

PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE FOR THE SATO CORPORATION

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Bachelor's Thesis
March 2012

Degree Programme in Facility Management
Tourism, Catering and Domestic Services





Author(s) KYRÖLÄINEN, Marika	Type of publication Bachelor's Thesis	Date 31.03.2012
	Pages 50	Language English
	Confidential () Until	Permission for web publication (X)
Title PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE FOR THE SATO CORPORATION		
Degree Programme Degree Programme in Facility Management		
Tutor(s) HINTIKKA-MÄKINEN, Kirsti		
Assigned by SATO Corporation		
<p>Abstract</p> <p>The research <i>PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE FOR THE SATO CORPORATION</i> was done for the SATO customer service premises. An innovative workplace is versatile, inspiring, efficient, and comfortable. The term innovative always includes the idea of implementation as well as value creation, which makes it different from the concept of creativity.</p> <p>The objective of the thesis is to find solutions for what kind of elements are needed to make SATO's customer service premises more innovative, and what kind of influence an innovative workplace would have on the employees' work.</p> <p>The research will be useful when thinking of new workplaces or planning new types of working practices. The research is defined to involve only SATO's customer service premises.</p> <p>The research question is: What kind of space is an innovative workplace at SATO? Thesis will also answer to the following questions: How is the workplace utilised at SATO at the moment? How could the workplace be more innovative if needed?</p> <p>The study was implemented by means of qualitative research methods. Data was collected at individual interviews which enabled further discussions on the topic. This ensured more elaborate answers compared to quantitative methods. Themes and coding were used as analysis methods to present data in a simpler form and to facilitate analyzing.</p> <p>The results of the study show that SATO should focus even more on functionality and amenity of workplaces. The customer service premises are now missing a clear common area, where it is possible to have meetings. In addition there are problems with noise and sound issues, which need to be solved. Employees wished to have a more inspiring and cheerful workplace, and they felt that it would affect their coping at work.</p>		
Keywords Innovative workplace, innovative organization, innovative environment, innovation, creativity, SATO		
Miscellaneous		



Tekijä(t) KYRÖLÄINEN, Marika	Julkaisun laji Opinnäytetyö	Päivämäärä 31.03.2012
	Sivumäärä 50	Julkaisun kieli Englanti
	Luottamuksellisuus () saakka	Verkkojulkaisulupa myönnetty (X)
Työn nimi INNOVATIIVISEN TYÖTILAN KEHITTÄMISSUUNNITELMA SATOLLE		
Koulutusohjelma Degree Programme in Facility Management		
Työn ohjaaja(t) HINTIKKA-MÄKINEN, Kirsti		
Toimeksiantaja(t) SATO Oyj		
<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Opinnäytetyö <i>Innovatiivisen työtilan kehittämissuunnitelma SATOLle</i> tehtiin koskemaan SATOn asiakaspalvelutiloja. Innovatiivisella työtilalla tarkoitetaan monipuolista, innostavaa, tehokasta ja viihtyisää toimitilaa. Innovatiivisuus terminä sisältää aina myös idean käyttöönoton sekä arvon lisäämisen, jonka vuoksi se eroaa luovuuden käsitteestä.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on löytää keinoja, joilla SATOn asiakaspalvelutilasta saadaan innovatiivisempi sekä selvittää millainen vaikutus innovatiivisella työtilalla on työntekijöiden työnteekoon. Tutkimustuloksista on pyritty saamaan mahdollisimman kattavat, jotta SATO pystyisi hyödyntämään niitä parhaalla mahdollisella tavalla. Tutkimuksesta on hyötyä suunniteltaessa uusia työtiloja tai miettiessä uusia työtapoja.</p> <p>Tutkimusongelma on: Millainen tila on innovatiivinen työtila SATOssa? Tutkimuksen alaongelmat ovat: Millaiset työtilat SATOssa on tällä hetkellä? Miten työtilat voivat olla innovatiivisempia, jos siihen on tarvetta?</p> <p>Tutkimus toteutettiin kvalitatiivisella tutkimusotteella. Aineiston keruumenetelmänä oli yksilöhaastattelu, koska näin päästiin syvällisemmin keskustelemaan haastateltavan kanssa. Haastattelut toteutettiin puolistrukturoitua teemahaastattelua apuna käyttäen. Aineiston analyysimenetelmänä käytettiin teemoittelun lisäksi koodausta, näin saatiin purettua haastattelut yksinkertaisempaan muotoon ja toteutettua analysointi helpommin.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa ilmeni, että SATOn olisi mietittävä vielä enemmän toimitilojen toiminnallisuutta ja viihtyisyyttä. Tällä hetkellä asiakaspalvelutiloihin tarvittaisiin selkeä ja erillinen alue, jossa voisi pitää esimerkiksi palaverieita. Lisäksi avoimessa tilassa melutaso koetaan välillä liian suureksi, johon toivotaankin parannusta. Työntekijät toivovat inspiroivampaa ja energisempää työtilaa, koska uskovat, että se voisi vaikuttaa positiivisesti työssä jaksamiseen.</p>		
Avainsanat (asiasanat) Innovatiivinen työpaikka, innovatiivinen organisaatio, innovatiivinen ympäristö, innovaatio, luovuus, SATO		
Muut tiedot		

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1 INTRODUCTION

The thesis *Plan for the development of an innovative workplace for the SATO Corporation* was assigned by SATO's customer service premises. The topic was chosen because this type of research has not been done for SATO earlier and, it would be useful to do a survey how the employees' see and feel about their working surrounding. In addition so much inspiration and motivation has come from Mrs. Suvi Nenonen's *Workplace* course in JAMK University of Applied Sciences in spring 2011. The topic is current because the personnel spend most of their time at work, and their work has oriented towards more collaboration and technology-based operations.

The objective of the thesis is to find out what kind of elements are needed to make SATO's customer service premises more innovative, and what kind of influence an innovative workplace would have on the employees' work.

The research will be useful when thinking of new workplaces or planning new types of working practices. The research is defined to involve SATO's customer service premises only.

The topic is interesting in that a workplace can be so much more than a room with common working facilities. The interest towards innovative workplaces has increased as people have realised the influence of innovative workplaces towards employees' flow of information and job satisfaction. A well-designed workplace includes clear spaces with different kinds of functions with smooth transfers from one space to another.

2 THE MEANING OF WORKPLACE

When talking about place and space it is useful to define the concepts. Place means space for functions where social relations and human activities happens. On the contrary, space is a structure of the world, three-dimensional environment in which objects and events occur. A physical workplace means a place where people come to meet and socialize, although they are often geographically distributed and collaborate from afar. Therefore, workplaces should be transparent and provide a choice of diverse spaces to support collaborative interaction experiences as well as to allow solo activities. Virtual workplaces support accessible, available and reliable infrastructure anywhere and anytime due because connectivity of different types of devices is nowadays possible. The appropriate choice and use of diverse communication channels is important for a company. Physical and virtual workplaces provide platforms for a variety of social interactions. They can create interactions in teams and organisations as well as the sense of belonging of individuals. Increasing visibility of roles and activities is important in workplaces. Especially in project teams, work practices and processes should be visible. In addition, creating formal and informal interaction of experiences is important in the workplace. (Nenonen et al.2009, 4-6)

Workplaces and spaces have changed over time from closed offices to open offices, and forwards to combination of closed and opened offices. Organisations begun to get interested in a variety of new ways to use spaces and therefore, a wide range of solutions appeared; for instance mobile work, non-dedicated workstations, flexi-offices and hotelling. An enabler of new workplace solutions has been the evolution of virtual places and spaces where social media and multiple communication channels have taken place. In addition, the social places have developed towards horizontal communication from the vertical structure when processes and teams were changed into matrix organisations. (Nenonen et al.2009, 13)

2.1 Workplace management and workplace resource management

The survey *The ProWork Project* presents different kinds of case studies about diverse workplaces and their impacts on workplace management. The results show that an open and transparent workplace provides multi-use spaces, and increases communication among people. Furthermore, the social awareness of each other widens and the information flow is accessible. The research also discusses about the relationships between workplace management and workplace resource management. The workplace management means management of workplaces as quantitative resource including processes on change, design and use of workplaces. On the other hand, workplace resource management is used to define programs in order to manage the workplace resource, and to achieve the organisation's goals. (Nenonen et al.2009, 6-7, 21-25, 31)

The case studies revealed that there are many workplace management practices which vary from operational workplace practices to defined workplace management processes. On the basis of the case studies, the researchers identified four different orientations to workplace resource management; network, experience, change and service management. According to the research, network management means integrated workplace programs and solutions, as well as the goals to ensure the collaboration among the interest groups of a workplace as a virtual, physical and social entity. Experience management's goal is to provide the memorable experiences for employees. Change management means identifying the workplace change process as a part of organisational changes. Service management's goal is to provide the collaboration flow, concentration flow and hospitality flow to employees by designing workplaces. The reason for identifying orientations is that the measurements of a workplace are still linked to concrete square meters, and to the intention of decreasing their amount. Consequently, workplace resource management provides programs which ensure that the workplace is not only a stable solution but a learning process. (Nenonen et al.2009, 6-7, 21-25, 31)

2.2 Innovativeness and creativity

Often the concepts of innovativeness and creativity are used as synonyms to each other. However, the concepts differ from each other so that innovativeness is a social process and creativity is more of an abstract process. Creativity can be seen as a part of innovative process. Furthermore, innovative process includes the implementation of a new idea. The value that can be created with innovation is not always financial. Additionally, it can be increased job satisfaction, learning outcomes or quality of life. Company's innovation capability is always based on an organization's ability to renewal. The company can then keep the current success factors at the same time as it creates a competitive advantage with innovative solutions. (Ståhle et al. 2004, 12-13)

A creative environment with a group of normal people is more innovative than a group of creative people in an inflexible environment. It is important to think about group dynamics and group practices because properly constructed groups are usually more creative and innovate than other groups. In addition, the process of creativity needs space to develop. Therefore, personnel should have a silent place to walk and think through their ideas. This kind of "idea walking" is an effective way to increase creative ideas. However, if the group members have worked together for too long, there may be a danger that the group members start to think too similarly or too narrowly. To avoid this type of an issue is to use an outsider in the group. For instance, some other employee from the organisation comes to visit the group and gives new and fresh ideas. After all, creativity is collective; it develops by working together. (Tukiainen. 2010, 30-32, 35)

Innovativeness cannot happen even if the workplace is well-designed but spirit of the space is missing. The Japanese professor Ikujiro Nonaka has launched the concept *Ba* to describe mental, physical and virtual space. *Ba* allows the best possible way to create new ideas and thoughts in the atmosphere of trust and cooperation. The basis of *Ba* is to combine tacit knowledge and expressed knowledge, as well as speed up information flow between the two. Organisation culture is strongly linked to innovation creation. If the

organisation culture is open-minded and encourages employees to create new ideas, then innovations have room for flourish. There is a few phenomenon of organisation culture which creates a strong basis to innovation creation. One of them is an open communication and knowledge sharing culture. In addition, people's mutual trust and respect as well as acceptance of pluralism and equality are vital in an innovative culture. An innovative culture does not try to cover up problems, but brings them out. Also the company's values and history encourage to innovation creation. (Antola et al. 2006, 91-93)

3 INNOVATIVE ENVIRONMENT

Innovative environment means that a company or organisation is not separate from its values or business behaviour. The culture, history and behavioural models of the company effect its innovative environment. Some organisations have developed innovative surroundings where information, knowledge and the best practises are easily shared with co-workers. An innovative environment decreases uncertain feeling in the company as people who are involved in the environment have better and wider knowledge of the changes and decisions in their innovative surroundings. Innovative environments are often seen as unofficial social networks, which have a certain image and feeling of solidarity. This is seen as improved synergy and creativity of the organisation. Typical features of innovative environments are co-operation as well as an energetic spirit for new things which inspire personnel to work more closely together. (Stähle et al. 2004, 14-15)

An innovative environment consists mainly of four things: innovation system, "buzz", global information channels and local actors. The innovation system helps organisations to understand that they are a part of the whole picture; therefore, it has contributed to improving interactions between different kinds of actors. The buzz means constantly on-going creative processes in an innovative environment. The buzz creates systematic and spontaneous communication channels between organisations. Global information channels mean that innovative environment should also be open outward in order for the creativity not to disappear. Local actors create network-like cooperation where different kinds of interest groups act together. The importance of the

innovative environment elements is to realise that the creation and utilisation of the organisation's cross-border knowledge is vital to the company for maintaining competitive advantage. (Stähle et al. 2004, 14-17)

Different kinds of conversations and encounters at work promote innovation and cooperation. Therefore, companies carry out the culture and floor plan with this in mind. However, the results have been both surprising and disappointing. Usually the new design in the workplace is explicitly thought to promote informal interactions. But sometimes there has been a poor guide when it comes to designing the interaction. For instance, every now and then in open-plan offices employees have shorter and more-superficial discussions due to the fact that they feel a lack of privacy. However, an open-plan office can also be innovative, and encourage informal interactions depending on the physical and social interaction of the workplace design. The most effective spaces bring people together and remove barriers as well as provide sufficient privacy so that people do not fear being overhead or interrupted. (Fayard et al. 2011, 103-108)

These kinds of spaces need to have three factors properly in balance: proximity, privacy and permission. Proximity means a place where design directs traffic to shared places such as coffee machine areas, and gives people reasons to cooperation. In private places people must be able to avoid interacting when they wish to, and they must feel confident that they can converse without being interrupted. Permission place means the company's culture and space itself. Comfortable furniture and obviously work-related machines help convey that casual conversation is encouraged. The balance between three factors can be found by testing them in practice. It can be tested for instance by measuring the building's flexibility of the design's effects. Seemingly small changes can have an outsize effect. In addition, unintended consequences are common. For instance, coffee rooms can be more often conversation-triggering spaces than true interaction spaces because that employees would often start conversation in there, and move then to a more private space to continue talking. However, the coffee room conversations are very fragile for interruption and external stimulus. Therefore,

the connection between proximity, privacy and permission should be smooth and transparent. (Fayard et al. 2011, 103-108)

3.1 Innovative workplace

Usually workspaces are inspected from the viewpoint of earning power and efficiency, and therefore, they are seen as cost factors measured by operating costs, utilisation rates and square meter -indicators. For that reason it is common that workplaces are spaces where all the unnecessary elements have been removed, and the spaces look clinical or blank. At the same, time people forget common experiences, perceptions, interactions and feelings they have had there. Therefore, an innovative workplace should include visions of proximity of life, modifiability and flexibility. In addition, workplaces can be seen as part of strategic management supporting the organisation to be more innovative and cooperative. A company's strategy management should include innovative workplace design, and take care of workplace's ergonomics to increase creativity and collaboration among people. (Antola et al. 2006, 98-99)

Innovation is more than manifestation of an idea. It always includes practical activities, especially when talking about organisations and wider spaces. The term of innovation can be summarised as a new idea with implementation and value creation. On the other hand, innovations are typically new kinds of operating models, ways of organising and strategic approaches as well as services and products. Recently, there has been talk about social innovations. Social innovations mean new kinds of ways to solve communal problems. (Ståhle et al. 2004, 11)

The Institute for Workplace Innovation (iwin) has developed an *Innovative workplace model* with eight dimensions that are shown to improve retention, engagement and recruitment. The reason for the research was iwin's previous study where it is mentioned, that the four strongest predictors of job turnover are job meaning, workplace relationships, contribution and schedule control. The research describes the model's importance within the changing nature of work.

The meaning of eight dimensions is to create dynamic work environments that support employees' daily work. In the model, the dimensions are presented as segments but they still depend upon one another, and only together do they create the innovative workplace. The eight dimensions are:

- promotion of health and wellness
- effective leadership and supervision
- opportunities for learning and advancement
- promotion of workplace flexibility
- culture of inclusion
- meaningful work
- cultivation of teams and social supports
- competitive compensation and benefits



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Figure 1. Iwin, innovative workplace

Business activities are not possible without personnel. If the personnel do not enjoy working in the facilities, creativity does not flourish and new ideas do not arise. Also, if the personnel are working whole days in box offices without a possibility to meet their colleagues in informal and comfortable places, there is no point to expect innovation to increase in the company. International Great Place to Work –institute has made many studies about the best workplaces. The research results reveal that the best workplaces expand faster and produce a better profit than other companies. In the best workplaces, the

utilised structures and solutions support development of innovations in the company. (Tukiainen. 2010, 11-12)

Many successful companies have understood the importance of cooperation between company's various departments. They have realised that working life is rapidly evolving, and to survive, the company needs to be innovative. In addition, workplaces are changing towards social environments because a prerequisite of innovation development is teamwork. Future's workplace seems to be more or less depending on meeting places. (Tukiainen. 2010, 18)

3.1.1 Mood It –concept

Mood It –concepts have been created for creative spaces. A five-step-creative process has been defined, which is the basis to Mood it –concepts. The steps are preparation, function formulation, developing alternatives, incubation and choosing alternatives. Preparation step requires for instance storage, an archive and a library. In addition, shelving, in which the employee's own items are stocked for others to look and wonder, acts as a good source of inspiration. A function formulation step requires a large space with good audio-visual equipment so that all participants can participate. Developing alternatives step needs space for teamwork which includes also a confidential atmosphere, and enough space for writing visible notes and ideas. Incubation step needs a peaceful and quiet space, but also activities that take the employee's mind away from work, such as flipper or dartboard. Choosing alternatives step requires space where the question is defined and assigned. In addition, it is important that the space permits presentations for big groups. The goal of the steps is to link creative process to the spaces so that all kind of information flow is possible in them; for instance teamwork creativity as well as tacit knowledge creativity. (Tukiainen. 2010, 106-108)

The main principles for the Mood It -concepts are simplicity, transitions, sliding, transparency, safety and nature. Simplicity means that the space is as simple as possible and together with materials, colours and elements tries to create a multisensory space. Transitions include among others light flow from one space to another, and clear movement. Transparency enables

transparent windows and doors as well as walls. For instance sliding doors enable the changing nature of space. The purpose of transparency is strengthening the image of an open organisation. Safety means space for silence and concentration. Nature is a part of working space through windows and glass walls. The Mood It –concepts consist of consecutive and partly overlapping Mood-episodes. Mood-episode means premises plus created feeling. Therefore, Mood-episodes are advancing the creative process of space. (Tukiainen. 2010, 112-113, 116)

3.1.2 The building materials of an innovative workplace

A multisensory space is one way to improve a work community's job satisfaction and creativity. Multisensory space means the sense experience of many senses at the same time in one place. It is important to connect the sensation of space to employees' own favourite place to improve creative process. Excellent place must provide a wide range of contents of perception, action, meaning and emotional togetherness with rhythmical clarity. (Tukiainen. 2010, 82-83) (Laurea. 2011)

The elements and space solutions for innovative workplace are spaciousness and openness as well as direct contact with nature and optimising the amount of natural light. Innovative workplace requires also separate places where one can go to think, and a large surface in which what has been done can be visualised. There should as well be storage space for inspiring objects as well as a possibility to circulate and move. However, the most popular element for innovative workplace is a kitchen and the possibility of common dining due to the fact that it brings the whole organisation together and the atmosphere is relaxed. (Tukiainen. 2010, 59)

The structure of office furniture in an innovative workplace should be versatility and changeability, as well as mobility and scalability. The latest trend is that a part of the work is done at home and on the other hand companies are beginning to partly resemble homes or hobby places. Future office spaces are ergonomic, flexibly changing forms, and relaxation increasing materials are used. The reason for this is that places for relaxation and well-being are

expected to improve productivity. Using right colours and contrasts improves the community's image, creates the place's identity and also effects on the working environment's comfort. (Tukiainen. 2010, 86-87)

Lighting confirms poetical and emotional impressions in a place. Therefore, it has a major impact on the atmosphere of the place. The latest innovation in lighting is to use moving images by reflecting them to a wall. In addition, the use of IT technology has increased innovative lighting. In addition, bringing some elements from outside to inside to the workplace increases personnel's job satisfaction. For instance, using plants and sounds of nature improves personnel's creativity and commitment to the company. (Tukiainen. 2010, 90-93)

3.2 Innovative organisation

There are several ways to be an innovative organisation. When the organisation's atmosphere of trust is highly developed, the learning is faster and relationships between workers are longer. This requires a courageous leader who is present in the teams' everyday activities, inspires to create new and wants to talk with the team members about it. The unity of the management team and the ability to re-edit the company's resources quickly and flexibility advances organisational creativity. An open and supportive atmosphere encourages the creation of innovations among the personnel. The informal culture also promotes the company's creativity. When it is possible to develop ideas "not seriously" or "not task centrally" more curious thoughts emerge. The foundations of informal culture are low hierarchy, open communication and vivid cross-sharing of ideas. (Tukiainen. 2010, 40-41, 44)

Innovative management particularly concerns managing people. Creating innovations and the effective implementation of them always requires the formation of social interaction both inside and outside of the organisation. Different kinds of technology tools and organisational structures support of human activity. Their roles as innovation enablers are important, but they are still lower than the effect of social activity. Social activity in an organisation is really important because creating added value with innovations needs the

effective implementation and dissemination of the developed idea. Managing the innovations of an organisation needs to find a balance between creativity and orderliness. (Ståhle et al. 2004, 61)

A company's competitive pressure is shown in its structural changes. The organisation should be more innovative the following types of characteristics: knowledge collecting, flexibility, connecting and horizontal collaboration. This means that the company's strategy has to take into consideration the technology development as well as human resource innovations, and operational boundaries between employees. Knowledge collecting includes finding, keeping and motivating talent, and it is a crucial business success factor. By improving knowledge collecting, the company increases both internal and external networking. Flexibility in the company can be seen as reflected by the friendship, trust and reputation in the organisation. The value of social togetherness is therefore, high among the personnel. Team-based form of organisation improves collaboration across organisational borders. In addition, this is a good way to improve the creation of innovations. Organizational innovation also shows in the new way of organising the company's strategy in a flexible and networking way. (Pettigrew et al. 2000, 279, 284-288)

The company's history, culture and policies affect innovations evolution and development. Furthermore, the company can control the risks of innovation by first testing the innovation within a testing team, and after that in the entire organisation. In addition, the company's background affects the perspective and perception of innovation. The dynamics of developing and training innovations is seen in some companies as a threat and in others as an advantage. The reason is that innovations are simultaneous and complementary actions that are called by dualities. Sometimes the outcome of an innovation is perceived as a problem although the solution of innovation was perceived to be successful. Due to the company's changing environment, the actions of an innovation may be more localised than their effects. Therefore, it is quite difficult to predict the outcome of an innovation. (Pettigrew et al. 2000, 290-291, 298)

4 SATO HOUSING INVESTMENT COMPANY

SATO Corporation operates in Finland and it is one of Finland's leading corporate investors in housing. SATO has offices in four cities: Helsinki, Oulu, Tampere and Turku. In addition, Sato operates in St. Petersburg renting high quality apartments in the best locations. The total number of rentable apartments owned by SATO is about 23,000, and they are located in Finland's largest centres of urban growth, and in St. Petersburg. The biggest shareholders of SATO are Finnish pension insurers and other insurance companies. In 2010 the turnover was about 193 million Euros, profit before taxes about 41.5 million Euros and operating profit some of 75 million Euros. (SATO. 2011)

SATO's way of doing business is to operate in the long term, think in a customer-oriented and professional manner. SATO has approximately 130 skilled employees working in the housing sector. Personnel are handling renting, sales and customer relationships. In addition, the organisation operations are focused on managing the housing portfolio and expanding the value of housing. Property management and maintenance, as well as supporting operations and some projects are managed through partnerships. (SATO. 2011)

4.1 Strategy of SATO

SATO's strategy is to become Finland's most significant housing investment company. At the moment the fair value of SATO's investment holdings is over 1.6 billion Euros and SATO aims to double it by 2020. SATO believes that it can achieve the goal by investing in rented housing. The best prospects for appreciation in value and constant demand are in rented housing according to SATO. Through customer service experience, operating methods and technology SATO assured a steady cash flow. SATO aims constantly to improve customer service by using modern technology and advanced

operating methods. In addition, SATO trains personnel and develops processes to achieve better customer and partnership -management. (SATO. 2011)

SATO's strategy has three objectives it tries to achieve. SATO aims to constantly improve services for the customers, average a 12% annual return for the shareholders and attain a value of more than 3 billion Euros in the investment properties by 2020. These objectives go hand in hand with SATO's mission and vision. SATO's mission is to be a provider of good housing and its vision is: "Homes are our passion – 50,000 satisfied residents in our homes in 2020." SATO has four values it believes are important and act as a guide in its business operations. The first value is to keep promises to customers in order to guarantee a high level of customer satisfaction. The second value is personnel's expertise as SATO believes skilled personnel are the strength of a company. The third value considers the importance of co-operation. SATO thinks that strong partnership is the key of success. The fourth value covers profitability. SATO sees that profit enables building of the company's future. SATO has made a value proposition according to its values: "A home the way you want it". The values are seen in SATO's way of focusing in its business. The emphasis in business is on the profitability of investment, and expanding the competitiveness of the holdings of housing, as well as improving and managing customer relationships. SATO handles renovations and construction projects, as well as maintenance and management of properties in cooperation with the network partners. (SATO. 2011)

5 EXCAMPLES OF COMPANIES WITH INNOVATIVE WORKPLACES

Microsoft, Nokia and SOL have taken innovativeness to their business strategies, and it can be seen in their workplaces. Next are a few examples of how companies have executed innovativeness in their workplaces.

Over 90 % of workers wish to work out of a traditional office environment in the near future. The most popular places are working from home and working

at outdoor locations. This indicates that in the future, employees do not want to work behind traditional office desks. In addition, this might be the reason why Microsoft has built a tree house, non-office-based, mobile working place. In addition, the company tries to increase work experience by making the lunch area more comfortable by using 'blind date areas' in the cafeteria. For instance, there are tables for two, resembling restaurants. Microsoft also uses employees' pictures in one of the meeting room walls to strengthen team spirit and support group identity. Furthermore, the company offers flexible and collaborative working areas to employees by providing for instance sofas, Fatboys and standing workstations. (Nenonen. 2011, 94, 96-119)

Microsoft has created above mentioned changes according to their *Workplace Advance Principles* program. There are seven goals they want to achieve:

- to support creativity and innovation
- provide employees with greater flexibility
- provide a pleasant work experience
- facilitate collaboration among employees, and between employees and customers
- enable team building
- foster community
- support business in making well-informed real estate decisions

Consequently, with these goals Microsoft wants to achieve an innovative workspace. The company noticed that aligning workplace designs with business unit goals enhances innovation and productivity. The company also wants to support group identity and community in the workplace, and give attention to human factors like access to nature and daylight, colour and material variety as well as sustainability and personal control. Microsoft is really interested to recognise the need for different types of active collaboration spaces, both informal and formal. (Nenonen. 2011, 94)

Nokia has also new concepts and services for the new way of working. Nokia has defined seven different spaces to meet the needs of working:

- open workspaces

- small meeting spaces
- project team spaces
- enclosed workspaces
- drop-in spaces
- informal areas
- phone rooms

Enclosed workspaces are quite similar to small meeting places but they are more suitable for teamwork which demands frequent internal communication and a medium level of concentration. Drop-in spaces are designed for individual work in silent places where employees can concentrate better. In addition, Nokia's employees utilise 'the wall' for innovation and creation processes. The meaning of 'the wall' is simple. Employees put the idea or issue to the wall so that everyone can see it and then comment or brainstorm it forward. 'The wall' is a good tool for individual work as well as team and group work because it combines people and artefacts, and creates interactions between employees. In addition, 'the wall' is so called social glue because it shares and makes artefacts visible to everyone. (Nenonen. 2011, 89-93)

SOL has renamed their headquarters to SOLcity because it is an open office with different kinds of innovative solutions. The meaning of the place is to be of comfort and remind something else than a usual office. SOLcity looks like a business playground due to its colour, creativity, and chaos. The chaos can be seen in many colours, shapes and materials that have been mixed in the space. For instance, oddly shaped conference tables, that can be pieced together like jigsaw puzzles are in one place, and another place is a tree house conference area. SOLcity differs from conventional corporate life as, for instance, there are no titles, secretaries or individual offices. There are no named workplaces but employees can choose a free place, and when they finished working they leave it empty for next employee. Employees keep their personal belongings in named bags. (Nenonen. 2011, 77-78)

6 THE OBJECTIVE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

The objective of this thesis is to find solutions for what kind of elements are needed to make SATO's customer service premises more innovative, and what kind of influence an innovative workplace would have on the employees' work.

The theoretical framework consists of three dimensions: innovative workplace, organisational management and SATO. The theoretical framework states the reliability of research and the validity of research. Next figure describes the theoretical framework.



Figure 2. The theoretical framework

6.1 Research questions

The research question is: What kind of space is an innovative workplace at SATO? The meaning of the question is to get as an accurate answer as possible to what kind of elements and features an innovative workplace requires of the SATO customer service premises.

In addition, thesis will answer to the following questions: How is the workplace utilised at SATO at the moment? How could the workplace be more innovative

if needed? The aim of these questions is to clarify the current situation on the premises SATO uses for customer service.

6.2 Research method

The research method is qualitative. It was chosen in order to be able to research the function of a single space in detail. It would be hard to use a quantitative method because creating questions extensive enough is difficult. Many new thoughts might come up in the interview process, and therefore creating the right questions in advance could be difficult.

The data collection method to be used is an individual interview in Finnish as it enables a profound conversation with the interviewees as well as the interviewees can emphasize what they think is important. The benefit of individual interviews is the minimisation of external factors. This way, no one can affect the interviewees' opinions. In addition, the interviewees do not have to think what everyone else thinks, as the collected information will occur anonymously in the final research. Six (6) persons, who are currently working at customer service, were interviewed.

To ensure reliability, as wide a range of literature sources as possible is used in the research, such as printed and electronic literature, and previous researches.

6.3 Data collection

Six (6) customer service employees were interviewed during October 2011. All interviewees have worked in customer service approximately one year or less. The whole customer service team was interviewed to get everyone's opinions, and the material of interviews would then be wider. With the help of interviewees, clarifying answers to the research questions were received.

The interviewees were contacted well in advance, and asked whether they were interested to participate in the interview. All contacted persons agreed to

an interview. The participants were told why the interview would be conducted, and what kind it would be. The structure of the theme interview was not given to the interviewees beforehand as spontaneous, unprepared answers were desired. In this way, the reliability remains good throughout the research.

Interviews were carried out during employees' working hours and they lasted approximately 30 minutes. All interviews were recorded. Interviews were executed in a private room where only the interviewer and interviewee were present. This way, it was possible to create an open and relaxed atmosphere. As follows, the answers to questions asked were honest. Interviewees had the courage to express their opinions openly as they were told beforehand that the interviews would be performed anonymously.

Interviews were executed with the structure of theme interview. Using theme interview was to make sure that all interviewees were asked the same questions. However, the interviewees were given the freedom to tell what they felt important, so the interviewees had an opportunity to highlight themes they felt special.

Interviewees followed the themes well and therefore, did not need particular guidance. Interviewees were able to tell a lot of things they felt familiar and close to their own experiences. These kinds of matters were for instance, improvements for the workplace. However, more profound answers were anticipated for some questions. Interviewees had difficulties to come up with reasonable answers to the tricky or not so familiar questions for instance, questions that included the word innovative. Thought this did not come as a surprise because it is clear that interviewees do not have strong opinions about matters they do not do or think consciously. Therefore, it was important that the interviewees had an opportunity to highlight themes they felt were important, and answer more profoundly to these questions.

All interviews were recorded using a mobile phone to ensure that it was possible to focus fully to interviewees' speech, and writing notes was not needed. The interviews were transcribed word for word a few days after the

interviews so that everything was still in fresh memory, and if there were some unclear points in the tape, the answers could be completed from memory.

6.4 Analysis of the results

In the qualitative research, deductive or inductive reasoning are usually used. In this thesis inductive reasoning was used in analysis as inductive reasoning starts from material. The structure of theme interview was used as a starting point of analysis. (Trochim. 2006)

Analysing the results was started by listening and transcribing the interviews. After transcribing the interviewee's answers were combined by topic according to the structure of theme interview. Then it was easy to see the overall picture of the topic. Next step was the coding of material using different colours. First a word list from interviewees' answers according to theme was made. Next each theme was studied in more detail. Using word lists a summary was compiled and answers were combined again to clauses. After this it was easier to begin writing a summary and conclusions as the results had been considered through many times.

7 RESEARCH RESULTS

The research results are based on the interviewees' answers. The interviews have been analysed one-by-one, and the conclusions from interviewees' answers have been compared to the research questions.

SATO's customer service premises are located on the ground-floor of SATO's head office. The premises are of the wide open-office type with only SATO's personnel having access to the space. Through the windows a train station and another office building can be seen. The space is decorated, for instance with white panel curtains, fluorescent ceiling lamps and grey non-slip mats as well as with a few plants and a small round kitchen table. The kitchen area is separate from the other space with wardrobes. Next to the entrance there is an empty space separated from the working area by a space divider.

7.1 The premises for customer service at SATO

At the moment, the premises for SATO's customer service are considered as a basic office with the ergonomic tools necessary. It is a communal, tidy and a wide space, but at the same time, the employee's see it as stiff, reasonable and grey. There are personal workstations for everyone, and a social space. In addition, there has been a meeting area but at the moment it is under construction. The space was designed as an open office about one year ago. Therefore, all the office furniture has been new when customer service functions started in the space.

"It is grey but not especially uncomfortable. It is clean and somehow in a way stylish but it could be more colourful."

"Well, it is reasonable and boring. Of course work is done in there and everything has been thought through ergonomics but it is still odourless and tasteless. It somehow remains cold because it is more or less bland."

"I think it is good because it is quite big. So it is not any small cubicle. Also, it is good that everyone has their own working station at all times. So that it is not that you have to constantly transfer your working items from one place to another."

The customer service premises have a practical and functional space that has just been renovated. Employees enjoy their work and are highly motivated although the space is seen as rather colourless and boring. All the necessary elements, that the customer service team needs are present in the space, such as personal workstations, a social area with a kitchen and a meeting area. They seem to represent a traditional office but can be operated differently because the space is only used by SATO's personnel.

"It is probably thought pretty much through practice. We all got new office furniture one year ago and they had thought of ergonomics with electronic tables and personal chairs."

“It is pretty much thought how it is functional, and how it is suitable for call centre operations. There is also practicality involved as well own meeting and social spaces.”

“There are no customers coming in, and no one sees in there, so it does not matter if it is different than the rest of the building.”

The space was found to cause problems to the employees' daily routines. There were problems with air conditioning in autumn 2011 which weakened the quality of air, and effected on the turnover of air. Fortunately the problem has been solved. The space is an open office. Therefore, are some problems with sounds that affect concentration. Sometimes it is difficult to hear customers' voices or concentrate on one's own work if the colleagues' speak in a loud voice.

“Sound matters are not quite okay. In there we talk so much with customers and each other, so sometimes it is difficult to focus. So it is not properly designed.”

“That echo and noise should be fixed somehow because it is sometimes too much. It has been tried to fix but not succeeded in it.”

7.2 Thoughts for an innovative workplace

Innovative workplace is a wide concept that can include many things and elements. Usually people do not think of innovative workplace as a concept itself but they think what could be done differently or what kinds of things are exciting to have in the workplace. At first, the interviewees' expressed that they don't know what could be an innovative workplace. However, thinking for a while about the questions, they had a many opinions for what kinds of things are needed on an innovative workplace. The previously mentioned example describes well the situation, that the concept is wide and quite new in the business world.

The most common thoughts for innovative workplace are colourful, versatile and transparent space. In addition, it could look like something else than a traditional work office. The atmosphere in innovative workplace is encouraging, inspiring and supporting because space offers different functions. Employees have the opportunity to work in teams but also individually. Consequently, space is communal and individual at the same time. Space and personnel create together a positive and energetic working environment where being is more creative and easy.

“Room dividers are good because they separate personal space from another and you can be in private.”

“There should be good equipment and enough space because it effects on employees’ wellbeing and in that way the wholeness which is also important.”

“But of course space should support the opportunity of different people who enjoy working differently. So that every person could identify his/hers own working methods in the place.”

“The nicer or better looking the place is, the nicer it is to be there.”

Unusual elements and colours affect the spirit of working. With small interior design elements the image of working environment could be changed, as well as the atmosphere among personnel. There should be at least indoor plants and paintings, but there could also be some features from home or hobby surroundings. The working surrounding should give energetic and positive feelings to the employees as then it would be easier to deal with unusual situations as well as working with different types of teams. The personnel enjoy their work more when they feel happy, and the working environment is encouraging and positive.

“Surroundings could be more interesting, versatile and maybe a little bit cosier.”

“Customers are not brought in to our customer service space so why could there not be a cosier atmosphere, like rocking chairs

and rag rugs. So when you have a break you can totally lose yourself.”

“Maybe it would encourage us working more intensively and it would be nicer to be there.”

7.3 Company's role

The interviewee's think that SATO's style is business-like and simple when thinking about design. SATO is using a certain style and colours which sometimes give an inflexible impression. Using surprising features in decor could inform that the company is open-minded also to other innovations and proposals.

“Want to keep a certain kind of image. Which is okay for instance in the lobby but in this kind of space it could be surprising to have something totally different.”

“If they would be ready to decorate the office space differently, it would tell that it would not be so inflexible to other proposals and innovations.”

According to the interviews, the company has a significant meaning to create an innovative workplace. The company should support and encourage employees to think differently or in a new way. SATO is ready to invest and make changes in its operations towards a more innovative working community when it sees it has some important effect. The whole organisation should be involved and everyone should be taken into consideration when planning and making something new or different.

“When it is considered to be important and they have found a solution that increases innovative and creative touch, then it is also possible to invest in and make changes.”

“But not so that manager decides but that all should participate.”

7.4 Improvements

The improvements of space should be something meaningful and inspiring for people who are using the space. It should increase communication and motivation among people. With small things; such as plants, paintings and colours, it is easy to change the spirit of space to something else. On the other hand, with bigger changes, for instance increasing the amount of meeting or social areas could change the dynamics of the space. According to interviews, it would be great to have a bigger and more sensible kitchen area. It could look cosier than it is now. In addition the meeting area could be better organised. There is a wide empty area without any special function. The space is hoped to be lively, comfortable, versatile and different than the rest of the building.

“...a sofa would be nice. And considering decoration, then colourful paintings and curtains, because there is still enough space.”

“...those customer service situations could be easier to handle if workspaces would be more casual.”

The atmosphere at work is vivid and cheerful. The customer service team has good interaction skills and everyone gets along with each other. Sometimes employees' volume increases so high in the space that it affects employees' concentration. Interviewees mentioned that there are sometimes problems with sound effects and volume. They mentioned that there could be better acoustic boards, as well as curtains and carpets to decrease volume. At the moment, the acoustic boards are grey, which is a quite discouraging colour. There is potential to make the acoustic board wall differently.

“Sound issues are not okay. We are talking so much with customers that it is not always easy to concentrate.”

“...that joyful buzz of conversation might sometimes distract working. Even if the customers cannot hear the buzz of conversation, it is heard by the customer service.”

“...I think it is not very cheerful or mind rousing, that grey colour. It could be more colourful.”

Interviews revealed that the customer service premises need reorganisation. There could be better lighting, and sofas or chairs where to sit on a break, as well as the meeting space could be different. Interviewees’ described that the changes could improve the overall feeling of working. An inspiring workplace increases employees’ work motivation and happiness at work. This affects directly to the employees team spirit and to the amount of information flow. This is because when people are highly motivated and inspired, they talk and share more information to each other and it happens usually unnoticed.

“...there is the table, where we could have different kind of meetings...we could have them in the kitchen.”

“...a nice, cosy sofa where we could sit and lay down when we do have a break.”

8 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The purpose of this development plan is to show in practice what kind of changes can be done in the customer service working space. Ideas and examples for this plan are from the interviews and theoretical part of the research.

At the moment the workplace at SATO’s customer service team is open office space with a kitchen/lunch area and a meeting area. Seven employees with personal workstations are working in the space. The workstations are divided into two four-person groups. The general appearance of the space is neutral and spacious. There are few flowers as well as white, gray and red colours used for design.

The plan focused on three areas; the meeting place, the social space and working areas which create the whole premises of customer services. The idea for the plan is that the customer service premises remain as an open office but dividers are used, and acoustics systems are increased. In addition,

a cosier and more colourful atmosphere is tried to achieve in the workplace so that comfort in the space increases.

8.1 Meeting place

In the development plan, the kitchen area also works as a meeting place, so that the current area is going to be larger. The space can be expanded towards the working area so that the workstations are repositioned towards the wall. The current round kitchen table is changed to a long wooden table with wooden chairs and a bench. To the wall, where is a painting at the moment, will be placed a mirror. Colourful curtains are used for creating a cosy atmosphere in the space.

The table group could be for instance a Pirkka table group that is a light-coloured wooden ensemble designed by Ilmari Tapiovaara (1955). The mirror on the wall could be a Water Drops -mirror. It has a round shape with small pieces which look like water drops. Lighting should also create cosiness in the space so therefore light could be a black wooden Secto Octo 4240. Curtains and carpet could be chosen for instance from Vallilla and they should bring richness of colours and fullness to the space. (Paloranta, Vallila, Vepsäläinen. 2011)



FIGURE 3. Pirkka –table group



FIGURE 4. Water Drops –mirror



FIGURE 5. Secto Octo 4240 –lamp

8.2 Social space

The big, empty space near to the main doors of customer service premises is going to be social area for the customer service team. A large, colourful painting or a large mirror is hanged to the wall. The space is separated from the other space by a divider. However, the divider must be airy so the material for it should be a light fabric or string. Inside the space is a place for a sofa and chairs as well as a table. It is a sitting area, where the employees have the opportunity to take a break. In addition, the space provides facilities to have smaller meetings or brainstorming sessions.

To the wall a large rectangular shaped Coccio –mirror could be put. The idea of the mirror is that broken glass brings good luck. Therefore, the mirror has been created from sharp parts which have been put together in a creative way. The divider to the space could be made of fabric or stripes with plastic crystals. With this kind of divider, it is possible to separate a space from the other area without making it a closed space. The sofa group could be a combination of cosiness and vividness as well as comfort. For instance, the Favn -sofa designed by Jaime Hayón (2011) with Swan chairs designed by Arne Jacobsen (1958) bring the brilliance of colours to the space. The table could be for instance a Platner coffee table that is a round shaped glass table designed by Warren Platner (1960). In addition, the carpets could be chosen

from Vallilla because they should bring fullness and richness of colours to the space. (Paloranta, Vallila, Vepsäläinen. 2011)



FIGURE 6: Coccio –mirror



FIGURE 7: Platner –coffee table



FIGURE 8: Favn –sofa



FIGURE 9: Swan –chairs

8.3 Working area

The working area is going to be a little bit smaller than it is at the moment due to the fact that there is an empty, unused space. In the wall, more acoustic boards are needed due to the noise problems. Acoustics boards can be like a piece of art. For instance, using multicoloured and different shapes of acoustics boards can create an interesting wall. In addition, acoustic carpet is a good way to decrease the volume of noise. Due to the fact that the ceiling height is higher than normal, lighting can be more impressive. Lights are placed above the workstations. In additional, inspiration to the place is brought by new curtains.



FIGURE 10: Maskros –lamp



FIGURE 11: ACU –acoustic board

An acoustic system carpet by CAS Collection could be used on the floor. The carpet is suitable for call centres, to open space offices as well as conference rooms. It helps creating a balanced acoustic environment. Acoustics boards to the wall could be from ACU. ACU is making acoustic boards with the idea of using them also as an interior solution. ACU makes it possible to print pictures or make paintings to the boards. Lights should be impressive but airy. For instance IKEA has a big, white, round ceiling lamp named by Maskros which can be set above the workstations. Curtains could be chosen from Vallila as they offer different kinds of solution for public spaces, for instance technology or silicon fabric materials. (ACU, Carpet Concept, IKEA, Vallila. 2011)

8.4 Estimate of budget

Estimate costs of purchases are calculated in the budget. The current prizes of items are taken into account. However, the prizes which need request for quotation are missing from the budget, for instance the acoustics carpets and boards. In addition, the costs of carpets and curtains are average prizes because the types of products to be used are not defined more specific. The prizes for furniture have been taken from the web pages of Vepsäläinen furniture store.

Naturally, there is a possibility to make similar kinds of space design for more reasonable price levels using for instance IKEA. On the other hand, the design potential was planned to show what can be done when only the sky is the limit.

	Item/s	Prize (€) approximately
Meeting place		
	table group	3 000
	mirror	350
	light	600
	curtains/carpet	500
Social space		
	mirror	450
	divider	on request
	sofa	7 700
	chair (à 2 800€)	8 400
	coffee table	1 790
	carpet	500
Working area		
	acoustic carpet	on request
	acoustic board	on request
	light (à 99€)	198
	curtains	300
Total		23 778

Figure 12: Estimate of budget (IKEA, Paloranta, Vepsäläinen. 2011)

9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Although the number of interviewees was quite small (six persons), the results can be generalised as all the interviewees' experiences of the researched issues were mostly similar. Most likely, a larger group interviewed would not have changed the results. Nevertheless, the reliability may weaken, if for instance the interviewee has not understood the question or has understood

questions differently than the interviewer meant. Potential errors in the foregoing examples are still quite small because the comments of all the interviewees are along the same lines. The answers to the questions about improvements were slightly different and inconsistent with each other as the interviewees had the opportunity to describe whatever came to their mind. Some interviewees had more bold and fresh ideas than others. On other hand, some interviewees had more conventional and traditional ideas for improvements. However, the majority of the interviewees thought that the improvements need the support of the organisation, and they could be more courageous and risqué on the customer service premises than in other spaces of the building, because the space can only be used by the SATO's personnel. Some of the interview's questions do not directly relate to the research question but the theoretical framework supports the results of the research. As the whole team was chosen to be interviewed and as their backgrounds represent many types of employees, validity is also good. The theoretical part and empirical part of the research support each other, and the research results represent the direction planned at the beginning.

The objective of the research was to find out the current situation of the customer service premises related to an innovative workplace. Another aim was to receive proposals for how the space could be more innovative, and what kinds of elements motivate employees in their work. The meaning was to find out concrete examples of an innovative workplace, which were received as anticipated. The theme interview made it possible to emphasize the interviewees' opinions of what they considered important during the interviews.

The development proposals are suggestive, so the company can directly centralize on the flaws that occurred in the interviews. In addition, the company has now a possibility to make internal guidelines on how to improve innovation and motivation on SATO's premises.

9.1 Development proposals

According to the research results it can be said that the workplace can be turned into more innovative on SATO's customer service premises. The best way to get a more innovative workplace is to clarify the spaces, and give them clear functions. This way the spaces could look completely different, and employees would notice immediately what the purposes of the spaces are. However, it does not mean that the spaces should somehow be separated from each other. It would be better if the space remains as an open space, and different kinds of divider solutions are used. This would increase the feeling that the space is wider and brighter than in reality it might be. In addition, moving from one space to another as well as communicating with each other is easier than in box offices.

The current dining area that operates at present as well a recreation space could look more like home than workplace. This way the employees could get ideas elsewhere for a moment and enjoy the break. In addition, it would be refreshing to have meetings there as it would be a completely different surrounding than that the employees are used to. It might increase activity and motivation among people. Here is one example picture of how it could look like:



FIGURE 13: Proposal for meeting place

According to the research results, the interviewees hoped to have a common area, with a possibility to have small meetings and chit-chats as well as coffee breaks. The common area could locate where at the moment is an empty space. There is a lot of potential to make it look for instance, like a lounge area. The general appearance of space creates an open-minded and relaxed atmosphere among employees. This could improve the employees' sense of well-being and coping at work. Here is one example picture of how it could look like:



FIGURE 14: Proposal for social space

The biggest problem in the working area is noise and sound issues. The open space with high ceiling increases volume and sometimes disturbs the employees' concentration. The most important thing is to decrease noise and sound problems in the working area by adding acoustic boards and carpets. In addition, other textiles such as curtains decrease volume. It would also increase the comfort level of the space, if different shapes and colours are used there. Here is one example picture of how it could look like:



FIGURE 15: Proposal for working area

To sum up, the workplace was hoped to have more colours and a more personal touch. Employees want the workplace to give an energetic feeling and it should be a place where is nice to come. Premises of SATO's customer service could change completely and it can resemble more places where employees enjoy the most, for instance home, cafe or a recreation room. There is potential to get the employees to interact and brainstorm for creating a new kind of workplace. According to the research, the employees are really interested in changes and eager to throw ideas around.

9.2 Other topics which occurred in the research

In addition, the interviewees were asked about the company's role and organisation's attitude. There came requests that the organisation should support more new ideas, and the organisation could have more dialogues with employees, and the boundaries among departments could be narrower.

Good interaction skills throughout the company require openness, confidence and respect among the whole organisation. It is important that the employees have a possibility to share their thoughts and suggest new ideas. The most

important matter is that the employees feel that they have an opportunity to influence. Employees must not be left with the feeling that they are ignored. In addition, when thinking of what kind of an innovative workplace is, it should be also thinking what kind of an innovative organization is, because they go hand in hand.

10 REASONING

Conducting the thesis was interesting but at the same time challenging. The theory and empirical research were well combined. In the research part, the theme interview was used. It was structured so that the themes supported the theoretical background. It was challenging to stay on schedule although the thesis was completed within the time limit given. The long breaks between the stages of the thesis slowed down the progress of the work. However, it was beneficial to have breaks between work stages. When the work was continued, reasoning was brighter generating fresh ideas.

The subject of the thesis was very topical. However, it gradually emerged along writing the thesis. Writing a thesis on an innovative workplace taught the author a lot about the meaning of the concept to enterprises. In the future, companies have to compete more and more for skilled employees in a variety ways, and one major aspect could be to offer a unique and personal work environment.

As for the sources used, *Tukiainen's Luova tila – Tulevaisuuden työpaikka* as well as *Pettigrew's and Fenton's The innovating organization* were particularly important. In addition, Nenonen's course material on the workplace was a very important source because it gave rise to this thesis. In the author's opinion, the theoretical part gives sufficient information about the subject.

Conducting the actual research was an educational and a pleasant experience. The interviewees participated eagerly in the research and conversation in the interview situation flew naturally. The themes were selected according to the theory. This way, the research results could be reflected against the theory. The analysis stage felt at first difficult as the

author did not know how to analyse the transcribed interviews and which qualitative method should be used. In hindsight, could have familiarized herself better with qualitative methods so that unclear situations related to the analysis of the data could have been avoided.

The topic of the thesis was sufficiently challenging. Enough literature on the subject was founded, and the research proceeded well without any greater difficulties. The work was divided in top periods, which made it possible to keep to the timetable. Making the thesis taught the author patience and improved her problem-solving skills, which is one reason for the thesis being successful.

The employees' job satisfaction as well as an inspiring work environment is crucial factors to achieving an innovative workplace or an innovative work community. An innovative workplace enables a better flow of information and motivates employees to think outside the box. The results of the thesis will be useful for SATO giving a clear proposal for actions whose execution does not require a lot of resources.

Further research proposal is to make similar kind of research using quantitative research method. If a research would be executed to the whole company, then SATO would get a common line of how to create functional and inspiring workplaces. This way, it would be possible to ensure innovative workplaces to everyone. Other further research proposal is that later on, a qualitative research is done among the employees of SATO's customer service about the effects of changes. For instance, has the workplace become more inspiring, and has the noise problem decreased? Has the workplace increased mutual communication and clarified the meaning of different spaces? This way it is possible to find out if the situation in SATO's customer service premises has changed, and what kind of help this research has given.

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12 APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The structure of theme interview

THE STRUCTURE OF THEME INTERVIEW

In this study I mean Innovative workspace as an office space, which is a versatile, inspiring, as good as new, efficient, and comfortable. Innovative term always includes the idea of implementation as well as value creation, which makes it different from the concept of creativity.

The research aims to find ways to make the workspace more enjoyable and creative so that employees' co-operation and motivation increase and this way also employees' job satisfaction and efficiency increase and eventually improve the quality of work and outcome of work.

All interviews remain anonymous and in the summary of information gathered cannot identify individual respondents. To remain anonymous allows talking about things with their right names and talking about things one does not want to tell by the name.

Background

1. How long have you worked in SATO's customer service?
2. How have you enjoyed working in the customer service?

Innovative workplace

Innovative work environment refers to the workspace where is taken into account the flexibility of office furniture as well as in the form of the spaces. Innovative workplace also advances health and well-being with the help of new and non-customary solutions. Likewise collaboration and social networking develop closer in innovative workspace.

1. What do you think is an innovative work environment?
2. What kind of things in an innovative work environment should be?
3. What are the benefits of innovative workplace?

The premises of SATO's customer service

1. What kind of workplace SATO's customer service does have?
2. Could you describe it a little more, such as adjectives?
3. What are you satisfied in the premises?
4. What would you change in the place?
5. What would you wish for the premises?
6. How do you think the improvements will affect to employees or working?

The role of company

Company plays an important role in creating an innovative working space because company's attitudes and culture influence to the atmosphere and behaviour what exists in the workplace.

1. What kind of role has the company to create an innovative workplace?
2. How can supervisor and organization affect the functionality of workspace?
3. How do you think the organization is currently involved to create innovation in the workplace?
4. How does an organization support better collaboration and communication in the space?

Do you have something to add which is not shown earlier? Thank you for your time.

Appendix 2. Teemahaastattelurunko

TEEMAHAASTATTELURUNKO

Innovatiivisella työtilalla tarkoitan tässä tutkimuksessa toimitilaa, joka on muuntautumiskykyinen, innoittava, uudenveroinen, tehokas ja viihtyisä. Innovatiivinen terminä sisältää aina myös idean käyttöönoton sekä arvon lisäämisen, jonka vuoksi se eroaa muun muassa luovuuden käsitteestä.

Tutkimuksen tarkoitus on löytää keinoja, jolla työtilasta saataisiin entistä viihtyisämpi ja luovempi, jolloin työntekijöiden yhteistyö ja motivaatio lisääntyvät ja näin olleen lisää työntekijöiden työtyytyväisyyttä ja tehokkuutta parantaen työn laatua ja tulosta.

Kaikki haastattelut käsitellään nimettöminä, eikä yhteenvetoon kootuista tiedoista pysty tunnistamaan yksittäistä vastaajaa. Nimettömänä pysyminen mahdollistaa asioista puhumisen asioiden oikealla nimellä sekä sellaisistakin asioista puhumisen, joista ei halua nimellä kertoa.

Tausta

1. Kuinka kauan olet työskennellyt SATOn asiakaspalvelussa?
2. Miten olet viihtynyt asiakaspalvelun työtiloissa?

Innovatiivinen työpaikka

Innovatiivisella työympäristöllä tarkoitetaan työtilaa, jossa on huomioitu työtilan joustavuus niin toimistokalusteiden kuin tilojen muodossa.

Innovatiivinen työpaikka edistää myös terveyttä ja hyvinvointia uudenlaisien ja ei-totuttujen ratkaisujen myötä. Niin ikään yhteistyö ja sosiaalinen verkostoituminen kehittyy innovatiivisissa työtilassa tiiviimmäksi.

1. Millainen on mielestäsi innovatiivinen työympäristö?
2. Millaisia asioita innovatiivisessa työympäristössä pitäisi olla?
3. Mitä hyötyä innovatiivisesta työtilasta mielestäsi on?
 - a. sinulle?

- b. muille työntekijöille?
- c. oppimiselle?
- d. työnteolle?
- e. motivaatiolle?

SATOn asiakaspalvelun toimitila

1. Millainen on mielestäsi SATOn asiakaspalvelun työtila?
2. Voisitko kuvailla sitä hieman tarkemmin, esimerkiksi adjektiivein?
3. Mihin olet tilassa tyytyväinen?
4. Mitä muuttaisit?
5. Mitä toivoisit tilalta?
6. Kuinka uskoisit parannusten vaikuttavan
 - a. sinuun?
 - b. muihin työntekijöihin?
 - c. oppimiseen?
 - d. motivaation?
 - e. työntekoon?

Yrityksen merkitys

Yrityksellä on suuri merkitys innovatiivisen työtilan luomisessa, koska yrityksen asenteet ja kulttuuri vaikuttavat siihen millainen ilmapiiri ja käyttäytyminen työtilassa vallitsee.

1. Millainen merkitys yrityksellä on innovatiivisen työtilan luomisessa?
2. Miten esimies ja organisaatio voi vaikuttaa työtilan toimivuuteen?
3. Miten koet tällä hetkellä organisaation osallistuvan innovatiivisuuden luomiseen työpaikalla?
4. Miten organisaatio voisi tukea paremmin yhteistyötä ja kommunikointia tilassa?

Vapaan sanan vuoro eli jotain lisättävää, mikä ei ilmennyt aiemmin. Kiitos ajastanne.

13 FIGURES

FIGURE 1. Iwin, innovative workplace

FIGURE 2. The theoretical framework

FIGURE 3. Pirkka –table group

FIGURE 4. Water Drops –mirror

FIGURE 5. Secto Octo 4240 –ceiling lamp

FIGURE 6. Coccio –mirror

FIGURE 7. Platner –coffee table

FIGURE 8. Favn –sofa

FIGURE 9. Swan –chairs

FIGURE 10. Maskros –ceiling lamp

FIGURE 11. ACU –acoustic board

FIGURE 12. Estimate of budget

FIGURE 13. Proposal for meeting place

FIGURE 14. Proposal for social space

FIGURE 15. Proposal for working area