established guidelines, which makes the further development of the deal difficult as the account manager has only partial information regarding the negotiations and expectations of the merchant.
It is of great importance to create a process or tool for this activity so it is followed regularly in order to increase customer satisfaction and awareness. This will reduce the amount of problems that appear due to the existence of misunderstandings by the merchant. These problems have jeopardized previous deals.

Potential issues: the handover of the deals is a very important point in the deal lifecycle as it is used as an information bridge; Information that is vital for the good development of the deal for Dealgecco, the platforms, the merchant and the end customer.
If the merchants have specific expectations that the account manager is not aware of, it will be hard to meet them and satisfy the merchant. This can result in the end of a deal contract, affecting the end customers and partner platforms.

3.2.3 Analysis of the interactions between the teams involved in the lifecycle of a deal

- **Sales team**

  Description: the sales team is integrated by three sales representatives and it is supported by one person on the sales support side. The sales team is in charge of obtaining offers for uploading to the platform with Dealgecco as an SOC. They have to contact merchants in previously defined target destinations and create travel packages at discounted prices that are then published by Dealgecco's partner platforms around the world.

  Interactions: the sales team interacts mostly with the account management team; the official interaction that can be mapped within the process is the merchant handover. This activity is very important to ensure the appropriate development of the deal, but as it was mentioned before it has no specific process designed for it.

The sales team also has spontaneous interactions with the account management team regarding requests from platforms and the development of current deals as the account management team has information coming directly from the source.

In order to improve the interaction between both teams, the Sales – Account management meeting was created. This meeting takes place once a week and has as main objectives to analyze the performance of each deal uploaded in the past month and define future target locations according to the interest of the platforms. In this meeting the account managers give the sales team feedback regarding the deals, what the platforms have liked or disliked and how to improve them.

- **Account management team**

   Description: the account management team is integrated by four account managers and supported by one person. The team promotes all the offers that are uploaded to the platform by Dealgecco and other SOCs. The result is that these accounts feature the offers on their platforms during a specific period. They also support the accounts in all matters connected to the deals.

   Interactions: the account management team has the most contact with all areas of the company. The interactions with the sales team were already defined in the previous point.

   This team also cooperates a lot with the product management and IT teams as they are in constant use of the platform. They are also responsible for training their accounts in the use of the platform so they constantly have to be aware of the new features in order to introduce them to the accounts. They also give feedback to these teams that comes from the experience of the accounts while working with the platform.

   Another important interaction for this team is with the accounting department. The accounting department produces the payment information for the platforms and sends it but in the end it is the account manager's responsibility to ensure that the payments are received from the SECs. These teams need to be in constant communication to make sure all due payments are received and all potential issues are solved.

3.2.4 SWOT Matrix

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Flat hierarchy within the company leading to lean processes and quick responses • Established work flow for the deal life cycle • Support and input from all areas involved in the process • Several check points that ensure positive outcomes • Direct and close relationships with partner platforms	• Lack of a structured process within particular activities • Communication barriers within the teams • Some tasks within the process are not clear for the executors • Not enough information available regarding the potential of each partner and their market • Low level of automation within the processes
• High number of daily deal platforms around the world • Higher travel potential due to low-price flights • Performance data and information available for better knowledge of the partner platforms • Open information sources with data to market the deals strategically	• Potential increased growth of the market and thus of the partners in the platform, undermining the capacity of the teams • Increasing pricing awareness from customers • Lack of knowledge of the market from the platforms leading to low quality bookings • Market saturation due to the large amount of players
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

3.2.5 Current quality standards within the process

The current process flow has no established quality check processes although some processes have inherent quality requirements that will be discussed in this passage.

It is important to highlight that although there is a major quality assurance step in the process, it controls the end product and not the process in itself.

The first process with quality requirements is the lead sourcing. In this process, the expected output has previously defined requirements or characteristics. Each lead should include the name of the hotel, the website, the number of rooms, the city, the country, TripAdvisor ratings and booking.com ratings. If these elements are not included in the lead, the lead will be considered incomplete and therefore not complying with 'quality standards'.

The final product obtained from the package design process is checked by the quality assurance team, but the process in itself is not verified.

The deal ticket and merchant agreement are always checked by the quality assurance team and should be returned to the sales representative if not properly completed.

The quality assurance process has a check list that allows the checking of all points of the offer and therefore has some level of verification; nevertheless it can certainly be improved.

The bookings made by the SECs also have two processes or tools that help assure a better process and product quality; the first one is the deal preview where the SECs send the deal to the quality assurance team to check that the contents are correct and according to the offer. The second process is the deal tracking that as its name indicates, tracks the evolution of the deal and alerts the account managers regarding the necessary steps that should be taken for the booking process to develop properly.

The rest of the processes have no established quality checks and the ones mentioned before require relevant changes in order to run a smooth and efficient process.

3.3 DEFINITION OF THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS WITHIN THE PROCESSES AND IDENTIFICATION OF THEIR CAUSES

This chapter will illustrate the most relevant problems for each process in the deal lifecycle. These problems have been observed in the results of the interview as well as on the day-to-day work at the company. They affect the correct operation of the processes and therefore risk the quality of the end product.

3.3.1 Relevant problems through the deal lifecycle

This section shows the problems encountered in each of the steps of the deal lifecycle.

- Contact with merchants

    - The merchants frequently do not get a good overview of how the process works, especially when it refers to payment and bookings but also regarding the nature and functionality of the platform.

- Package design

    - The second and most important negotiation stage is usually entered without doing pertinent research about the hotel and the potential of a possible deal.

- Creation of deal ticket and merchant agreement

    - The process of creating the documents is not very practical and can take long, especially when there is information missing.

    - The merchants are not at all involved in the process, making the information flow slower as they do not have any input possibilities.

    - The deal tickets are given to the QA team with incomplete content.

- Quality assurance

    - The final QA approval can take long, delaying the finalization of the deal.

    - The sales team considers they should be more involved in the QA process as they would like to have further feedback about the deal and learn about the process.

    - After some time goes by, the hotel prices fluctuate and the deal stops being a deal.

- The quality of pictures is not being assured in the process.

- Handover

    - There is no established process for the handover of the merchants from the sales to the account management team.

    - The account manager doesn't know the negotiation details for each deal and needs to start from scratch with the merchant instead of continuing a process.

- Bookings from SECs

    - It is difficult to find the right match between platform and deal to ensure there will be good sales.

    - There are not a lot of statistics available to analyze which bookings work and which not.

    - The platforms do not book on their own and have to frequently be pushed to see and select deals to book.

- SEC deal process

    - The SECs frequently do their assigned tasks after the deadlines which stops the process leading to dissatisfaction from the SOCs

- Other problems

    - The sales team requires further knowledge about the use of Salesforce.

    - The sales activity tracking is difficult to do when the sales representatives do not update the deals after each stage.

    - The poor communication and feedback between the sales and account management teams affects the relationships with merchants and the accomplishment of goals.

    - The merchants sometimes do not communicate the existence of the deal to the hotel staff making the booking process complicated.

    - The communication between teams is currently not very efficient or frequent.

- There is a lack of knowledge about the use of the platform and its features from the teams that do not work together with it. This is also the case for many general Dealgecco relevant topics.

3.3.2 Most frequent causes for encountered problems

- The lack of an established process in the case of the handover.

- Unstructured communication strategies between team.

- Insufficient feedback between activities and parties involved.

- Missing relevant information in the process conduction.

- Absence of task awareness in determined activities.

- Bottle necks and obstacle in the information compilation phase as well as in some process steps.

- Poor involvement of the merchant in the deal lifecycle.

3.3.3 Ishikawa Diagram (Cause and Effect)

All the problems exposed in the diagnosis and identified through the interview and observation of processes, add up - as its causes- to a general problem that has to be tackled. This problem is the inefficiency in the deal lifecycle process. This diagram shows the general problem and illustrates its potential causes.
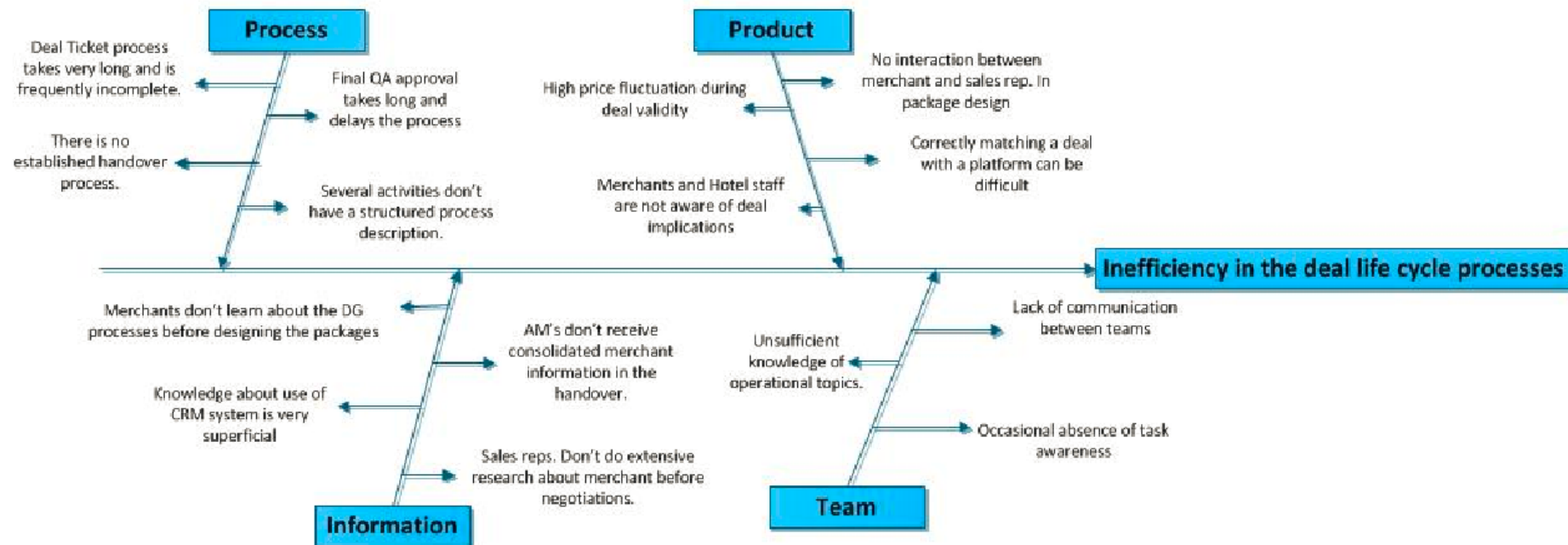
3.4 PROPOSITION OF A SOLUTION TO THE ENCOUNTERED PROBLEMS

Throughout the development of this project, the main goal has been to design a quality control system for the 'Deal lifecycle'. This lifecycle starts with the process of sourcing leads for potential merchants and ends when the last guest leaves the hotel and a new deal package is designed with the merchant. By analyzing the processes that constitute the deal lifecycle, several opportunities for improvement were encountered and evaluated providing the results listed in this chapter.

3.4.1 Suggestions for improvement of the deal lifecycle

In the Ishikawa diagram that was presented in the previous chapter, the problems were assigned to four different sources. These sources are: team, information, process and product related issues. Suggestions for improvement are proposed in this section for the most relevant matters within these sources.

Product

- **Deal – Partner matching feature:** the partners that work with Dealgecco ideally have good knowledge about the market they are working in and have specific targets for their deals. Through the interviews that were led with the account management team, a situation that was mentioned several times was the difficulty to correctly offer and match deals with partners and the lack of initiative from the partners to log into the platform and look through the large number of deals that Dealgecco constantly offers.

  As a solution to this issue a Deal – Partner matching feature is proposed. The feature will consist of a notification of the availability of a deal that features the partner's requirements.

  On the platform there is currently a filter that can save previous searches according to the needs of a partner but according to statistics from the platform it has only been used three times since April 2012 when it was made available. The root of this problem can be linked to the fact that partners do not take the time to log-into the platform and therefore do not even have the chance to use it and the active partners are either not aware of it or would rather go through all deals.

  The goal of this feature is to learn the preferences of partners throughout the duration of their collaboration with Dealgecco and to offer them the best fitting deals according to these preferences while increasing the ways of keeping them active in the platform.

  Partners are more active and motivated at the moment of registration to the platform; therefore this will be the ideal time to get them to inform Dealgecco about

what kind of deals they are looking for. This will be done through an information input mask that will look very similar to the one that is currently used as the search filter and will appear on the first time they sign into the platform as a mandatory step before being able to see the deals. The information given by the partners will be saved in the database and each time a matching deal is uploaded to the website, the partners will receive an e-mail with a link directing them to the deal.

This feature will ideally lead to more high quality bookings as it brings together the interests of the partner's target market with the available deals without having to go through the huge list of offers and eventually missing the fitting ones. It will also be a new tool to lure the partners to log into the platform and will potentially reduce the time account managers devote to sending emails with potentially interesting deals to inactive partners in the effort of turning them active in the platform. Finally it will provide a first impression of what the partners' interests are.

The implementation of this feature would require one month and the work of the two members of the IT team.

- **Merchant manual:** many of the merchants that work with Dealgecco have not had previous experience in dealing with deal vouchers and therefore had problems to envision the necessary steps to take in order to run a deal successfully. Other partners that had run deals previously also had to face different processes due to the fact that Dealgecco operates in the B2B segment and therefore encountered some issues.

As the negotiation process takes a long time and all the processes are not easy to grasp in the midst of it, by the time customers arrive to the hotel or even start booking, the merchant is confused about how to follow the process.

With the goal of making the merchant more aware of the processes and providing a tool to which they can refer when dealing with bookings or the offer in general, a merchant manual was created.

The merchant manual explains the main processes a deal goes through and which actions need to be taken by the merchant in order to run it successfully. The processes are explained in a step by step manner so merchants know what they should expect in each stage of the deal lifecycle.

The merchant manual is meant to help the merchants solve more of the potential issues that arise on their own and to clarify their doubts and questions, leading to a decrease of the amount of time an account manager has to dedicate to solving questions from the merchant throughout the process.

The merchant manual can be found in the annex section as ANNEX 4.

- **Establishment of a price verification task:** due to the fluctuation of prices that creates problems regarding the deal quality, a new task was established for the quality assurance team in order to verify the deal price on a continuous basis. The task was established and described in the process manual (ANNEX 5) as follows: Once a month the quality assurance team conducts a price search that consists of verifying the deal price with the current prices on booking engines. If there have been any substantial changes, the team will suggest a modification of the deal data if even with the change the deal still complies with the quality assurance requirements. Otherwise the team will suggest the account manager a deal renegotiation.

Process:

- **Online deal ticket:** the sales team stated in the interviews their desire of making the deal ticket process more interactive with the merchant and reducing the waiting times. To solve these issues the creation of an online deal ticket was proposed.

  The process will involve the use of a format of the same type as that being used when creating a deal on the platform. This format will include the fields that appear in the 'Deal Ticket – Client' tab. The merchants will be able to input and review the information through a unique link that they will receive from the sales manager. When the merchants access the deal ticket format, all contact information and negotiation terms will already be included. These fields are:
    - Deal price
    - Commission
    - Total number of vouchers available
    - Number of vouchers available per customer
    - Duration of the stay
    - Benefits
    - Validity period
    - Contract specifics and surcharges
    - Blackout dates
    - Refund policy
    - Links to ratings
    - Number of people included in the deal.

  The merchant will be requested to enter their payment information, hotel check in and check out times, booking instructions, children and pets policy as well as being able to upload the pictures they desire to feature which will also serve as an on-the-spot image size and quality check that has been a constant suggestion to increase deal featuring quality.

  Once the merchants insert all the required information, they will be able to send the contract for final approval to the quality assurance team who will be able to access a quality tab in which they will do the final check in the same way they are currently checked on the deal ticket and if the deal is approved it will be sent to the merchant

in a PDF version via an automatic email from the platform, otherwise the process will be as usual and the deal shall be renegotiated.

The items that are not included in the deal ticket client can be inserted in the deal upload process and provided by the sales team.

This feature will reduce the waiting times in the process as many times the merchants take long to send information and revise the deal ticket after it is sent by the sales manager. The feature also aims to reduce the amount of mistakes or incomplete data in the payment information and hotel policies as it will be inserted directly by the merchant without allowing any room for confusion. The involvement of the merchant in the process will represent an advantage for it by creating more solid relationships with the customer and commitment on their part as well as providing a space for process feedback that will lead to its continuous improvement.

This process will take one month and will require the work of the two members of the IT team.

- **Handover Process:** after the negotiation process with the merchant ends and a deal is ready to be uploaded to the platform, the sales manager stops being the contact point of the merchant in the company and hands this task to the account manager who will introduce the merchants to the processes the deal will go through and assist them with any concerns regarding their deal.

Up to now, there has been no established handover process for this and the account managers frequently find themselves lacking information about the merchants, which the sales manager gathered during the negotiation process.

With the purpose of ensuring complete knowledge transfer between both teams it was considered necessary to establish a handover process and format so the account manager effectively receives all the information about the merchants before the first contact with them. The merchant handover format includes the basic deal details, a section where the merchant's preferences should be included and one for the impressions the sales manager had from the merchant in the negotiation phase. The format also gives way to the introduction of the account manager to the merchant by including three questions regarding the appropriate development of the task. The format can be found in ANNEX 6.

The appropriate use of this format will improve the communication between teams and the knowledge transfer regarding customers and deals. It will also play an important role in increasing customer satisfaction and reducing potential issues with end customers by understanding since the beginning the merchant's expectations and limitations concerning the deals.

During the interviews it was also a concern from the sales managers that they didn't receive any further information about the deal once it was handed over to the

account managers, aiming to keep both parties updated, a 'Merchant history' format is also proposed. This format includes the information regarding the identification of the deal on the platform, the different feedback, events and observations regarding the deal. This format will be available in each of the merchant folders and can be accessed by all the members of the Dealgecco team who are encouraged to include all information related to the deal or the merchant in the available fields. The format can be found in ANNEX 7

- **Dealgecco process and platform tasks manuals**: during the interview and throughout the observation process it came to notice that there were no process manuals for the different tasks and processes developed in the company. The existence of process manuals is vital to ensure the good realization of tasks, appropriate training of new employees, an effective follow-up of established standards, the achievement of continuous improvement goals and the guarantee of quality oriented processes.

  In order to establish a quality assurance process such manuals play a role of great importance and are therefore some of the most substantial tools developed during the project. The process manual includes all the necessary actions for the development of the deal lifecycle, these actions are:
  - Lead sourcing
  - Sales
  - Quality assurance
  - Deal upload
  - Account management (merchants)
  - Account management (partners)
  - On-platform quality assurance
  - Customer support

  Each description takes into account the following components:
  - Objective
  - Scope
  - Responsibilities
  - Definitions
  - Supplies
  - Results
  - Interaction with other processes or teams
  - Policies
  - Process description
  - Formats

  Not all processes include all these descriptive items as they are not relevant in some cases.

  The process manual is available in the ANNEX 5

The other manual that was developed as a part of the project is the platform tasks manual. The purpose of this manual is to illustrate each of the tasks that are done through the platform on a step by step basis. This manual will be specifically useful to those using the platform for the first time and will potentially reduce the time invested in training and answer many concerns for the users.

In the manual, the following activities were described

o Deal upload: creating a new deal and copying and existing deal
o Deal quality assurance
o Bookings on Dealgecco
o Deal launch (deal preview)
o Voucher lists: preliminary and final voucher list uploads
o Payment process: payment information, SEC payment to SOC, Handling fees.
o Other relevant tasks: new registrations and opening deals for new SECs

Each activity included the following elements in the description:

o Who is responsible for the activity
o Where it is done – on or off platform
o Tools and alerts available for the task
o How to do the task
o Tips

The platform tasks manual is available in the ANNEX 8

Information:

- **QA Feedback:** the deals always go through a quality assurance process that approves or declines them. It is the task of the sales team to improve these deals according to the suggestions provided by the quality assurance team.

The sales team manifested through the interviews the desire of having a more complete feedback from the quality assurance team, with the aim of doing this and assuring the optimal modification of deals. In order for them to comply with the quality assurance requirements, a feedback format was designed.

This format will be used only in the case in which a deal is declined. The format specifies the reasons why a deal was rejected and for each of the potential reasons it includes the current information that does not comply with the requirements and the required changes that will lead to the approval of the deal.

The feedback format shall be sent to the sales manager and uploaded to the merchant's folder by the quality assurance team.

The format is available on the ANNEX 9.

- **Sales process awareness:** the sales process is one of the most important steps in the deal lifecycle as it initiates the contact with merchants, introduces the business model and creates the deal. The knowledge and experience of the sales manager is vital for the success of the deal and it is therefore portrayed as a competitive advantage when designing a deal with Dealgecco.

  The sales manager is responsible for explaining the processes to the merchant and make sure that they are understood and the merchant is prepared to create and feature a deal.

  Through the observation process it was evidenced that many merchants design their deals with some input from the sales managers but not with the full guidance they are able to provide. Another aspect that was encountered is that merchants frequently do not understand the processes and therefore have completely different expectations when running the deal.

  With the aim of reducing these situations a process discussion session in which the importance of these two highly relevant aspects of the process is highlighted is suggested. This session can be established as a regular activity in which sales managers can discuss what works in the process and what doesn't and provide feedback for continuously improving it.

- **Usability of tools:** through the different processes in the deal lifecycle there are several relevant tools such as templates, software and applications. The use of these tools can be frequently neglected leading to long process lead times or mistakes.

  The ability to use relevant software like Salesforce or templates like the deal ticket is important in order to obtain a high quality process. It is advised to have short training sessions in the use of all these tools to ensure an appropriate and efficient use of them that will lead to a better quality in the processes.

Team

- **Dealgecco Bulletin:** some teams are constantly well informed about operational and current company topics such as changes in the platform, projects and relevant information but some are uninformed concerning these topics.

  With the aim of keeping all teams updated in all relevant fields the creation of a monthly information online-bulletin for employees is suggested. In the bulletin all important projects of the month can be presented as well as the bestselling deals and platforms which frequently are ignored by some of the teams, important announcements and initiatives.

  The bulletin can improve the exchange of information between teams and the responsibility of developing it can be rotated so that in each edition a different point of view and approach is portrayed. The development of the bulletin will involve the

contact of the responsible team with all of the other teams in order to obtain the information that will be included in the bulletin.

- **Task checklists:** during the interviews another aspect that was reflected was the lack of task awareness in some processes. Looking to provide a tool to improve this aspect, task checklists for the processes were developed. These checklists are very simple and do not include any development information but only the list of necessary activities in each process as well as mentioning the required formats.

  The following task lists were developed:
  o Lead sourcing (ANNEX 10)
  o Sales (ANNEX 11)
  o Quality assurance (ANNEX 12)
  o Deal upload (ANNEX 13)
  o Account management (merchants) (ANNEX 14)
  o Customer support (ANNEX 15)
  The lack of an account management (partners) checklist is due to the variability of the activities in this process.

3.4.2 Quality assurance system

Based on the interviews, observation and other tools that were used for gathering the information related to the deal process, a simple quality assurance system was designed. This system is available in the quality manual (ANNEX 16).

The quality assurance system is composed of several items that shape the process.

The first item is the quality policy in which the commitment of the company towards quality is expressed. This statement sets the base for the development of the quality assurance system as it is the initial guideline that establishes the goals and limits of it.

The manual continues defining the responsibilities within the system. One member of the quality assurance team will be responsible for the development and implementation of the quality assurance system, this person will have the authority to analyze processes and inquire about them to the members involved. This person will also have the responsibility of training the teams, develop communication mechanisms, propose solutions to the encountered problems and most importantly guarantee that the system is being deployed effectively.

The management will also play an important role in the project by supporting and validating the existence of the process. The commitment of the management is relevant as it transmits the importance of the process to the team. The management will review and assess the process and the proposals submitted by the quality assurance team in a periodical manner.

After the different responsibilities, policies and limits of the quality system have been defined, the actual necessary tasks in the system are explained. The quality assurance team must verify the development and results of specific tasks that have been considered as checkpoints as they influence the development of the process chain in the deal lifecycle.

These tasks have been divided in the different sections that make up the quality system.

- Product design: the product design involves the complete sales process, all the tasks done in this phase affect the quality of the end product and therefore the satisfaction of partners and end customers. The product design is also divided in input and output sections as well as a final review and verification phase.

  The input phase verifies that all the input data and processes are accurately and effectively communicated. This starts with the verification of leads which are the first step of the process. All leads need to provide the relevant information to the sales manager and all target locations should be defined by the management. In this section, the communication of the relevant information for the end customer also plays a strong role as it provides them with the bases to understand how to redeem the deals. Information provided by the merchants is also vital as the partners will rely on it to promote the deal.

  The output phase also focuses a lot in the information of a deal as this is what the customers see when buying a voucher. Here the complete delivery of documents, pictures and information is verified as well as the transfer of information between teams which is done on the deal handover, a process that was further established in the project.

  The phase of design review and verification relies deeply in the deal quality assurance process and the quality assurance team that controls the passage of the deal between stages.

- Document and data control: documentation and data are highly important in the deal lifecycle as they are the written assurance and guarantee of the service that is sold to the end customer. In this phase all documentation is checked and verified. The work on this phase can be verified for each deal but it also includes periodical tasks to keep track of all documentation. The guarantee of the availability and accuracy of the documents reduces potential issues that lead to the dissatisfaction of customers and partners.

- Product identification and traceability: the ability to trace and identify deals and issues quickly is important in order to solve customer and partner related issues that frequently need to be done promptly. In the platform this can be done easily but in the internal database it takes more time. For this reason the availability of traceable features in the deal ticket is important and will be monitored. Another aspect of traceability is for the merchants and partners to be able to keep track of their deal.

For this purpose it is important to verify that all previews are received and done and all merchants receive the links where they can see and monitor their offer.

- Process control: it is an important task within the quality system to guarantee that processes are being developed according to their guidelines. With this purpose the process manual was designed. The quality assurance team should verify that processes are done accordingly and provide training to the team members if necessary. If the processes are not being performed according to the guidelines, the quality assurance team should monitor them and analyze the potential causes and solutions for the matter.

- Servicing: the service Dealgecco provides for its partners and merchants has an important influence in their level of satisfaction. The quality system requires the verification of the timely answer of all enquiries and the communication of these enquiries to the relevant parties.

The manual also refers to the tools designed for the quality system and includes checklists for the required activities in each inspected section.

Finally, the manual establishes the necessity of running internal audits every six months in which all teams are involved. This will ideally lead to a continuous improvement oriented quality system that will be effective thanks to the involvement of all teams and relevant parties.

3.5 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS AS A PROOF OF CONCEPT (POC) AND ANALYSIS OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

As a proof of concept for the quality assurance process, the servicing portion of the quality manual was implemented. This was done by monitoring the customer support team during a period of time in which the process and its results were analyzed.

3.5.1 The customer support department

Since the definition of the business processes in the company, it was established that the account managers were responsible for supporting their customers. The customers in this case are all the partners that book deals on the Dealgecco platform. These customers face all sorts of situations regarding the deal.

- They analyze the available deals and compare them to the needs of their customers to determine if these deals are a good match.

- They go through the process of booking, producing and featuring a deal.

- They are in contact with end customers and therefore receive all questions and complaints regarding the deal.

- They are responsible for the after-sales process of uploading and updating voucher lists and information for end customers, partners and Dealgecco.

All these different questions and situations were becoming very time consuming for the account managers who have other responsibilities that are vital for the business.

The customer support team parted from the need of servicing Dealgecco customers according to their expectations while allowing account managers to have more available time for their other tasks.

The customer support team was then integrated by two persons who could alternate their responsibilities with those of the customer support department. There were two types of inquiries; travel and product and it was decided that all issues related to end customer problems were going to be dealt with by the customer support team as they were usually the ones who required more dedication and created no value with the required tasks.

As the customer support team took over the tasks, the use of the Zendesk software was implemented and the partners were informed of the new disposition via e-mail and through the account managers. Every time a complaint came to the account managers, it was forwarded to the customer support team.

The Zendesk software allowed the team to organize the requests and processes in a way in which only one member took over one inquiry thread and treated the topics that were more relevant to their usual tasks. Another component that was taken into consideration for dividing the work load was the language of the inquiry.

The team has been working for four months in the following tasks:

- Answer of customer inquiries.

- Submission of customer inquiries to relevant and interested parties.

- Solving issues related to customers.

- Assisting partners with on-platform issues.

- Reporting of customer support issues.

3.5.2 The analyzed results

The customer support team and the support process were analyzed during a period of one month and the following results were obtained.

- Every day an average of three 'tickets' or inquiries are received by the customer support team.

- For every three inquiries, two inquiries belong to the travel deals.

- 70% of the enquiries were answered within two hours of the requests, 20% within six hours and 10% within 24 hours.

- Most inquiries can be resolved by the support team, otherwise the first point of contact is the respective account manager and in case they cannot provide a solution, the merchant is contacted.

- All inquiries receive an answer within 24 hours. Even when a solution cannot be found, the requester is informed about the status of their process.

- The time the account managers invest solving issues has been considerably reduced since the customer support team started working.

- The parties that submit the enquiries have expressed their satisfaction with the support in several occasions to the members of the customer support team.

4   DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This project was developed while working at the company Dealgecco which provided a great advantage for analyzing and understanding all the processes and activities that are done in the company. The results of the project are the fruits of this analysis and experience and were obtained with the aim of improving the daily activities in the company and establishing an initial quality assurance system.

The first step taken in this project was to gather and register all the available information regarding the processes, working methods and perceptions of the different teams that interact in Dealgecco. From this first stage, the result obtained was a great deal of knowledge and understanding of the company's operations. The first valuable result of this work was an established vision and definition of a deal lifecycle; understanding the scope, key activities and metrics of the process. The necessary intermediate steps in this phase were the thorough description of processes, the use of graphical tools such as flowcharts to analyze the processes and finally the semi structured interview carried out with the sales and account management teams

Once the scope of the lifecycle was established, the following step was to determine the current status of the process. This was the phase in which a thorough diagnosis of the company and its processes was carried out. This stage differentiates itself from the previous one by the type of information it offers. In the initial stage all the information came from the source while in the second one the main task was for the writer to analyze all the information gathered in the first one in the form of a diagnosis. This diagnosis shed some light into the main problems that were tackled through the development of the process and drew the limits into which the solutions were offered. The process diagnosis studied each area individually and provided a view of the current state of the cycle. Following this, the interaction between processes was analyzed as well as the one between teams. A SWOT matrix of the deal lifecycle was designed to highlight the opportunities for improvement available in the process and finally a summary of the existent quality assurance process was offered reaching the proposed objective.

In the third stage of the process, the problems that were identified through the information obtained in the first phase and the analysis of it in the second one were defined and classified. Initially they were organized according to their place in the process flow, this provided a broad view of the problems found and located each one in a determined part of the process. Following this analysis, the general and most common causes for the problems were presented. As these causes were similar to many problems, an Ishikawa diagram was used in which the issues found were divided in four different groups or aspects that influence the development of the processes, these were: the team, the process, the information and the product. This way the most relevant problems were determined, providing an easier way to visualize and solve them.

The most relevant accomplishments of this project were perceived in the fourth stage of work in which tools were designed and presented as solutions for the established problems. These tools provide a way to fix the issues in the long term and improve the quality of the processes. The solutions were proposed for the problems established in the Ishikawa diagram and tackle the main issues for each of the four relevant areas. Some tools as the online deal ticket and the partner matching feature are a suggestion to be implemented in the platform that will mainly improve the interaction with partners and will reduce waiting times in the process. Other tools like the merchant manual are focused on the merchants and aim to improve their experience during their work with Dealgecco while trying to increase the end-customer's level of satisfaction. One of the most important goals was to improve the quality of the processes and with this purpose the process manual and the platform task manual were created. These manuals document the work methodology and process flow of the deal lifecycle and provide a base for the development of the quality assurance team. Formats like the task check lists and the quality assurance feedback are tools that will improve the development of the processes and their follow up. New tasks such as the deal handover process and deal price follow up were also established in some relevant areas. Finally the development of the quality manual in which the required tasks through which the processes should be reviewed to guarantee the expected quality included an established quality policy, quality tools, process requirements and check lists.

The final stage of the project was the analysis of the implementation of the quality plan in the customer support service. The customer support was established to answer inquiries from partners mostly related to end customers. The team has been working with two members and properly solving inquiries from partners on a timely manner. The establishment of the process and the quality test were successfully implemented and showed positive results.

5   CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The importance of quality oriented processes and products is visible in our everyday activities. Now a days more and more people are conscious of what they expect from a product or a service and therefore assume and demand that these expectations are fulfilled. Services are an especially sensitive topic as they are produced, sold and consumed by the customers all at the same time and for these reasons cannot be improved or re-used, making the first impression of a customer the most important one.

In Dealgecco, the vouchers that are sold translate into a service for our partners' end customers and our partners also connect with Dealgecco directly through service experiences with the account managers. As services are difficult to regulate, having a quality assurance system is important in order to keep all involved parties satisfied.

For the development of a project such as this one, the work and experience within the company were vital. It is very important to be familiar with all the processes, teams and departments as well as the goals of the company and their commitment to the development of a quality assurance process.

This project provided a great opportunity to learn about the importance and relevance of establishing, documenting and communicating processes within the different teams that make up the company. It put in evidence the great deal of communication that is required to run projects and processes successfully no matter the size of the company.

A quality assurance system requires first of all the existence of structured processes and documentation which were not available in the company. In order to obtain the expected results of the system, this documentation was designed and included as part of the project. This will ideally allow a more organized process development and the completion of the quality assurance system but also an improved training system for new employees. These manuals are also useful evidence to adopt when working on continuous improvement projects.

The input of all the interviewed team members was very valuable as it provided different points of view and offered new perspectives to problems that had not been yet obtained. It is much recommended to use this approach when doing any projects of this sort. Similarly, brain-storming activities, interviews and spaces where the opinions of team members can be openly shared are advised for companies looking to improve the satisfaction of internal and external clients, the effectiveness of processes and the communication among teams.

The complete implementation of the quality assurance system would require a long time. Due to the deadline for the termination of the project, the full implementation was not possible therefore the complete results and impacts of it cannot be perceived.

Based on all the information, tools and solutions offered in this project, it is recommended to continue implementing the quality assurance system in the company for the deal lifecycle. This implementation should be verified and analyzed, looking for opportunities that permit the existence of spaces designed to improve processes and also products on a continuous basis.

Furthermore, it would be a good opportunity for self-diagnosis to design similar plans for the other areas of the company. This will offer a full overview of the processes, improve quality in processes and services and therefore increase the satisfaction of both; partners and end customers.

The tools designed in this project will improve the perception that the different parties involved in the processes have of Dealgecco. They are meant to allow the processes to run smoothly and according to the established standards and to provide a quicker way to solve process related issues. This can be done following the manuals and checklists that allow the employees to understand and visualize all steps of the process so they can detect failures in an easier manner.

A valuable lesson learned throughout the project was the importance of establishing a feedback culture within the different processes. It came to notice that after the product moved from one process to another the employees lost track of it. This in many cases was unproductive as it cut any possibilities of improvement from parties that were involved in a previous stage. This feedback processes were established in the quality assurance process and the handover process, where the input of all parties is very valuable to obtain a successful end product.

The results obtained from the implementation of the quality assurance process in the quality assurance system, showed the importance of keeping structured processes and documentation for the different tasks run in the company. The team found the availability of task checklists useful for fulfilling the tasks according to the established standards.

The use of tools such as Zendesk, improved the ability of tracking requests from customers and assuring that they were properly dealt with. When dealing directly with customers who are most frequently urging to find a solution to their problems, being able to answer them on time and follow-up with their needs and requirements provides the company with a competitive advantage.

The positive response from the customers using the service is also an evidence of the advantages presented by the development of the quality assurance system, as it shows that they were always serviced according to the established standards and that their expectations were fulfilled.

As most issues that arise in the customer support process are related to travel, it is advised to continuously monitor the status of deals with partners and keep a close and proactive approach when solving issues in order to prevent potential problems regarding the same topics.

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7. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Interviews

SALES TEAM INTERVIEW

Name: **Department:**

As a requirement for obtaining my title of Industrial Engineer I am required to write a thesis project that I am conducting here at Dealgecco GmbH designing a Quality Control system that will allow the company to provide a better product for the end customer. Therefore I would like to ask you some questions regarding the processes within your department.

Stage 1: Process Preparation

1. How do you find the quality of the leads you are given?

2. What Major problems do you encounter with the leads?

3. Do you do any previous research before contacting a lead?

4. What kind of information do you require before contacting a lead?

Stage 2: Negotiation Process

1. Where do you find obstacles when trying to negotiate a deal?

2. What elements do you think make a deal successful?

3. Which do you think are the reasons for some deals not to be booked by our partners?

4. Do you have any suggestions to improve our deals and/or the interaction between the sales and account management teams?

Additional Questions:

1. What do you consider when creating an offer?

2. Do you work together with the hotel or is it more frequent that each party works separately?

3. Where do you find the biggest obstacles in the process? (The answers to this question were combined with those for question 4 on the stage 2.)

4. From your experience, do you know which type of Hotels is most likely to agree to a deal?

5. In which stage of the process do the negotiations usually die? What can be improved in the process? (The answers to this question were combined with those for question 4 on the stage 2.)

The account management team interview was conducted with 6 members of the team: Antonia Hammer (CEO), Elena Kirova, Tommaso Tidei, Nina Walters and Stefan Pieprzyk

The format used for the account management interview is the following:

Account Management Interview

As a requirement for obtaining my title of Industrial Engineer I am required to write a thesis project that I have decided to conduct here at Dealgecco GmbH designing a quality assurance system that will allow the company to provide a better product for the end customer. This is why I would like to ask you some questions regarding the processes within your department

1. Can you describe the process a deal goes through in the account management department? *

2. How is the handover done? Are there things that could be improved? *

3. How do you promote a deal to our partner platforms?

4. What elements do you think make a deal successful?

5. Which do you think are the reasons for some deals not to be booked by our partners?

6. Do you have any suggestions to improve our deals and/or the interaction between the sales and account management teams?

* *the first three questions were only asked to Elena Kirova as she is the only one involved in the merchant account management process.*

Additional questions:

1. Do you know if the merchants get repeat business from our deals? Asked to Elena Kirova

2. What impressions do you get from the merchants regarding their experience with Dealgecco? Asked to Elena Kirova

3. Could you briefly describe what you think the profile of our end customer is? Asked to Elena Kirova, Antonia Hammer, Nina Walters

4. Do you find any problems when promoting the deals? Asked to Antonia Hammer.

5. What objections do you find when offering a deal to a partner? Asked to Nina Walters

6. What other information do you think would be useful to promote the deals? Asked to Nina Walters

Annex 2: Deal ticket (Client tab)

Dealgecco

Deal Ticket	
Partner Company Information:	
Name of Merchant:	0
Merchant Address (Zip-Code, City, Country):	0
Account Holder (with title or position):	0
Contact person (with title or position):	0
Contact Details (Email, Phone, Fax):	0
Bank name:	0
IBAN:	0
BIC SWIFT Code:	0
VAT number:	0
Billing party (VAT number holder) if other	
Billing address if different from hotel address	
Merchant Website:	0
Payment Details	
Currency of the Deal:	EURO
Original Voucher Price:	0.00
Deal Price (per voucher):	0.00
% Discount for End-Customer:	#DIV/0!
Price includes how many people:	for Double Room (price includes 2 pax)
Prices if others / exact name of the room:	
Number of Nights that Price includes:	0
Number of vouchers available for sale:	0
Number of Vouchers available per Customer:	0
Can vouchers be bought as presents?	0
Merchant Disbursement Amount (per sold voucher)	0.00
Dealgecco Commission (% of the Deal Price):	25.00%
Deal Information	
Destination City, Country:	0
Validity Period of the Voucher (Start):	00.01.1900
Validity Period of the Voucher (End):	00.01.1900
Quality of Hotel (Stars):	0
Blackout Dates:	0
Surcharge Dates + cost (if any):	0
Hotel Check In Time:	0:00
Hotel Check Out Time:	0:00
Children Policy:	0
Pets Policy:	0
Other benefits of the deal (including original value):	0
Other notes:	0
Refund Policy:	0
Reservation required: Yes or No (please choose an option):	0
Booking Instructions:	0
Voucher codes shall be used from	N/C
Contract Specifics:	0
Desired / important countries:	0
Blackout Countries (if any):	0

Signed by partner: _____
(date, name)

Signed by Dealgecco: _____
(date, name)

17.10.2012
14:58
C:\Users\Maria Gomez\Desktop\Deal_Ticket_TRAVEL_1.0

La información presentada en este documento es de exclusiva responsabilidad de los autores y no compromete a la EIA.

Annex 3: Merchant Agreement

Cooperation Agreement Between

Merchant Company:		&	Dealgecco GmbH
Street:			Saarbrücker Str. 36
City, Zip Code, Country:			10405 Berlin, Germany
Account Holder:			Nicolas Rädecke
Position:			COO
Contact Details:			+49-174-30 99 172
Contact Person:			xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Position:			Business Development
Telephone Number:			+49 17430 99171
E-Mail:			name@dealgecco.com
Website:			www.dealgecco.com

*Herein referred to as "**Merchant**"*   *Herein referred to as "**Dealgecco**"/ "**DG**"*

Preamble

Dealgecco operates a B2B marketplace (the "**Platform**") for Deals on the Internet through which different Partners can offer or search Travel, Service or Product Deals.

La información presentada en este documento es de exclusiva responsabilidad de los autores y no compromete a la EIA.

This agreement shall govern the details of any deals offered by the Merchant to the Dealgecco platform and details regarding their placement by other Dealgecco Selling Companies ("**SEC**").

Conditions

1. The Parties shall cooperate regarding this platform on a case-by-case basis.
2. The Parties hereby agree that each specific Deal offered on the Platform shall be detailed in its own "***Deal Ticket***" as an Excel document for each Deal.
3. Dealgecco can add further particulars and terms to the deal, insofar as these are not in contradiction with the terms provided by the merchant.
4. The objective of this cooperation is to present 2-6 deals per annum on the agreed upon Dealgecco websites.
5. Merchant shall define, for every single Deal, to which Dealgecco partners the Deal must not be offered. Without explicit declaration of which partners to exclude, Dealgecco shall be entitled to offer the Deal to all partners. Dealgecco cannot guarantee in which countries the Deal will be actually featured.
6. Duration and design of the placement are at Dealgecco's or SEC's discretion.
7. During this Agreement the Merchant is prohibited from negotiating packages with other Dealgecco partners directly. All package negotiations must be done through Dealgecco. Exempted from this clause are partners, which are named below.
8. This contract runs for a period of one (1) year. This Agreement shall automatically renew for a successive one (1) year period ("Renewal Term") unless terminated by either party by giving written notice of such termination not less than thirty (30) days before the end of the current Term, or of any Renewal Term. The right of extraordinary termination of this contract with notice for good cause remains unaffected.
9. The termination of the Cooperation Agreement cannot affect the individual contracts ("Deal Tickets"). Its provisions shall continue to apply until its complete performance.
10. Merchant hereby accepts and agrees that Dealgecco is constantly seeking new external deal partners and shall enlarge its list of partners, in which all deals may be featured.
11. Merchant hereby grants the right for DG and approved SECs to use pictures and logos from the partner's website for deals featured on the SEC's website.
12. Merchant hereby grants the right for DG to use Merchant's logo on the DG website and other relevant sales and marketing materials.

13. Dealgecco will pay Merchant to the bank account defined below within 30 days after the Deal goes offline on the SECs website, unless otherwise stated in the Deal Ticket.

14.   DG and the SEC generally work as intermediaries to the Merchant. In case the SEC purchases the voucher for the deal himself to resell them to the end customer, the Merchant grants DG the right to collect the payment from the SEC on behalf of the Merchant. The SEC can pay with debt discharging effect to DG.

15.   Vouchers will be offered according to the dates set forth between Dealgecco, Merchant and SEC.

16.   Voucher codes will be generated by the Merchant, SEC or DG (defined in each Deal Ticket).

17.   Dealgecco will send a report of voucher codes to Merchant within 14 days after the deal has ended on a SEC platform.

18.   The validity period stated by the Merchant represents the total validity period of the voucher. The validity period for the vouchers sold on each SEC's platform shall begin no earlier than 14 days after the deal has gone offline.

19.   Customers will make reservations directly with the Merchant.

20.   All remuneration apart from the voucher price for the end customer shall be defined as a net price. VAT will be added where applicable.

Names of current and active partners of the Merchant:	

☐ The Merchant has read and agrees to the General Terms and Conditions of Dealgecco GmbH

Place, Date	Merchant	Name

Berlin	**Dealgecco GmbH**	

Place, Date   **Nicolas Rädecke, COO**

Annex 4: Merchant Manual

Power Point version:

Merchant
Manual.pptx

Dealgecco

Merchant Manual

Welcome to Dealgecco

Dear partner,

We are delighted to have you onboard! We are looking forward to a successful cooperation with you.

Now that you have created a tailor-made deal for your desired source markets, people from around the world will be able to see your offer and get acquainted with your business.

Here at Dealgecco we strive to bring outstanding merchants together with our extensive international customer base. Our partnership will lead you to develop solid and long lasting relationships that will contribute to the success of your company.

This merchant manual will show you how Dealgecco works and what you should expect as your deal is featured by our partners. It will give you all the information you need to know regarding the operations behind running a deal with us.

If you have any further questions, please contact our support team at customersupport@dealgecco.com we will be very happy to answer them!

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What to expect and when to expect it

First contact with Account Manager

Your deal is going live!

When to accept a customer's booking

Welcoming your new customers

Your deal is being booked!

At the end of your promotion

Receiving your payment

Dealgecco

Step 1
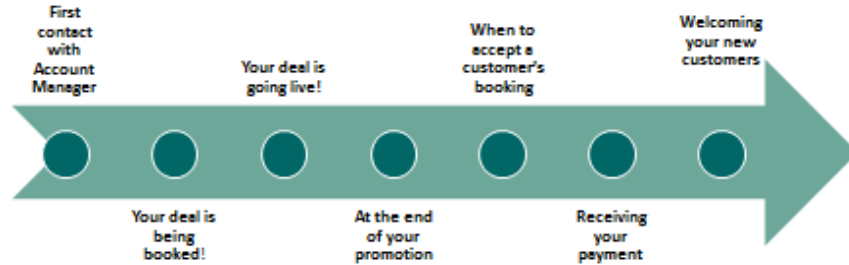
First contact with your Account Manager

After closing the deal with one of our sales representatives, your account manager will contact you to introduce you to our processes and answer any questions you may have about your offer or our partners.

Your account manager will be your key contact point in Dealgecco and will inform you about all the developments regarding your offer.

Dealgecco

Step 2

Your deal is being booked!

Once your deal is online on Dealgecco, our partners will be able to see and book it. This means they will request a determined number of vouchers and will set the dates in which they will feature your deal on their own platform.

When your deal is booked your account manager will contact you and inform you which platform booked it and the dates in which the deal will go live. Deals usually run for 5 to 7 days. In case there are any changes, you will immediately be informed by your account manager.

In order to make sure your deals are only booked and viewed by our partners, the access to the Dealgecco platform is restricted. Therefore you won't be able to see your deal on Dealgecco but on the platforms that feature your offer.

Dealgecco

Step 3

Your deal is going live!

Before your deal goes live, we at Dealgecco make sure all details are in place so the customers can see your deal in the way you would like it to be featured.

On the day the deal starts your account manager will send you a link to the deal so you can see how it looks on our partner's platform.

While the deal runs on our partner's website you can expect to receive many emails and calls from potential customers. They will most likely want to enquire about available dates for making a reservation and the sooner you answer them the more vouchers your offer will sell!

Dealgecco

Step 4

At the end of your promotion

After the end of your deal on our partner's website, your account manager will send you a list with all the voucher codes that were sold. With this list you will be able to verify the codes that the customers will supply you when making a booking.

You will receive two lists; one immediately after the deal ended on our partner's website, this is what we call a preliminary list. Two weeks after this you will receive a final list, the amount of voucher codes between both lists may differ. The reason why you will receive these two lists is that due to the European e-commerce law, customers have two weeks to return the goods they purchase online. Please always verify both lists and in case you had already confirmed a booking with a code that has been removed from them, cancel the booking and inform the customer about the cancelation.

Dealgecco

Step 5
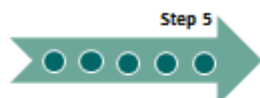
When to accept a customer's booking?

You can accept bookings as soon as you like but your deal will most likely be valid only 14 days after the promotion finishes on our partner's website.

Always ask your customers for their full name, voucher code and selling platform so you can verify their voucher.

Step 6
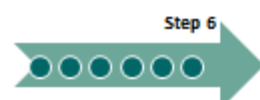
Receiving your payment

You will receive your payment approximately 30 days after your deal starts. We receive payment from our partner company right after we receive the final voucher list (14 days after the deal ends) and we immediately transfer this amount to you. You will receive the full amount for the vouchers sold, if customers don't show up, you still keep it!

Dealgecco

Step 7
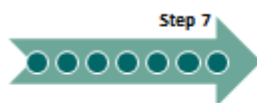
Welcoming your new customers

Your customers will book and arrive at your hotel some weeks after your deal was published. There are also eager customers who want to book and arrive even earlier than that; it is at your discretion to accept these early bookings.

Every detail regarding the customers' stay will reflect in the relationship you build with them. If they feel welcome and have a wonderful experience, they will return and pay full price for your services, now it is in your hands to dazzle them and make them regular guests!

Dealgecco

Recommendations

✓ Keep all your staff informed about the promotion; Let them know they should expect many calls and inform them which platforms have been running it. Once it is time for the customers to start arriving, remind them about the deal details; if the deal includes extras such as a dinner or a boat trip, the staff should be aware of that.

✓ Answer all booking and information requests as soon as you can. This will influence the amount of vouchers sold and your customer's satisfaction.

✓ Keep track of all redeemed vouchers and bookings.

✓ Profit from this experience by getting your new customers to love your hotel, this way they will become regulars.

Dealgecco

Deal lifecycle

Process Manual

INDEX

Introduction

The deal lifecycle in Dealgecco comprises the development of a deal since its design until the end of all interactions between merchant, partner and deal. The cycle starts with the process of 'lead sourcing' and ends with the 'payment' process. As a cycle, it is meant to always recommence by the creation of a new deal with the merchant.

This manual includes all the steps that must be taken within the deal lifecycle in order to guarantee the appropriate development of a deal.

The 'customer support' process was also included in the manual as it plays an important role in the lifecycle of the deal and can start in any stage of the cycle.

This manual is meant to be used as a guide and a documentation tool for the processes done in the company. The processes that are done 'on-platform' are included in the 'Platform Tasks Manual' which is referenced several times within this manual.

This manual shall be available to any team member intending to learn, follow or modify the deal lifecycle processes.

Objective of the manual

This manual is meant to be a process guide and a documentation tool for the processes included in the deal lifecycle. The tasks in this manual shall be followed in order to run the process according to the desired quality standards. It shall be available to all employees of the company.

Process flowchart

The following flowchart describes the process flow in the deal lifecycle.

```
                    ┌──────────┐
                    │  Start   │
                    └────┬─────┘
                         │
                 ┌───────────────┐
                 │ Lead Sourcing │
                 └───────┬───────┘
                         │
              ┌────────────────────┐
              │ First contact between│
              │ sales representative │
              │    and merchant      │
              └──────────┬───────────┘
                         │
                    ╱────────╲        NO   ┌──────────┐
                   ╱ Is the    ╲───────────│   End    │
                   ╲ merchant  ╱           └──────────┘
                    ╲interested?╲
                         │
                 ┌──────────────┐
                 │Package design│◄──────────────────────────┐
                 └──────┬───────┘                            │
            NO     ╱─────────╲                    ┌────────────────┐
         ◄─────── ╱ Merchant   ╲                  │ Bookings by SEC │
                  ╲ agrees with ╱                 └───────┬────────┘
                   ╲ package?  ╱                          │
                         │                        ┌────────────────┐
              ┌────────────────────┐              │    Booking     │
              │ Creation of Deal ticket│          │confirmation by SOC│
              │ and Merchant agreement │          └───────┬────────┘
              └──────────┬───────────┘                    │
                         │                        ┌────────────────┐
                 ┌──────────────┐                 │  Deal preview  │
                 │Quality Assurance│              │  revision by   │
                 └──────┬───────┘                 │   Dealgecco    │
                         │                        └───────┬────────┘
                    ╱─────────╲     NO                    │
                   ╱ Approved   ╲──────────       ┌────────────────┐
                   ╲  by QA?    ╱                 │Deal goes live on SEC│
                    ╲─────────╱                   │    website     │
                         │                        └───────┬────────┘
              ┌────────────────────┐                      │
              │ Signature of DT and│              ┌────────────────┐
              │ MA by both parties │              │ Deal ends on SEC│
              └──────────┬───────────┘            │    website     │
                         │                        └───────┬────────┘
              ┌────────────────────┐                      │
              │ Last contact from Sales│            ┌────────────────┐
              │ with Merchant. Welcome │            │  SEC uploads   │
              │to Dealgecco. Handover │            │voucher sold lists│
              └──────────┬───────────┘            └───────┬────────┘
                         │                        ┌────────────────┐
              ┌────────────────────┐              │ AM sends voucher│
              │  Document upload    │             │lists to merchants│
              │   to SharePoint.    │             └───────┬────────┘
              └──────────┬───────────┘                    │
                         │                        ┌────────────────┐
              ┌────────────────────┐              │ Payment process │
              │  SEC remuneration   │             └───────┬────────┘
              │    definition       │                     │
              └──────────┬───────────┘            ┌────────────────┐
                         │                        │Renegotiate new │
                 ┌──────────────┐                 │deal with merchant│
                 │ Deal Upload  │                 └───────┬────────┘
                 └──────┬───────┘                         │
                         │                          ┌──────────┐
              ┌────────────────────┐                │   End    │
              │  First contact      │               └──────────┘
              │ between AM and      │
              │   Merchant          │
              └────────────────────┘
```

Process Description

LEAD SOURCING

Objective

To obtain complete data from potential partners and include it in the company's CRM system.

Scope

It involves and influences the sales support team, the sales team, the account management team and the management in the activities related to potential new partners as well as sales and after sales.

Responsibilities

The sales support team, the management and the account management team have responsibilities within the activity.

The sales support team:

The team is in charge of the development of the activity. The team should deliver consistent and sufficient information for each of the requested locations according to the policies defined for the process

The management and the account management team:

The management together with the account management team is responsible for delivering the input information for the activity by defining the target locations for the week.

Definitions
- Sales lead: The identity of a person or entity potentially interested in purchasing a product or service.
- TripAdvisor: free travel guide and research website that assists customers in gathering travel information, posting opinions of travel related issues and engaging in interactive travel forums. (www.tripadvisor.com)
- Booking.com: International hotel search and booking engine. (www.booking.com)

Supplies

Information or documentation

The first necessary supply for lead sourcing is the input information received from the management every week. Based on this information, the team sources the leads.

Office supplies or materials

- Computer
- Microsoft Excel software
- Salesforce CRM software
- Internet access

Results

A sufficient amount of leads in the defined location that include the information required according to the process' policies, assigned to each member of the sales team on Salesforce.

Interaction with other processes or teams

- Sales process: The lead sourcing process supplies the input information for the merchant acquisition process.
- The management and account management teams: These teams set the target location in a weekly meeting.

Policies

The lead sourcing process has a defined quality policy.

Each lead should include these criteria in order to be taken into the hunting list:

- The hotel should hold at least 3 stars in the country's hospitality star rating.
- The hotel should hold at least a 3,5 TripAdvisor rating (www.tripadvisor.com). TripAdvisor rates the hotels on its website from 1 to 5 circles, being 5 the best possible level. If the TripAdvisor rating is not available, the hotel shall have at least a 7 in the Booking.com rating (www.booking.com). Booking.com rates hotels from 1 to 10, being 10 the best rating.

Process description

Responsible	Activity
Management and account management team	Definition of target location in weekly meeting Each account manager suggests around four locations according to the perceived needs of their partners and the management consolidates a final list for the sales support team.
Sales support team	Lead sourcing in the defined locations. Each lead should include the following information: - Hotel name - Hotel website link - Hotel's telephone number - City - Country - Hotel stars - Booking.com and TripAdvisor rating - Number of rooms All leads are saved in an Excel file.
Sales support team	Lead import to Salesforce: All leads are imported to Salesforce by creating a .csv (comma delimited) file on Excel. (Check Salesforce quick guide)
Sales support team	Lead assignment. All leads are assigned to the members of the sales team. If a member of the team holds special knowledge of a region or language, those leads are assigned to them directly; otherwise there are no assignment preferences.

Formats
The excel sheet in which the leads are saved has a special format in order to properly do the lead import. The format can be seen by clicking on the icon.

Lead Format.xlsx

SALES

Objective
To acquire new merchants that will feature special offers from their hotels on the Dealgecco platform.

Scope
This activity involves the sales team and starts with the first contact with potential merchants following up to the signature of a service contract.

Responsibilities
The sales team is in charge of this process and has these responsibilities:

- Acquiring new partners for Dealgecco.
- Explain the Dealgecco business model to the potential partners
- Design a package to offer on the platform
- Creation of the documentation: Deal ticket and merchant agreement.

Definitions
- Merchant Agreement: A merchant agreement is the contract that a new partner signs. It includes all contact data from the partner as well as the Terms and Conditions of Dealgecco.
- Deal Ticket: The deal ticket is an excel file in which all information regarding the deal is contained; contact information, benefits, deal conditions, etc.

Supplies
Information and documentation
- Leads
- Deal Ticket
- Merchant agreement

Office equipment
- Telephone
- Computer
- Access to internet
- Access to Salesforce software

Results
Closing of a deal with a new merchant and fulfilling all activities delivering all required information and documentation.

Interaction with other processes or teams
- Lead Sourcing: The lead sourcing provides the input information for the process

- Quality Assurance: The quality assurance department verifies that the deal complies with all quality requirements, if this is not the case the deal needs to be revisited by the sales team to make the pertinent changes.

Policies
All deals should be approved by the quality assurance team and comply with all the requirements of that process.

Process description

Responsible	Activity
Sales team	Lead selection and research. One lead from the hunting list is selected and researched before contacting a potential merchant. The research in this stage is superficial and refers merely to the hotel's location, capacity and basic information.
Sales team	First contact with the merchant. In the first call, the business model is explained to the merchant and any initial questions are answered. Ideally the time for a second call is arranged and the merchant is informed that he will soon receive further information about the company and the service offered by Dealgecco.
Sales team	Sending information to potential new partners. The merchant receives an email confirming the time for the second call and including a company presentation as well as a list of countries where Dealgecco is present.
Sales team	Package negotiation. As communication moves forward with the merchant the negotiation stage starts. The sales person should discuss pricing, benefits and deal details with the merchant and design together a deal package.
Sales team	Creation of a deal ticket and merchant agreement. The sales person should include all information regarding the deal in the 'internal' tab of the deal ticket. The merchant agreement has to be completed with the requested contact data.
Sales team	Send deal ticket to QA team. The sales person sends the deal ticket to the QA team for the quality assurance check of the deal.
Sales team	Sending deal documentation If the deal is approved by the quality assurance team, the sales person will receive a deal ticket in PDF that should be sent together with the merchant agreement to the partner for signing.
Sales team	Complete handover format and include it in the merchant's document folder.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Objective
Verify the quality of the deals obtained by the sales team according to the criteria established for the process.

Scope
The process is carried out by the quality assurance team but requires the input of the sales team through the deal ticket and affects all potential deals.

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Responsibilities

The quality assurance team is responsible for this process, the responsibilities include:

- Checking the deal according to the defined criteria.
- Informing the sales team about the deal and which potential changes need to be made.
- Sending the deal to the management for final approval.

The sales team is responsible for:

- Handing the deal to the quality assurance team for the revision.
- Making the chances suggested by the quality assurance team or the management.

The management team is responsible for:

- A final deal check and approval.

Supplies:

***Information or documentation*:**

- Complete deal ticket supplied by sales team

Office equipment:

- Computer
- Internet connection
- Microsoft Excel software

Results

The quality assurance team has to deliver a revised deal ticket with a recommendation for approval for the management or improvement suggestions for the sales team.

Interaction with other processes or teams

- Sales process: The quality assurance process requires all its input information from the sales process and gives feedback to the sales persons if there are changes to be made to the deal.
- Management: The management defines if a deal is approved or not. The quality assurance team receives feedback from the management accordingly.

Policies:

Deals are only checked once they are completed and the deal ticket includes all the required information.

Process description

Responsible	Activity
Sales manager	Send complete deal ticket to the quality assurance team
Quality assurance team	Verify that all information on the deal ticket 'internal' tab is complete.
Quality assurance team	Verify the quality criteria defined in the 'QA Check' tab of the deal ticket. The criteria is the following: **Location:** the venue has to be located less than 100 km away from an airport. **Discount**: The average discount of the package compared to the prices available on the hotel's website should be at least 40%. The highest discount should be 50%. **Ratings:** At least 3,5 TripAdvisor rating. If the TripAdvisor rating is not available, the hotel shall have at least a 7 in the Booking.com rating (www.booking.com **Price:** First the price of the deal minus the price of the benefits has to be calculated, this price has to be compared to the best available price in

	booking.com or other booking engines and the Dealgecco has to be always lower. **Star rating:** The hotel should have at least a 3 in the country's star rating. **Length of validity:** The deals should be valid for at least 3 months in which the customers can redeem their vouchers. **Blackout dates:** the hotel can determine some blackout dates in which customers can't come. These dates should be less than 10% of the total validity period. **Deal ticket version:** The deal ticket can be modified; therefore the sales manager should always take the latest version from the document management system of the company. **Completeness of information:** All the information in the deal ticket has to be completed. If the criteria are fulfilled, the field with the red number zero should be changed to a number one by clicking on the arrow that can be located on the right side of the field. In the bottom part of the sheet all the approved fields are added up and it has to be defined if the deal is or not approved by selecting yes or no in the bottom field.
Quality assurance team	If the deal is approved it should be sent via email with a link to the deal ticket to the management for final approval.
Quality assurance team	If the deal is not approved, the relevant recommendations have to be sent to the sales manager.
Quality assurance team	Uploading deal ticket and merchant agreement to document management system and sending email to management with link to the documents.
Quality Assurance team	Monthly check of price status Once a month the quality assurance team conducts a price search that consists of verifying the deal price with the current prices on booking engines. If there have been any substantial changes, the team will suggest a modification of the deal data if even with the change the deal still complies with the quality assurance requirements. Otherwise the team will suggest the account manager a deal renegotiation.

Formats
The QA tab that was previously mentioned has the following format and can be found inside each deal ticket.

			Yes = 1, No = 2		
Check-List GOOD DEAL			Name of hotel		
Latas Surf House					
1	**LOCATION**	**Data**	**evaluation**		
1.1	Less than 100 km away from a major airport (or predefined location by two of (Colin, Antonio, Boris))?		1		
	Name of airport:	Santander			
	Name of city:	Spain, Soma	1		
1	**SUM**		**1**	*1*	*minimum value*
2	**DISCOUNTS**				
2.1	Discount for end customer 40% or higher?		1		
	Exact discount:	50%			
	AND				
2.2	Whole Margin at least 25% of Deal Price		1		
	Exact margin:	30%			
2	**SUM**		**2**	*2*	*minimum value*
3	**RATINGS**				
3.1	Tripadvisor rating (above 3.5 circles)		1		
	Exact rating:	4,0			
	Hotel link on tripadvisor:	http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g644321-			
	OR				
3.2	booking.com rating (above 7 full circles)				
	Exact rating:	NA			
	Hotel link on booking.com:	NA			
3.1	**SUM**		**1**	*1*	*minimum value*
4	**PRICE**				
4.1	Price is below price on booking.com for the same dates (within the validity period)		1		
	Our deal price:	189,001			
	Room Rate (Our Deal Price minus the additional services):	189			
	Description of package / additional services:	Accomodation in shared room with up to 3 other people during 7 nights, breakfast every morning, surf lessons			
	Price on booking.com (pick lowseason time / days!):	NA on booking.com			
4	**SUM**		**1**	*1*	*minimum value*
5	**MISC**				
5.1	Hotel Star Rating (minimum 3 star)	NA	0		
5.2.1	Voucher validity start (min. 3 month):	16.09.2012	1		
5.2.2	Voucher validity end:	16.06.2013	1		
5.3	Blackout dates not more than 10% of deal duration	None	1		
5.4	Latest version of Dealticket?	Version: 1.5	1		
5.5	Internal Dealticket complete?		1		
5	**SUM**		**5**	*minimum value*	
	SUM		**9**	*10*	*minimum value*
		Deal approved by QA?	no		
Comment (e.g. when approved though minimum value not reached:					

Deal Upload

Objective

To upload new deals to the Dealgecco platform using the information on the deal ticket and the pictures supplied by the merchant.

Scope

The upload team is in charge of the process. The quality assurance team and the management are also involved in it.
As the information has its origin in the sales team, it also reflects their work.

Responsibilities

Upload team

- Upload of the deal to the website including all the information in the deal ticket and the pictures supplied by the merchant.

Quality assurance team

- Revision of the upload following the information on the deal ticket.

Management

- Final revision and approval of upload.

Supplies

Information or documentation

- Deal ticket
- Deal pictures

Office equipment

- Computer

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- Internet access
- Microsoft Excel software

Results
The result of this process is a live deal on the Dealgecco platform including all information provided by the deal ticket and the pictures supplied by the merchant.

Interaction with other processes or teams
- Quality assurance team: the team does a thorough revision and can stop the upload process to make relevant modifications.
- Management: The management gives final approval for the deal before it goes live.

Policies
- If the deal pictures are not of the expected quality, the upload team can reject them and request better quality images from the merchant through the sales manager.
- Spelling and grammar are important for the upload and can be corrected by the upload or quality assurance team.

Process description

Responsible	Activity
Quality Assurance team	Uploading deal ticket and merchant agreement to document management system and sending email to management with link to the documents.
Management team	Define SEC margin. This margin determines which percentage the selling company will receive from the deal price.
Management team	Forwards deal ticket link to upload team.
Upload team	Upload of the deal and pictures to the platform. (To see further description refer to the "Platform Tasks" manual.)
Upload team	Save deal as a draft and forward it to the quality assurance team.
(On-platform) Quality assurance team	Revision of deal upload. The quality assurance team checks the deal according to the information on the deal ticket and forwards it to the management if all the information is correct; otherwise the required changes are made by the upload team.
Management	Final approval of deal The management approves the deal and notifies the quality assurance team.
(On-platform) Quality assurance team	Deal is approved on the task list of the platform and goes live.

ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT FOR PARTNERS

Objective
To promote the deals that are available in Dealgecco among the different partners registered in the platform.

Scope
This process is led by the account management team and involves all partners registered in the platform.

Responsibilities

The account management team is responsible for:

- Acquisition of new partners.
- Training of new partners in the use of the platform.
- Promoting the deals between their partners.
- Motivating partners to upload deals to the platform.
- Assisting and supporting the partner accounts with the development of the deals.

Supplies
Information or documentation
- Deals available on the platform

Office equipment
- Computer
- Internet access
- Access to the Dealgecco platform

Interaction with other processes or teams
This process interacts with other teams frequently, these teams are:

- Quality assurance team: This team works with the deal previews that are sent by partners before publishing a deal and also with partners who want to publish a deal to Dealgecco; because of this the quality assurance team and the account management team frequently interact with regards to issues on these processes.
- IT team: the most important tool for the account management team is the platform therefore they are frequently in contact with the IT team regarding potential features for the platform or any issues that they can experience with it.
- Sales team: The sales team as a supplier of the deals receives feedback from the account management team regarding the deals.

Process description

Responsible	Activity
Account manager	Acquisition of new partners. The account management team has a hunting list from which they contact potential new partners and introduce them to the Dealgecco business model and subscribe them to the platform if there is a good match between the interests of the partner and Dealgecco.

Account manager	Training of new partners
	The account manager usually holds a Skype call with a member of the new partner company and shows them how to get around the platform and the vital functions in it, such as:
	    • Creating a new deal
	    • Booking a deal
	    • Uploading deal lists
	    • Filtering deals

Account Manager	Thorough knowledge acquisition of new deals uploaded to the platform in order to promote them appropriately among the partners.
Account manager	Promotion of deals according to the interests and requirements of the Dealgecco partners.
Account manager	Assistance and support of partners in the Development of the deal.

ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT FOR MERCHANTS

Objective
To assist and inform the merchants regarding their offer on Dealgecco.

Scope
The process is done by the account manager in charge of merchants, nevertheless the sales team and the account managers for partners are involved.

The merchant plays a key role in the process as the receiver of the service which covers all Dealgecco merchants.

Responsibilities
The responsibilities of the account manager include:
- Constant contact and assistance for Dealgecco merchants.
- Inform the merchant about the development of the deal.
- Sending relevant documentation to the merchant (e.g. voucher lists) in a timely manner.
- Act as an intermediary between partners and Dealgecco merchants.
- Continuation of the partnership between merchants and Dealgecco by obtaining new deals.

The sales team is also involved and is responsible for:
- Doing an appropriate and complete merchant handover to the account manager.

Definitions

- Preliminary voucher list: this list includes all the codes for the vouchers sold and is uploaded by the SEC at the end of the deal feature.
- Final voucher list: During 14 days after the end of the deal, customers have the right to return their vouchers according to the European e-commerce law. After this period, the SEC will upload a new voucher list, this will be the final one and it will include all the valid vouchers. Vouchers that have been returned will not appear in this list.

Supplies
Information or documentation
- Complete handover format from the sales team.
- All information related to the deal; Deal ticket, merchant agreement, contact information from merchant on Salesforce.

Office equipment
- Computer
- Access to internet
- Microsoft Office software
- Access to the Dealgecco platform

Interaction with other processes or teams
- Sales team: The sales team must provide the account manager with a thorough handover format where all relevant information regarding the negotiation and the merchant is available.
- Account management team: The account management team is in constant communication with the account manager for merchant regarding any issues concerning the deal. Any

feedback the partner platforms have is also given by the account manager in order to potentially modify the deal.

Process description

Responsible	Activity
Sales team	Delivery of the complete handover format to the account manager.
Account manager	First contact with merchant. The account manager informs the merchant about the deal process on the platform and answers any questions the merchant may have.
Account manager	Information about bookings. Once the deal is booked, the account manager informs the merchant about the partner who booked it and the featuring dates of the deal.
Account manager	Deal going live. The day the deal goes live, the account manager informs the merchant and sends a link to the deal on the partner platform so the merchant can see and monitor the deal.
Account manager	Deal ends. After the deal ends on the partner platform. The account manager will send the preliminary voucher list to the merchant. 14 days after the end of the deal, the account manager will send the merchant the final voucher list. These lists include all the voucher codes that were sold by the partner platform.
Account manager	Create new deal. After the end of the deal on the platform the account manager will contact the merchant to design a new deal taking into account all the feedback received by the account managers and platforms.

ON-PLATFORM QUALITY ASSURANCE

Objective
To verify the documents and details regarding the deal features.

Scope
The process is done by the quality assurance team and includes all the documents, previews and lists supplied by the partners regarding deal features.

Responsibilities
The quality assurance team is required to:
- Check the deal previews sent by the partners and verify that all the information that is contained in them is correct according to the deal on the platform.
- Verify the correctness of the data in the voucher lists both final and preliminary.
- Check the deals uploaded by Dealgecco partners to the website and verify that the information is correct and valid.

Supplies
Information or documentation
- Deal previews supplied by partners.
- Voucher lists supplied by partners
- Deals supplied by partners.

Office equipment
- Computer
- Internet access

- Access to the Dealgecco platform

Interaction with other processes or teams

The quality assurance team interacts with the partners that supply the documents, lists and information but also with the account managers who can also communicate the information to the partners.

Process description

Responsible	Activity
Dealgecco partner platforms	Send deal preview to quality assurance team.
Quality assurance team	Check deal previews. The deal previews that are sent by the merchants are compared to the deals on the platform and any necessary changes are requested from the partners via email.
Quality assurance team	Approve preliminary and final lists. The uploaded lists are approved after verifying that the number of vouchers reported as sold is the same number of voucher codes available on the list.
Quality assurance team	Quality check for other SOC deals. The quality assurance team checks the deals from other SOCs before they go live. The following information is checked: • Deal price: Compared to price on hotel website and booking.com • Selling dates and validity period: Selling dates should always be around 2 weeks shorter than the validity period. • Benefits • Spelling and grammar • Booking instructions If the deal is not approved the quality assurance team sends a message to the partner through the platform informing the partner which changes need to be made. For further reference check the 'Platform tasks' manual.

PAYMENTS

Objective

To complete payments to merchants in an effective and timely manner.

Scope

The process is done by the accounting team and involves all deals in the platform created by Dealgecco.

Responsibilities

The accounting team is responsible for:

- Sending payment information to partners.
- Finalizing payment for merchants.

Supplies

Documentation or information

- Payment information for merchants

Office equipment
- Computer
- Internet access
- Salesforce access
- Microsoft Office software

Process description

Responsible	Activity
Accounting team	Send payment information to partner. The accounting team sends payment information to the partner who featured the deal. The payment information format is downloaded from the monitor in the payment section. The format includes the amount of money that should be paid to Dealgecco and the amount the SEC keeps as well as all required payment details (e.g. IBAN, BIC, etc.).
Accounting team	Payment to merchant. The accounting team transfers the money to the merchant according to the amount of vouchers sold.
Accounting team	Invoice for merchant. The accounting team sends the merchant an invoice detailing the amount charged for marketing services (Commission for Dealgecco).

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Objective
To assist the partners and merchants with any issues regarding deals and problems with end customers.

Scope
The customer support process involves all departments that work in the deal's lifecycle and is conducted by the customer support team.
The customer support department can eventually also contact partners and merchants regarding the deals and issues that arise in the process.
All partners can contact the Dealgecco customer support team.

Responsibilities
The customer support team has the following responsibilities:
- To assist all partners that contact the customer support department.
- To answer inquiries in a timely manner.
- To submit all inquiries to the relevant parties (e.g. merchants, account managers, partners).
- To create a weekly report of the enquiries detailing partners, deal type and issues.

Definitions
- Zendesk: Zendesk is a professional-grade help desk system. In general, a help desk is where end-users go to for support, when they can't solve an issue themselves or through the help of others.

Supplies
Information or documentation
- Customer inquiries or complaints
- Partner contact detail list

Office equipment
- Computer
- Internet access
- Zendesk access
- Salesforce access

Interaction with other processes or teams

The customer support department is in contact with most of the other teams in the company. This includes the account management team, the sales team, the IT and the accounting team, this is due to the nature of the questions that can be related to any aspect of the operations of the company.

Process description

Responsible	Activity
Partner / merchant	Send support request or inquiry to customer support team.
Customer support team	Looking into the issue and contacting partners/merchant if the issue cannot be resolved internally.
Customer support team	Answer the inquiry with the encountered solution or instructions to solve the situation.
Customer support team	Create weekly report. Create report using the Zendesk 'Report' function for both travel and product deals and send the report to the account managers.

ANNEX 6: Handover Format

Dealgecco

MERCHANT HANDOVER FORMAT

Deal Information

Merchant:			
Contact Person:		Email:	
Link to Salesforce:			
Deal destination		Deal duration:	Deal price:

Merchant preferences

Featuring countries	
Target markets	
Special featuring times or requirements:	

Negotiation process

Lead Source:	
Are the contact person and the person the deal was negotiated with the same?	
Relevant events, requests or concerns during the negotiation process:	

Has a 'Welcome to Dealgecco' email been sent? Yes ☐ No ☐

When should merchant be contacted by account manager?

Has merchant been contacted? Yes ☐ No ☐

Observations:

ANNEX 7: Merchant history format

Dealgecco

MERCHANT HISTORY

Merchant:			Date:	
Location:			Website:	

Deal number:		Deal ID:		Deal link on DG:	
Companies who booked this deal / vouchers sold:					
Incidents with deal or merchant:					
Requests / Feedback from partners					
Observations:					

Date:

Deal number:		Deal ID:		Deal link on DG:	
Companies who booked this deal:					
Incidents with deal or merchant:					
Requests / Feedback from partners					
Observations:					

ANNEX 8: Platform task manual

Platform Tasks Manual

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Deal upload

Who: SOCs or Dealgecco team. The deals on the platform can come from Dealgecco or other SOCs.

Where: On the Dealgecco Platform

How:

Creating a new deal

If the deal is new the SOC should log-in to the Dealgecco platform and click on the '*SOC Offer deals'* tab on the top-right side of the website then on *'Create New Deal'* under the *'Offer'* side.

The SOC will be led to a format that includes 4 different steps. The first step is '***Mandatory deal details'*** this tab includes several categories.

Deal Basics: Here the type of deal and relevant deal policies from the SOC are provided.

Deal Location: All information related to the location of the venue where the deal is offered is listed in this section.

Deal Price: All pricing related data goes in this category. This includes original and discounted deal price, remuneration to SOC from SEC as well as information related to the deal duration, children and voucher policies.

Deal Timeframe: Here the three more relevant timeframe related fields are available.
The first one; '***Deal ends on Dealgecco'*** refers to the period in which the deal will be featured on the Dealgecco platform. During this time the Sec who can see the deal are able to book it. In this

field the end date for the deal's availability time on the Dealgecco platform shall be inserted. This period is also known as the bidding period.

Following this is the *'SEC selling period'* this is the time in which all the SECs that book the deal can sell the offer in their platforms. Here there are two fields that should be completed with the start and end of the selling period. This selling period does not need to be the same as the validity period.

The last defined time frame is the *'Validity of the Voucher'* in this part there are also two fields that should be completed with the start and end date of the period in which customers can use their voucher. This period should be 2 weeks longer than the bidding period.

Additional Deal Details: This section includes the relevant ratings, booking instructions and headlines as well as a section for including deal variations. Here the previously existing relevant deals can be selected, this means if there is a deal that has very similar features but different options such as different deal duration (2, 3, 4 nights) it can be connected to the others by using this field.

The second step for uploading a deal is the '**Optional deal details'** that also contains several categories such as:

Benefits: Here all extra benefits of the deal should be clearly included. The section is divided in benefits related to: Meals, Drinks, Miscellaneous and others. There are two fields for each benefit; the benefit description and the original price. The original price field is used to offer transparency regarding the overall deal price. In the 'Other' division, all benefits that are not available in the first categories can be added.

Destination & Accommodation: In this section, the first part concerns the upload of the pictures that are relevant to the deal. This is done by clicking on the pink '*Upload*' button and selecting the pictures from a folder. After this, the fields are related to relevant information to the accommodation as airports and airlines, the accommodation's link, among others.
After this there is information relevant to the merchant; whether the merchant is a hotel or a travel agency.

Additional Documents & Notes: Here additional links, information and documents can be added. The section of 'What we love about the deal' is also to be found here; There are three fields in which relevant phrases that showcase the most attractive aspects of a deal can be written. Finally there is the 'Contract Specifics' section in which all additional terms to the deal can be added.

The third step in the upload is the '*SEC Choice*'

In this section the account manager or key contact person in the SOC's company is defined as well as the SECs who can view the deal. This is done by checking the desired regions or the specific SECs from the list.

The fourth and last step is '**Check deal details'** where a preview of the deal can be seen and reviewed before sending it to quality assurance.

Once the final step is completed, the SOC can decide to keep it as a draft or to send it to quality assurance by clicking on the pink 'Send to Dealgecco Admin for Approval' button.

Copying an existing deal

If the deal is similar to an existing deal, the SOC can copy it in order to use the information included in it.
The SOC should log-in to the platform and click on the '*SOC Offer deals'* tab on the top-right side of the website then on '*Copy Existing Deal'* under the *'Offer'* side. There the SOC will be able to choose a deal among the existing ones.

The SOC will be led through the same steps as in the *'Create New Deal'* function and will be able to modify all details through the 4 steps that were described previously.

Another option to copy a deal is to select one of the SOC's existing deals from the *'SOC Offer Deals'* section and click on the *'Copy Deal'* button in the deal overview page.

Once the deal has been accessed all existing fields can be modified to fit the new specifications in the same way as option one.
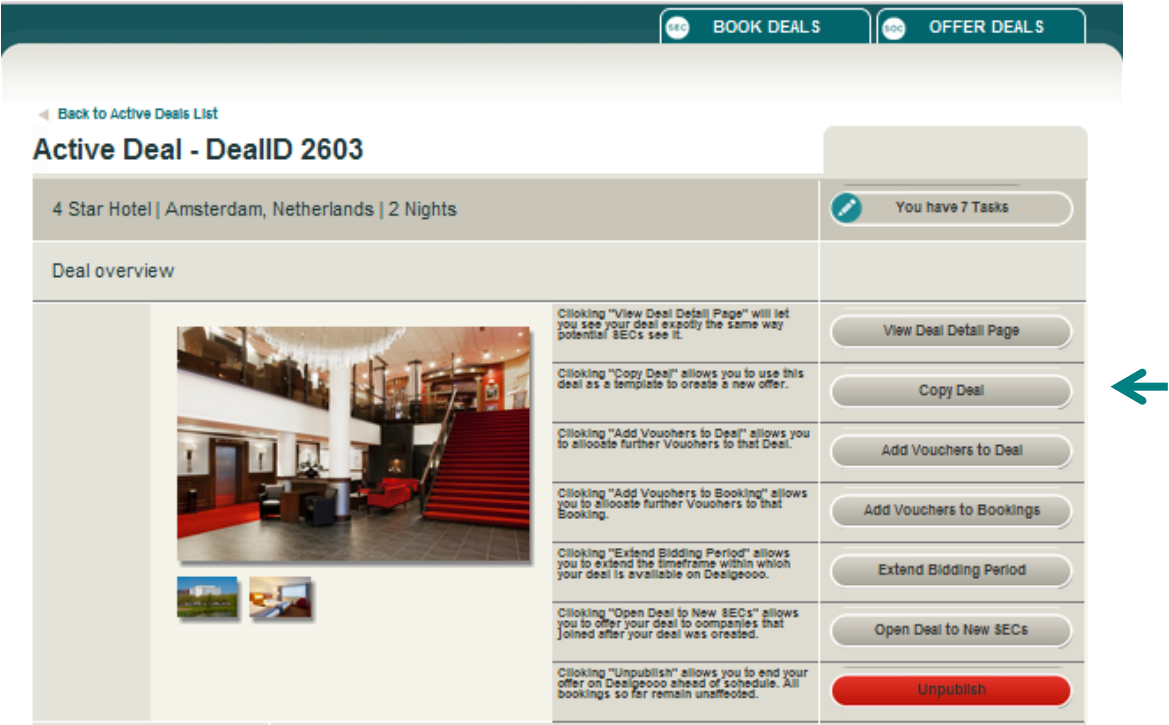
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Deal quality assurance

Who: Dealgecco quality assurance Team

Where: On the Dealgecco Platform (My Account →Admin → Task List)

Tools & Alerts:

- ✓ Dealgecco automated email: The Deal "xxx" with the Deal ID "1111" is now ready for Admin approval!
- ✓ Dealgecco automated email: The Deal "xxx" with Deal ID "1111" was declined

Why: SECs on Dealgecco rarely know the SOC and are often reluctant to book from unknown partners. Dealgecco wants to give both sides comfort that the deals are ok by offering the QA service. By doing this, Dealgecco does not accept any responsibility about the content of the deal, but only helps avoid typical mistakes that can turn into problems afterwards. Typical mistakes are voucher validity, blackout dates or extras. By having a trained person look at all uploaded deals, the majority of mistakes can be spotted and the average time spent per day is 1-2 hours.

How:

Once the deal is submitted to the quality assurance team, the responsible person (Admin) will receive an email requesting a quality check for the uploaded deal and including a link to it. The email is automatically sent from the platform and the subject will look like this: *The Deal "xxx" with the Deal ID "1111" is now ready for Admin approval!* The email has the following format:
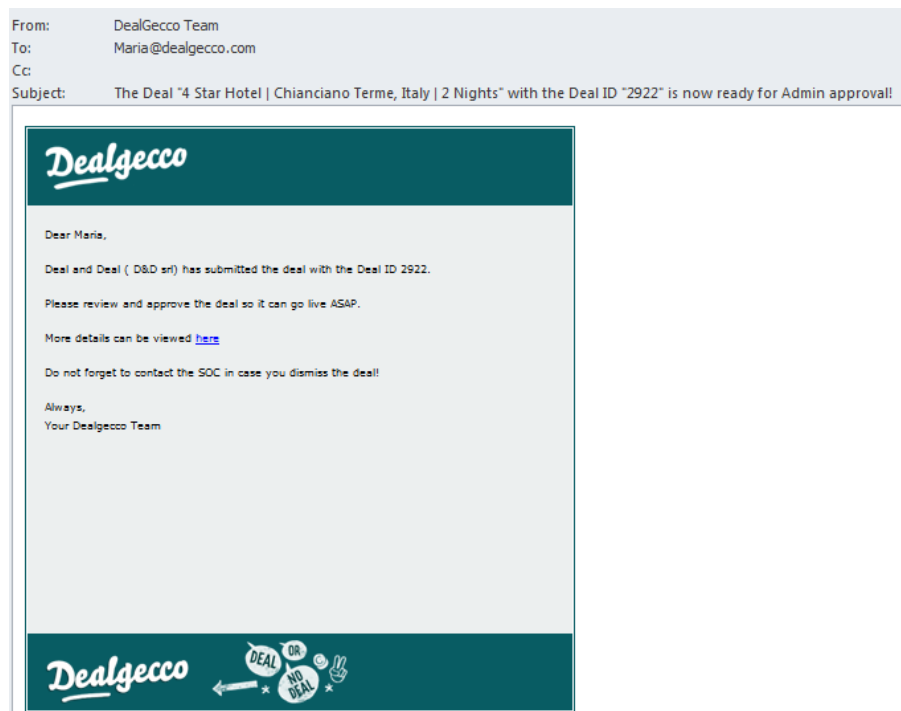
Another way to see the pending deals is by clicking on '*My Account*' in the upper-right side of the web page and then clicking on the '*Admin*' button in the left side of it and finally on '*Task List'* in the displayed list. Here all the pending deals can be seen. The '*Task List'* looks like this:

The quality assurance team should run a ***quality check*** to verify that the following deal aspects are correct:

✓ *Correct grammar and spelling throughout the deal overview page*
✓ *High quality pictures for the offer*
✓ *Correct name of location in English*
✓ *Correct location of the accommodation on the map that is visible on the deal page*
✓ *Accurate original and deal price*: This is checked by looking on both booking.com and the hotel's website. It is very common that booking.com offers a lower price compared to the hotel's website but the 'Dealgecco price' should always be the best available. If the prices are not accurate it is requested that the SOC changes them or sends price evidence.
✓ *All benefits should be correctly defined as well as specific policies and contract related clauses.*
✓ *The deal offer should always include booking instructions with a telephone number and email to reach the hotel.*
✓ *If black-out dates apply they should be stated in the deal, if they take a long period from the validity it can be suggested to the SOC to reconsider the length of the Black-out period.*
✓ *The voucher validity should be at least two weeks longer than the selling period of the deal.*

If all details are correct the deal can be ***approved*** in the Task List and will go live in the platform. The deal is approved by clicking on the 'Approve' button.

If the deal does not comply with the requirements, it has to be ***declined*** by clicking on the '*Decline*' button; in this case a text box will appear where the reasons for declining the deal should be stated.

If the deal is declined, the SOC and the quality assurance team will receive an email that looks like this.
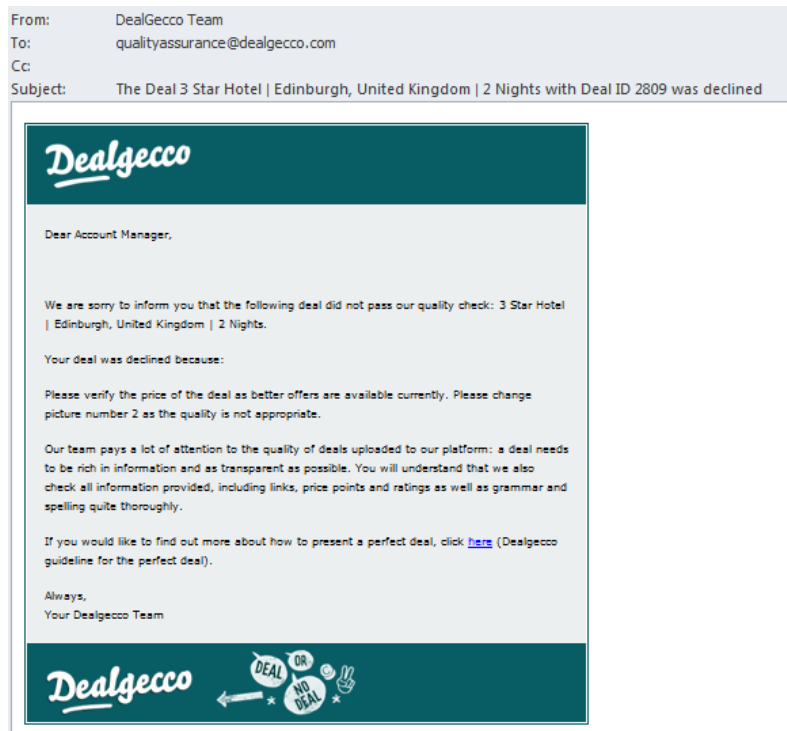
Once the SOC receives this email, the respective changes shall be made and the deal should be submitted again to quality assurance.

Tip: With the purpose of keeping records of the required modifications, the quality assurance team should keep the 'decline' emails and compare the newly submitted deal to the decline email, so it can be verified that the required changes were made.

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Bookings on Dealgecco
Who: SECs, SOCs

Where: On the Dealgecco Platform

Tools & Alerts:

- ✓ Dealgecco automated email: New bid for "4 Star Hotel | Istanbul, Turkey | 4 Nights", Deal ID: 2765 (To SOC)
- ✓ Dealgecco automated email: Approval for the Deal "xxx" (To SEC)
- ✓ Dealgecco automated email: Your bid on the Deal "xxx" was declined (To SEC)
- ✓ Dealgecco automated email: Contract created with Dealgecco for the deal "xxx"

How:

Once the deal is live, it can be booked upon by the partners that have access to it (These were selected in the deal upload process).The partners will browse through the platform to find a suitable deal.

When they go to the deal detail page (by clicking on the deal name) they will see a pink '*Book the deal*' button. Once they do this, a green box will appear requesting them to enter the amount of vouchers they would like to have for this deal. There is one field requesting the minimum and maximum amount of vouchers the partner requires in which these numbers should be specified. Once this step is completed the booking status is: *declared*.

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For example a partner might want to have a minimum of 5 vouchers for a Budapest deal but considers he could sell up to 20 vouchers, so the partner will enter this range in these boxes. Once this is done the booking is declared.

Once the SEC has done this, the SOC will receive an email informing about the booking and asking to accept it and assign a number of vouchers between the ranges requested by the partner. The email includes a link to the booking so the SOC can be directed immediately to it.
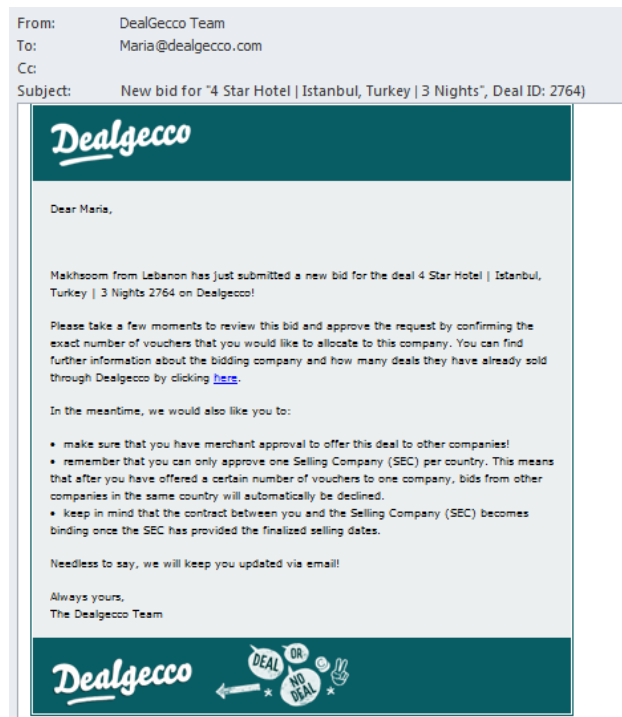
Once the SOC assigns the vouchers the status of the booking is *accepted*. In legal terms, this is equal to an offer to close a contract.

When the SOC has accepted the booking, the SEC receives an email asking to insert the selling dates; this is the period in which the deal will be featured in the SEC's website. Once this is done, the status of the booking is *confirmed.* In legal terms this means a contract between the SEC and SOC is closed at this point.

Tip: When Dealgecco is the SOC, once a booking is confirmed the respective account manager contacts the merchant via e-mail to let them know that their deal has been booked. They inform them about the partner who booked the deal and also about how long the deal will be played on their platform.

Deal Launch – Going Live!

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Deal Preview

Who: SEC sends deal preview – Dealgecco QA team does preview

Where: Off platform – Via e-mail/ on platform: Info validation

Tools & Alerts:
- ✓ Deal tracking for account managers: The deal tracking is a tool that tracks the status and development of deals. Every day the account managers receive a task list according to the deal tracking. (Deal Tracking is a complex tool that will be introduced separately)

- ✓ E-mail from SEC to Dealgecco QA team

How:
Before the deal goes live on the SEC's platform, the SEC should send the Dealgecco quality assurance team a preview of the deal to the email: qualityassurance@dealgecco.com.
The deal preview can be a link to the deal on their platform, a screenshot of the deal on the platform or the deal text in a word document.
The previews are received in the SEC's language and translated by the Dealgecco team using online translators.

The quality assurance team answers the SEC via e-mail informing them if there are any changes to be made to the deal.
The team compares the information on the deal preview with the information that is on the Dealgecco platform and specifically looks for the following information:

- ✓ *Original and deal price:* They can be slightly higher to prevent loses in currency exchange

- ✓ *Hotel Name*

- ✓ *Number of nights and persons included in the deal*

- ✓ *Room type (if specified)*

- ✓ *Benefits of the deal:* If there are more benefits than the ones originally listed, the hotel's website should be checked as they may offer them to all guests

- ✓ *Booking instructions*

- ✓ *Validity period*: The validity period should start 2 weeks after the deal ends

- ✓ *Maximum amount of vouchers per customer (If displayed)*

- ✓ *Deal running time (If displayed)*

- ✓ *Contractual terms*: All contractual terms included in the contracts specific, blackout dates, additional information, hidden costs, surcharges, etc. have to be included in the deal.

Tip: The deal preview is a service provided by Dealgecco and therefore doesn't imply any responsibility from Dealgecco or the SOC in the accurate presentation of the deal which will be under any case the responsibility of the SEC. In order to clarify this to the SECs the following text is included in the email.
"Please note that the preview check provided by Dealgecco is a support service only and does not replace the requirement by the SEC to check and correctly feature the deal.
Dealgecco cannot accept any responsibility for the featuring of the deal by the SEC."

FW Istanbul deal approval.msg

Click to see an example of a preview email exchange

Voucher Lists

Preliminary voucher list and approval
Who: SEC uploads voucher list – Dealgecco QA approves voucher list – SOC downloads list from platform

Where: On platform

Tools & Alerts:
- ✓ Deal tracking for account managers: The deal tracking is a tool that tracks the status and development of deals. Every day the account managers receive a task list according to the deal tracking. (Deal Tracking is a complex tool that will be introduced separately)

- ✓ Dealgecco automated email: Please upload Voucher List for Deal xxx! (Upload voucher list now!) (To SEC)

- ✓ Dealgecco automated email: Please upload Voucher List for Deal "xxx" ASAP

- ✓ Dealgecco automated email: Preliminary List for Booking ID 1111 has been approved.

- ✓ Dealgecco automated email: Oops - your preliminary voucher list for the deal xxx has been declined!

- ✓ Dealgecco automated email: Final List for Booking ID 1111 has been approved.

- ✓ Dealgecco automated email: Oops - your final voucher list for the deal xxx has been declined!

How:

Once the selling period for the deal ends, the SEC is expected to upload a preliminary list. This list is expected one day after the SEC selling period ends.
The list is uploaded to the platform by selecting the SEC Book Deals tab and clicking on Active deals and then on the specific deal. The upload option can be found in the 'Voucher List Upload' section.

Once the SEC has uploaded the list, the Dealgecco team will receive an automated email from the platform that will include a link leading to the 'Task List' in the 'Admin' section of the platform. The lists can be found under the second section.
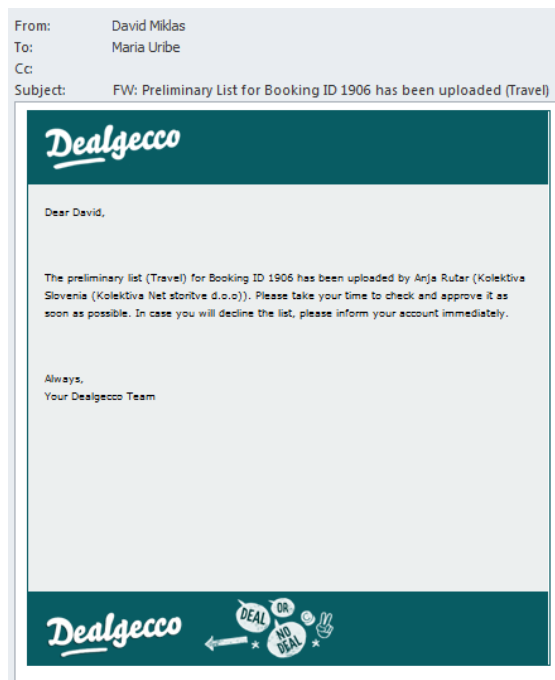
Another way to access the task list is by clicking on 'My Account' in the upper-right side of the web page and then clicking on the 'Admin' button in the left side of it and finally on 'Task List' in the displayed list.
The list has to be approved by Dealgecco once it is uploaded.

In order to approve a list, the number of vouchers entered as 'Vouchers Sold' has to match the amount of codes included in the file, otherwise the list will be declined and the SEC will have to upload a correct list. If their voucher list is declined, they will receive an email from the platform informing them about it.

To decline or approve the voucher lists it is only necessary to click on the respective buttons in the task list.

Once the list is approved it can be viewed by the SOC in the deal overview page, under the bookings section by clicking on the icon under the 'vouchers' column. The deal overview page can be accessed by clicking on the 'SOC Offer Deals' tab by clicking on active or completed deals according to the deal status.

The SOC can download the lists by clicking on the green *'Download'* button.

Tip: If the deal is offered by Dealgecco, the account manager will send the voucher list to the merchant.

FINAL VOUCHER LIST UPLOAD AND APPROVAL
The final voucher list should be uploaded 14 days after the deal ends. This is due to the European E-commerce law that entitles customers to a grace period of 14 days for voucher refunds.

The process for the final voucher list upload is the same as the one for the preliminary list upload.
Tip: the amount of vouchers between the preliminary and final voucher list can vary due to voucher refunds or processing of payments.

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Payment process (At a glance)

The accounting process is complex and will be further described by the accounting team in the handover process.

Accounting prepares payment information
Who: Dealgecco Accounting team

Where: Off Platform

Tools & Alerts:
- ✔ Payment information for SEC (Produced by Dealgecco)

- ✔ Invoice from SEC to SOC (Sent from SEC to SOC)

- ✔ Handling Fee (Sent from Dealgecco to SEC and SOC)

How:
Once the final list is uploaded, the accounting department prepares a document regarding payment information that will be sent to the SEC.

The total value that appears in the payment information is the amount of vouchers sold multiplied by the price of one voucher. This amount is divided into two different concepts; one is for marketing services (commission for SEC), this amount is kept by the SEC. The value that appears as 'Amount to be transferred' is the amount that has to be paid to the SOC.
This document includes all the information regarding payment and banking details.

The SEC should send and invoice with the amount charged for 'Marketing Services' to the SOC and transfer them the rest of the money.

A payment information document looks like this:

Send to Selling Company (SEC): Kolektiva Slovenia (Kolektiva Net storitve d.o.o)			Zoran Savin
Booking ID 1779			zoran.savin@kolektiva.net
Deal ID 2750			17.09.12

4 Star Apartment | Siena, Italy | 6 Nights	Number of Vouchers	Deal Price	Total Amount
Sold Vouchers (Deal Price for Customers)	4	334,00	1.336,00 EUR
Amount for Marketing Services			-148,00 EUR
Amount to be transfered			1.188,00 EUR

Please issue invoice	148,00 EUR	to Dominodeal srl
to Sourcing Company (SOC)		V. G. Pagnini, 18 50134 Firenze, Italy
And send to:		
domino.deal@gmail.com		

Please transfer amount	1.188,00 EUR	to Dominodeal srl
to Sourcing Company (SOC)		Bank: Cassa Di Risparmio Di Firenze S.P.A.
		IBAN: IT29S0616021401100000000261
		BIC: CRFIIT3F

Contact Matteo Martinelli	domino.deal@gmail.com
VAT No. / Tax ID	06089160482

Payment Instructions: Please always use SEPA Transaction for payments in EUR and check SHA (shared fees) as agreed in Dealgecco's Terms & Conditions.

The Selling Company (SEC) shall pay the Sourcing Company (SOC) the total deal amount received from the end customer for further transfer to the merchant.

The Selling Company shall invoice the Sourcing company for providing the marketing services for the Merchant and enabling the conclusion of the contract between the Merchant and the Selling Company's end customer (with the Selling Company acting as the Intermediary for the Sourcing Company).

The Selling Company deduct its remuneration for marketing services from the price paid by its end customers for the Deal ("Deal price for customers") and transfer the remaining amounts to the Sourcing Company.
Any VAT requirements concerning the provision of the above-mentioned services by the Selling Company to the Sourcing Company is the sole responsibility of the Selling Company.

SEC payment to SOC

According to the payment information, the SEC shall transfer the SOC the respective amount for their services. Once the SEC transfers the money to the SOC they should confirm it on the platform by clicking on the payment task and then confirming the payment by clicking on the green 'Confirm payment to SOC' button.

Once the SOC receives the payment, this shall also be confirmed in the payment task by clicking on the green 'Confirm payment from SEC' button.

Once both parties (SEC & SOC) have confirmed the transfer and reception of the payment, the booking status changes to *'completed'*.

Handling Fee

The final step taken by Dealgecco is to send a handling fee invoice to the SEC and SOC. This handling fee is 2.5% of the amount sold per booking. The invoice is sent at the end of the month and includes all sold deals during this period.
The invoice looks like this:

Other relevant tasks
New registrations
Who: Potential Partners – Dealgecco Admin

Where: Platform and E-mail
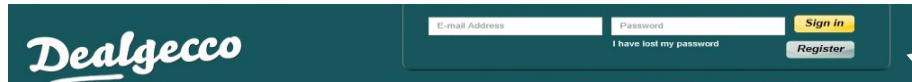
Tools & Alerts:

- ✓ Dealgecco automated email: You have a new message!

How:

When a partner wants to register to work with Dealgecco a process to verify the accuracy of the match between Dealgecco and the partner is carried out.
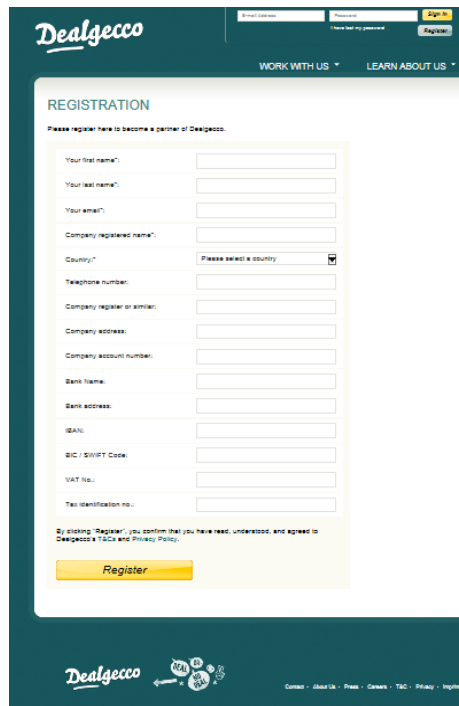
First, the partner registers by filling a form on the platform. This is done by clicking on the 'Register' button located on the top, left side of the platform.

By clicking here they will be led to a registration form which they should fill in with their company's details. Here they also have a direct link to the T&Cs and Privacy Policy of the company.

Once a customer has filled in the form. A defined Dealgecco Admin will receive an email alert about the reservation that contains the information that was given by the partner.
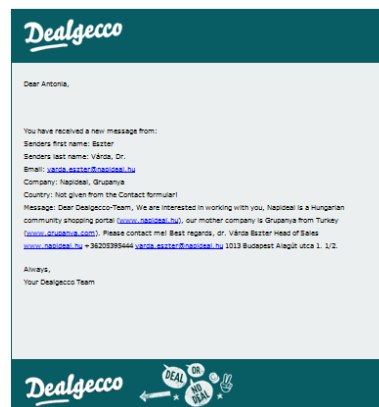
After receiving this email, a member of the Dealgecco team contacts the partner to request information about their business model and to assess if it will be a good addition to the Dealgecco partner base.

If this is the case, the Dealgecco team completes a registration form using the information provided by the partner. This is done by clicking on My Account on the top-right side of the platform, then on Admin and finally on register. There a registration form similar to the one the partner filled in should be completed.

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Once the registration is finalized, the partner will receive an email with their user name and password.

Opening deals for new partners

When a partner first registers to Dealgecco only example deals are available for them. It is the task of each SOC to open the deals for the new partners to see them.

This is easily done through the platform.

Deals can be opened individually or massively. The first step is to open a deal overview page by clicking on the *'SOC offer deals'* tab and selecting a deal. Next, it is necessary to click on 'Open Deal to New SECs'.

Once you click here you will be able to see the new SECs that have no access to the deal and either select one of them and open that specific deal. Another option is to do a massive "deal opening" by clicking on the link 'Open deals to new SECs' that will lead you to a general overview of ALL the deals that are not open for ALL new SECs.

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ANNEX 9: Quality assurance feedback format

QA FEEDBACK

Why was the deal not approved?

Price ☐   Discount ☐   Ratings ☐   Validity Period ☐   Blackout dates ☐   Missing info ☐

Price

Current price:		Ideal price:	
Average price on hotel's website:		Average price on booking.com	

Discount

Current average discount:		Current high Discount:	
Minimum discount:		Required high discount:	
Average discount (hotel's website):		Average discount (booking.com)	
Price to obtain required discounts:			

Ratings

Current rating: Required ratings: 3.5 TripAdvisor – 7 Booking.com

Validity period

Current validity period: Required validity period:

Blackout dates

Current blackout dates: Maximum blackout dates:

Missing information

1.
2.
3.

Observations:

ANNEX 10: Lead sourcing process checklist

LEAD SOURCING

Process checklist

✓	Target definition location	Responsible: Management and account management team
✓	Create lead sourcing template	Responsible: Sales support team
✓	Lead sourcing on booking.com/TripAdvisor	Responsible: Sales support team
✓	Save the leads in the .csv Excel template	Responsible: Sales support team
✓	Assign leads in Excel template	Responsible: Sales support team
✓	Verify that leads include required info	Responsible: Sales support team
✓	Import lead document to Salesforce	Responsible: Sales support team

Templates

- Lead sourcing .Csv (comma delimited) template

Lead Format.csv

ANNEX 11: Sales process checklist

SALES

Process checklist

✓	Find lead on Salesforce	Responsible: Sales manager
✓	Contact lead and explain business model	Responsible: Sales manager
✓	Feedback call	Responsible: Sales manager
✓	Design package together with merchant	Responsible: Sales manager
✓	Create deal ticket (DT) + merchant agreement (MA)	Responsible: Sales manager
✓	Send deal ticket to QA team	Responsible: Sales manager
✓	Make changes to deal if required by QA team	Responsible: Sales manager
✓	Send DT and MA to merchant	Responsible: Sales manager
✓	Request pictures from merchant	Responsible: Sales manager
✓	Deliver signed MA and DT to the QA team	Responsible: Sales manager
✓	Send 'Welcome to Dealgecco' email to merchant	Responsible: Sales manager
✓	Do handover with account manager	Responsible: Sales manager

Templates

- Merchant agreement
- Deal ticket
- Handover format

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ANNEX 12: Quality assurance process checklist

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Process checklist

- ✓ Receive deal ticket from sales team   Responsible: Sales manager
- ✓ Do deal check in deal ticket   Responsible: QA team
- ✓ Complete QA feedback format if deal requires changes   Responsible: QA team
- ✓ Send deal ticket to management for final approval   Responsible: QA team
- ✓ Create PDF version of client DT and send to sales manager   Responsible: QA team
- ✓ Receive signed DT and MA   Responsible: Sales manager
- ✓ Upload/Archive signed DT and MA to   Responsible: QA team
- ✓ Forward link to deal file to management   Responsible: QA team
- ✓ Convert Salesforce lead to Account   Responsible: QA team

Templates

- Completed deal ticket
- Signed deal ticket and merchant agreement

ANNEX 13: Deal upload process checklist

DEAL UPLOAD

Process checklist

- ✓ Receive deal link from QA team   Responsible: Quality assurance team
- ✓ Define SEC remuneration   Responsible: Management
- ✓ Send deal to upload team   Responsible: Management
- ✓ Do deal upload   Responsible: Deal upload team
- ✓ Send deal draft to QA team   Responsible: Deal upload team
- ✓ Check deal upload   Responsible: QA team
- ✓ Suggest changes to upload team if required   Responsible: QA team
- ✓ Send deal to management   Responsible: QA team
- ✓ Final upload approval   Responsible: Management
- ✓ Approve deal to go live   Responsible: QA team

Templates or documents

- Deal ticket

ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT (MERCHANTS)

Process checklist

- ✓ Deal handover with sales manager   Responsible: Sales manager
- ✓ Contact merchant and explain deal processes   Responsible: Account manager
- ✓ Inform merchant about bookings   Responsible: Account manager
- ✓ Send merchant deal links on featuring day   Responsible: Account manager
- ✓ Send merchant preliminary and final voucher lists   Responsible: Account manager
- ✓ Assist merchant in the creation of a new deal Responsible: Account manager

Templates or documents

- Deal handover format
- Deal ticket

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Process check list

- ✓ Complaint or inquiry is received by the customer support team.
- ✓ Inquiry is classified in Zendesk   Responsible: Customer Support
- ✓ Customer support looks into issue   Responsible: Customer Support
- ✓ Customer support contacts involved parties   Responsible: Customer Support
- ✓ Customer support answers inquiry   Responsible: Customer support
- ✓ Create weekly inquiry report   Responsible: Customer support

Templates or documents

- Inquiry from customer
- Zendesk reporting

Quality Manual

October 2012

Contents

Quality Policy

Dealgecco aims to provide its partners with high quality deals and service by meeting their expectations and needs. With this goal in mind, a quality assurance system is maintained focusing on these basic principles:

- Customer satisfaction comes first when designing and delivering our services and products.
- Our staff is aware of their responsibility of providing our customers with high quality products and services
- We strive to improve every day and with this goal in mind have created the necessary spaces to encourage the participation and initiative of the team in this process.

Organization

- **Responsibility and authority**

In the quality assurance team, one member will be the responsible of the application of the quality assurance system. This person will be responsible for the following tasks

- Introduce the team to the quality assurance system and the processes that are implemented to fulfill it.
- Train each member in the relevant tasks that require their action in the quality assurance system implementation.
- Create and promote channels through which the members will inform the quality assurance team of potential mistakes, incidents and problems related to the deals, the processes or the quality system.
- Analyze the information and feedback received by the team and propose, develop and implement solutions

- **Management representation and review**

In order to keep an active communication and effective implementation of the system as well as a goal oriented approach to the quality assurance process, a member of the management team will support the process by taking responsibility of the following tasks:

- Periodically assessing the implementation and continuous improvement of the process.
- Analyzing new solutions proposed by the quality assurance team.
- Providing the team with the insight of the management and the strategic requirements
- Verifying the correct development of the quality assurance process

Quality system

- ## Product design

Each deal promoted on the Dealgecco platform is unique and therefore goes through a different 'design' process. The design of the product is done in the sales process (For complete process description see process manual – sales). The sales managers are responsible for designing the deals that result as the final product that is offered to the customers through the Dealgecco platform.

Design input

- All locations have to be defined in the weekly meeting and should be bases in the partners request and approved by the management. These locations are the translation of the customer requirements and should be therefore the aim of the sales team.
- The sales manager shall explain all the requirements, processes and impacts a deal has on a merchant to ensure the merchant is aware of the necessary tasks and accomplishes them successfully achieving customer satisfaction.
- The sales manager shall design the deal together with the merchant to ensure the expertise and experience of the sales manager is used in favor of the development of a successful deal, providing high sales levels to the merchant and satisfied partners and end customers.
- All information provided by the merchant and the sales manager shall be accurate and complete.

Design output

- A deal is only done when all information in the deal ticket is complete.

- For a deal to be published in the platform, the sales manager has to provide a signed deal ticket and merchant agreement as well as high quality pictures supplied by the merchant
- The sales manager is responsible for promoting the deal in the way the merchant wishes it to be done therefore the deal sub headline and the three Gecco lines are their responsibility and should showcase the merchant's desires.
- The sales manager is required to do an appropriate handover with the account management team using the provided format.

Design review and verification

- The deal, in the form of the deal ticket should always be reviewed by the quality assurance team and the management before being sent to the merchant for contract signature.
- For a deal to be approved it should be compliant with the quality assurance processes.
- All the information in the deal should be approved by the merchant and Dealgecco.

- ## Document and data control

- All leads included in Salesforce should include all the required contact information and the person responsible for the process should verify there are not repeated leads.
- All information in the deal ticket and the merchant agreement has to be verified by the quality assurance team before the signature of both parties (merchant and Dealgecco management).
- All documentation should be included in the merchant's folder before the deal is sent for upload. The documentation includes: excel version of deal ticket, signed deal ticket and merchant agreement. In case the deal was previously declined the quality assurance feedback should also be included.
- The quality assurance is responsible for the upload of the previously mentioned information to the merchant's folder.
- One day after the deal was sent over for upload, the merchant folder shall also include the handover format and the merchant history format.
- The quality assurance should convert the lead to an account and include all payment information taken from the deal ticket.

- Every three months the quality assurance team should review the merchant folders and verify that all the required information is available and complete.
- All obsolete documents should be removed from all locations.

- ## Product identification and traceability

  - All deal tickets should include the deal ID to trace the deal in the platform.
  - All merchants should receive the merchant manual after the first contact with the account manager.
  - All partners should send a preview of their deal that should be reviewed by the quality assurance team.
  - All merchants shall receive a link to their deal on the day it goes live.

- ## Process Control

  - All tasks should be developed by qualified personnel
  - All team members should be properly trained before starting to intervene in processes
  - All process shall be observed with periodicity and analyzed by the quality assurance team following the standards determined in the process manual and the process checklists.
  - When processes are operating out of the regulations, the quality assurance team should approach the team, inquire about the causes and solve any potential issues in order to return to the standard process operation.

- ## Servicing

  - Service for the majority of partners is done through the customer support department.
  - The customer support team shall receive and analyze the requests.
  - All partners involved shall be contacted to clarify the situation.
  - Partners should receive a prompt response (not more than 24 hours).
  - All inquiries should be answered.

- ## Internal quality audits

The quality assurance team must develop internal quality audits every six months. In these audits all teams will be consulted separately about the effectiveness of their processes and their most frequent problems in the development of their tasks.

The audit should involve a team and process audit. The process audit follows the process check list and should be done for several deals to guarantee objective results.

For the team audit, the auditors will individually analyze the results of the team during the six month period and review all reports received in the period regarding the process that is being audited.

All process audits should use the process manual as a standard for the development of the activities within the team and the quality check lists as guidance.

The audits should provide a space in which the team can suggest modifications and improvements for the process.

The auditors should develop and provide a report including all their findings. This report will be presented and studied with the management in order to set improvement goals. The auditor will also present solutions and suggestions for the improvement of the process.

All the measures agreed on by the quality assurance and management team as well as the most relevant results should be presented to the members of all the audited teams and processes who should also be informed about the implementation plans and schedules.

Quality system tools

- The merchant manual is a basic tool for the quality system and the quality assurance team but it is also highly relevant to al team members. The manual should be available to everyone involved in the process and revised every six months in the quality audit.
- The platform task manual supports the necessary activities for the deal lifecycle that are done through the platform. It is a valuable tool for all platform users.
- The process check sheets are very important for the users and for the proper development of the quality system that uses them as a support tool for process verification and observation.

Quality system check lists

- **Product design**

  - ☐ Target locations were defined by management and account managers in the weekly meeting
  - ☐ All processes of the deal lifecycle were explained to the merchant by the sales manager.
  - ☐ The deal was designed by the merchant with the assistance of the sales manager
  - ☐ All information provided by the merchant and sales manager is correct and complete.
  - ☐ A signed deal ticket and merchant agreement was provided by the sales manager to the quality assurance team
  - ☐ Good quality pictures were provided by the merchant
  - ☐ All promotion information is included in the deal ticket and reflects the merchant's strengths.
  - ☐ An appropriate handover including the upload of the handover format was done.

- **Document and data control**

  - ☐ All leads in Salesforce include all relevant contact information.
  - ☐ All information in the deal ticket and merchant agreement was verified by the quality assurance team
  - ☐ All documentation is uploaded in the merchant's folder
  - ☐ The Salesforce lead was converted to an account on Salesforce and the payment data was included

- **Product identification and traceability**

  - ☐ All deal tickets include deal ID on platform
  - ☐ The merchant received the merchant manual
  - ☐ Deal preview was reviewed by quality assurance team
  - ☐ Merchant received link to deal on partner's website.

- **Servicing**

  - ☐ All inquiries were answered in a timely manner.
  - ☐ The customer support team provided solutions to the inquiries.
  - ☐ The partners involved were informed about the relevant problems.

- **Periodical tasks**

  - ☐ All merchant folders were checked for relevant documentation.
  - ☐ If documentation was not complete, the relevant parties have been informed and the documentation is being processed.
  - ☐ Obsolete documents found in inspection were removed.
  - ☐ Process and team audits were carried out.

ESCUELA DE INGENIERÍA DE ANTIOQUIA
ACTA DE EVALUACIÓN DE SUSTENTACIÓN FINAL DE TRABAJO DE GRADO

Fecha: (dd/mm/aa)	21 de noviembre de 2012
Nombre del proyecto:	Design of a quality control process for dealgecco GmbH
Director del proyecto:	Nicolás Radecke

Nombre del estudiante	Programa académico
Maria Adelaida Uribe Gómez	Ingeniería Industrial

Evaluación de la sustentación

Tenga en cuenta: fluidez, seguridad, manejo del tiempo, respuesta a las preguntas y material de apoyo para la presentación

X Aprobada   _____ No aprobada

Observaciones:

Espacio exclusivo para proyectos exploratorios en emprendimiento

Se considera que el proyecto puede continuar con incubación? Si____   No _____

DIRECTOR DEL PROGRAMA
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Nicolás Radecke

JURADO (Si lo hubo)
Maria Victoria Echavarría

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