
Doing More With Less
– Techniques to Manage Team’s Increasing Workload



Bachelor’s thesis

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timo Döbert". The signature is written in a cursive style with some flourishes.

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Title of thesis

Increasing Workload

Doing More With Less – Techniques to Manage Team’s In-

ABSTRACT

How to manage a team with increasing workload and enlarging responsibilities without being able to add to the headcount?

This thesis is a qualitative research, which combines literature review and in-depth interviews to find solutions and techniques to help manage a team through a changing environment.

The author has researched the current stage of change, how it is being lead and how change is being experienced within the team. Fears and uncertainties towards change and the strategic goals for change within the organization have been highlighted, and resistance to change and integration in planning activities for the change analyzed.

Conclusions have been drawn for discovering tools from LEAN practices, to utilizing visualization boards to enhance organizational focus and to follow-up on key issues, as well as rhythm job tasks to create efficiency and clarity for individual job activities. Taking delegation and empowerment to the next level by looking at the teachings of creating a “Team of Team’s”.

Recommendations include the utilization of human resources strategic planning to help visualize the organizational future state and future skillset needed, which will help remove uncertainties associated with change and set focus on what future core activities will be, enabling also the outsourcing of none-core activities.

Keywords Team, Change Management, Leadership, Strategy, Empowerment, LEAN

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Kuinka johtaa tiimiä, jolla on kasvava työtaakka ja laajentuvat vastuut ilman, että päälukua on mahdollista kasvattaa?

Tämä opinnäytetyö oli kvalitatiivinen tutkimus, jossa yhdistettiin kirjallisuuskatsaus ja syvälliset haastattelut. Tutkimuksessa haluttiin löytää ja kehittää sellaisia ratkaisuja ja tekniikoita, jotka edesauttavat ryhmän johtamisprosessia alati muuttuvassa ympäristössä.

Opinnäytetyön tekijä on työssään tutkinut muutoksen nykytilaa, miten sitä ohjataan ja miten muutos koetaan tiimissä. Muutoksesta johtuvien pelkojen, epävarmuustekijöiden sekä organisaation strategisten tavoitteiden lisäksi tarkastelun kohteina olivat muutosvastaisuus sekä muutoksen suunnitteluun osallistuminen.

Johtopäätöksiä tehtiin löytämällä työkaluja LEAN-käytännöistä. Esimerkiksi visualisointitaulujen hyödyntämisen avulla voidaan parantaa organisaation painopisteiden hahmottamista ja selkeyttää keskeisten asioiden seuranta, sekä tehostaa yksittäisiä tehtäviä työn rytmityksellä. Valtuuttamisen vieminen seuraavalle tasolle voidaan toteuttaa noudattamalla "Team of Team's" -ohjeita.

Tutkimuksen suosituksina mainittiin erityisesti henkilöstöressurssien strateginen suunnittelu ja sen hyödyntäminen. Siinä kartoitetaan organisaation tulevaa tilaa ja tarvittavaa tulevaa osaamista tulevaisuusjohtoisesti, mikä puolestaan auttaa poistamaan muutokseen liittyvät epävarmuustekijät ja määrittämään ydintoiminnot mahdollistaen myös ei-ydintoimintojen ulkoistamisen.

Avainsanat Tiimi, muutosjohtaminen, johtaminen, strategia, voimaantuminen, LEAN

Sivut 30 s.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The company

Santen is a pharmaceutical company, which is specialized on ophthalmic products, e.g. eye drops in layman’s terms. It is a Japanese company with a global presence in over 50 countries. Santen has a global revenue (fiscal year 2016) of 1.7 billion U.S. dollars. 88.4 % of this revenue is collected from prescription ophthalmic pharmaceuticals, 5.6 % from over-the-counter pharmaceuticals, 1.2 % from medical devices and the remaining percent’s from other revenue streams like technology sharing agreements etc. Santen has a strong foothold in Japan, as only 27.4 % of the global revenue comes from overseas sales. (Santen 2016)

Corporate Headquarters and Group Companies	Location
① Corporate Headquarters	Japan
② Claire Co., Ltd.	Japan
③ Santen Business Services Co., Ltd.	Japan
④ Santen Eye Care Co., Ltd.	Japan
⑤ Santen Holdings U.S. Inc.	U.S.A.
⑥ Santen Inc.	U.S.A.
⑦ Advanced Vision Science, Inc.	U.S.A.
⑧ Santen Holdings EU B.V.	Netherlands
⑨ Santen Oy	Finland
⑩ Santen S.A.S.	France
⑪ Santen GmbH	Germany
⑫ SantenPharma AB	Sweden
⑬ Santen Switzerland SA	Switzerland
⑭ Santen Italy S.r.l.	Italy
⑮ Santen UK Limited	U.K.
⑯ Santen Pharmaceutical Spain, S.L.	Spain
⑰ Santen Pharmaceutical (China) Co., Ltd.	China
⑱ Santen Pharmaceutical Sales & Marketing (Suzhou) Co., Ltd.	China
⑲ Santen Pharmaceutical Korea Co., Ltd.	Korea
㉑ Taiwan Santen Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.	Taiwan
㉒ Santen India Private Limited	India
㉓ Santen Pharmaceutical Asia Pte. Ltd.	Singapore
㉔ SANTEN (THAILAND) CO., LTD.	Thailand
㉕ SANTEN PHARMA MALAYSIA SDN. BHD.	Malaysia
㉖ SANTEN PHILIPPINES INC.	Philippines

(Santen 2016)

1.1.2 The Team

The team in question for this thesis consists of a team leader and three team members. The team is in charge of the Information Technology Infrastructure of Santen in Europe. This incorporates end user devices (PC’s, tablets and smartphones) for circa 750 users in numerous countries, the IT-infrastructure in 11 offices across Europe including Russia as well as the servers running in two data centers.

1.1.3 The Strategy

The global IT strategy within Santen is to shift IT infrastructure as much as possible to cloud computing to achieve agility and remove functional redundancy between regions to achieve cost savings. A key driver is to minimize the increase of IT personnel through global optimization of systems and personnel.

1.2 Objectives

The research question of the thesis is to find techniques to help manage the team, which is facing increasing workload and enlarging responsibilities, without being able to add headcount. Moreover, it is necessary to discover tools, which will help lead the team through the changing business environment as well as the personal change of each team member.

1.3 Research Methods

The research approach chosen for this thesis is a qualitative methodology and the research methods used in this thesis are combined from a literature review and in-depth interviews.

The focus of the literature review is on, how to lead people through change, change management in general and the human resource aspect towards change management. The approach chosen was to not build the thesis around one classical methodology, but instead have different inputs from various sources, but still feeding the initial research question.

The focus of the interviews is to assist the research of the current situation as well as potentially help with the analysis of problems, strengths and challenges.

To respect the privacy of the people interviewed, the responses have been anonymized.

2 CHANGE MANAGEMENT

When it comes to change, many people are afraid of it and try to combat the change itself. The fact that change brings excitement, new opportunities and growth is seldom recognized. (Nelson & Economy 2003, p. 221)

“The world of business is constantly changing, and the pressures on managers to perform are greater than they’ve ever been before. In addition, most organizations have gone from being bastions of stability and status quo in the stormy seas of change to being agile ships, navigating the fluid and ever-changing seas in which they float”. (Nelson & Economy 2003, p. 221)

One can look at change being an ocean wave hitting the beach. A person can stand in the shallow water and try to resist the change, but the wave of change will always hit them, run over them and flow around them. The person alone cannot change the direction of the wave of change, nor can they stop it from hitting the beach. Only an idiot would stand there in the beach sand and think so. However, one can start to learn riding the wave, let it carry and forward oneself to places one could not have imagined before.

2.1 Four stages of change

There are four stages for change (Nelson & Economy 2003, p. 224-225):

1. Deny change
2. Resist change
3. Explore change
4. Accept change

Typically, a person runs through all stages in numerical order. At first, not believing the change will actually happen. Possibly even thinking it is just an idea and/or management will soon reject this approach. Then trying for change not to happen or thinking that the change does not involve oneself. It is not until the third stage that a person will see some opportunities in the change itself. At this stage, having accepted that the change will happen, the resistance will be overcome too. In the last stage, one will have integrated the change into their work routine and it is part of their daily life.

To be able to see opportunity within the change, one first have to see where the change will lead you.

2.2 Overcome resistance

Change management has traditionally been about two things (Anderson & Ackerman 2010, p. 2):

1. How to plan for implementation
2. How to overcome employee resistance

These are today seen as only the tip of the iceberg. Change leadership is foremost about co-creating a positive future. However, in the traditional change management model overcoming the change resistance is already half of the change success.

To overcome change resistance you have to first identify who is resisting the change and why? It is important to understand the perspective of the resistance, to listen to the person, analyze whether there should be a differentiation to the planned change and communicate the outcome as well as the reasons to the resistor. Key is to being respectful and giving a chance to be heard. (Blount & Carroll 2017)

For others to change, one needs to be ready to change him- or herself and their approach to the organizational change as well.

2.3 Look to the future

Paint a vision, for the employees who are affected by the change, which will visualize how the organization will be a better place, once everyone has adapted to the change and begun to use it to their benefit. (Nelson & Economy 2003, p. 228)

There are different views towards the future state after the change. There is the organizational view, which is focusing on the organizational benefits to be achieved through the change and then there is the individual view looking at how jobs and tasks change due to the change. (Creasey 2017)

Future State Organization View	Future State Individual View
<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Organizational Benefit 1> Organizational Benefit 2> Organizational Benefit 3> Organizational Benefit 4> Organizational Benefit 5	<p>Employee A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">> How does their job change?> What must they do differently? <p>Employee B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">> How does their job change?> What must they do differently? <p>Employee C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">> How does their job change?> What must they do differently? <p>Employee D</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">> How does their job change?> What must they do differently?

(Creasey 2017)

Drawing out the individual view, in addition to the organizational view, will be encouraging for employees and enable them to focus their personal change to be in line with the future state.

It is important to give meaning to individuals and through projecting their future role; it helps to take down suspicions against change as well.

“Change leadership implies seeing the future and being able to lead people to co-create it” (Anderson & Ackerman 2010, p. 4).

2.4 Involve employees

Another great way to lower resistance of change is to involve employees in the plan and design of changes ahead. Delegating decisions making authority, but also responsibility of those decisions, can foster a very strong commitment for the change. (Nelson & Economy 2003, p. 228-229)

It is easy to look for faults in ideas and methods that others have created, if one is against them from the beginning, but once an employee has orchestrated improvements on the ways of working within their team, they are not so likely to criticize their own work so lightly. Even better, they most likely have also improved the team’s capabilities through their own initiatives. How is that for craftsmanship pride?

Another aspect towards involving employees in the change plan is that their expertise and experience might actually improve the change design. The chance to affect the outcome of

the change raises the felt respect and thus also lowers the resistance to change. (Blount & Carroll 2017)

2.5 The 8-step process

John P. Kotter introduced the 8-step process in his famous book: *Leading Change*. In his 2014 book *Accelerate* he enhanced his initial 8-step process to give additional capabilities to organizations.



Step 1 – Create a Sense of Urgency

In step 1, change leaders should describe an opportunity that will create an urge in the hearts and minds of employees to raise an army of volunteers. Creating employee engagement.

Step 2 – Build a Guiding Coalition

From the ranks of the volunteer army a coalition of effective people, who can guide, co-ordinate and communicate activities needs to be formed. The coalition will help launching, driving and sustaining change.

Step 3 – Form a Strategic Vision & Initiatives

Design activities that will make the vision a reality. Helping people envision the future and focus on initiatives that help to realize the vision.

Step 4 – Enlist a Volunteer Army

Large-scale change needs the gathering of significant amount of employees to drive the change into a common direction. Important is also that the employees want to contribute and are not forced to.

Step 5 – Enable Action by Removing Barriers

Removing inefficient processes or hierarchies will enable employees’ innovation across silos and create new ways of creating real impact.

Step 6 – Generate Short-Term Wins

Wins fuel the volunteers to drive change. Wins need to be collected and communicated early and often to accelerate towards the final goal.

Step 7 – Sustain Acceleration

Change leaders need to adapt quickly to stay on the course of change, removing misaligned processes and avoiding over-management.

Step 8 – Institute Change

You need to define and share the connection between the new behaviors and the organization’s success in order to build persistent repetition for the future.

2.6 Change Management Plan

The same as in project management, change management should be executed against a written plan. Writing down the plan will also help in channeling thoughts together as well as producing a roadmap to lean against further down the road of change.

A change management plan could list the following (University of Glasgow 2014):

- Introduction
 - The strategic goals of the change
- Project Sponsor
 - The person who is accountable for the change initiative
- Project Objectives

- Details what should be achieved with the project
- Change Objectives and Principles
 - Details what the change process should achieve and what principles underpin the change
- Change Plan Elements
 - Listing the focus elements for change (work culture, IT systems, documents, processes, skills, organization roles)
- Rationale for the Change
 - Drivers, constraints and risks for change
- Key Stakeholder Analysis
 - Identifying key stakeholders, analysing their position towards change and identifying their communication needs
- Assessment of Readiness to Change
 - Upper management support and awareness for change. Work climate towards change.
- Key Change Messages
 - Ca. 6 key messages on gains and losses of the change process

3 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

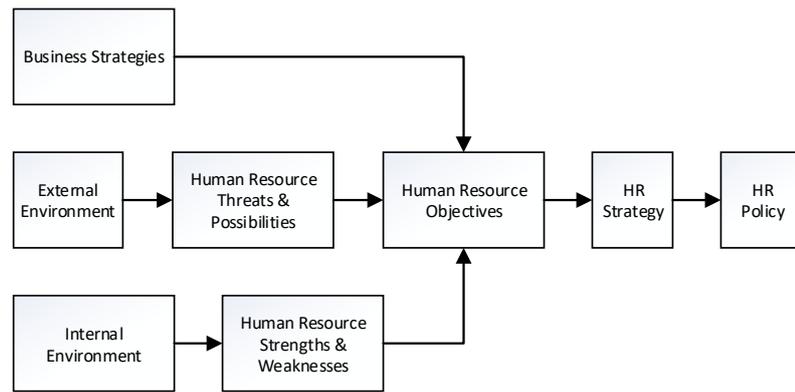
Riitta Strömmer believes that the changing business environment sets the demand for flexibility within human resources. And that the pursue of flexibility has led to caution on hiring permanent employees.

More and more companies are hiring for long-term employment only the kind of people, which are essential to the core mission. Businesses now give up everything that is not directly related to the actual business operations. Routines and expensive enterprise support functions can be purchased as external work activities at lower cost than paying for fixed time. (Strömmer 1999, p. 44)

The people who remain in the company form the core of the organization. These people's skills, motivation and commitment are crucial to the company. It is desired that from the core the best possible working and development contribution is given to the company. Companies must consider how these people's motivation can be constantly kept high, and how to ensure that their expertise is maintained at the highest level alongside the tight pace of work. With the permanent staff of companies being scaled to the lowest level, it is necessary to flatten the peak load thru purchased services and temporary labour. (Strömmer 1999, p. 44)

3.1 Human resources strategic planning

Strategic planning is a tool that provides means to the organization to meet the demands of the future business environment. The strategic planning process is generally used to define the organization's business concept, which sets the objectives of the organization and the resources allocated to achieve objectives. Similarly, human resources strategic planning is a process, set for uniquely identifying objectives for human resources, the development of a human resources strategy to achieve the objectives and to develop a human resources policy. Human resources strategic planning produces information on future staffing needs for both quantity and quality. (Vanhala, Laukkanen & Koskinen 1998, p. 215)



Human resources strategic planning model (Vanhala, Laukkanen & Koskinen 1998, p. 216)

Charting the amount, the quality and characteristics of existing staff gains insight into the potential of existing staff to respond to the company's future staffing needs. At the same time can be estimated the staff increase/reduction need as well as the need to develop staff. (Vanhala, Laukkanen & Koskinen 1998, p. 217)

3.2 Change Leader

Outsourcing the accountability for effective change management to HR or external consultants will most likely increase the organizational change failure rate.

Instead the ability to manage change should be strengthened in the skillset of managers. These change managers need to integrate change plans into existing project and business plans and not treat change as an independent add-on (Ashkenas 2013).

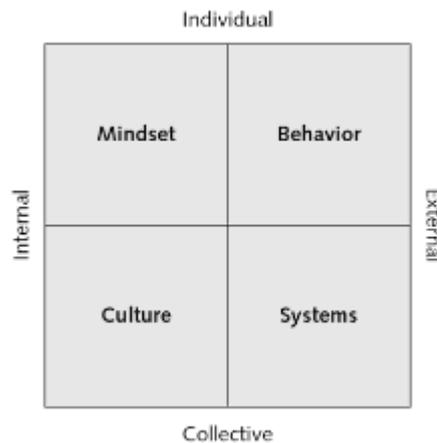
A change leader should lead by example and live in the change requested to others. Silent signals are being send by the way how the change process is given time and resources, so the importance of the change needs to reflect in all doing. Decisions made need to support the direction of the change and measuring needs to be adjusted early on to highlight new priorities. (Johnson 2017)

Anderson & Ackerman define that a change leader needs to be a conscious change leader, implying the need to be more conscious and aware of people and dynamic processes.

The conscious change leader will be able to achieve better commitment through taking the human dynamics into account and is more likely to succeed in his change efforts by taking all dimensions into account. (Anderson & Ackerman 2010, p. 4)

3.2.1 The Four Quadrants of Conscious Change Leader accountability

A conscious change leader must address the **mindset**, which includes the emotions, values, thoughts and beliefs. The **behavior**, which includes skills and workstyles. The **culture**, which includes the work climate and culture. As well as the **systems**, which are the IT systems and processes.



(Anderson & Ackerman 2010, p. 6)

The four quadrants display the different levels that need to be addressed to successfully transform an organization, as well as the relation on which two are considered internal dynamics and which two are considered as external dynamics. It also displays the importance of individual dynamics, which have the same weight as the collective ones as well as displays that both individual and collective quadrants have both internal and external influence.

3.3 Delegation

According to Brian Tracy “the strength of any organization is determined by the quality of its managers at all levels... What they do and how well they do it are the key determinants of corporate success” (Tracy 2014, p. 3-4).

Tracy lists 21 key ideas to become an excellent manager, effectively delegating being not only one of them, but also the critical element to succeed as a leader. Through delegation, a manager can multiply what he or she can achieve by themselves by utilizing other peoples full potential. Which in turn will allow the manager to transition from doing to controlling.

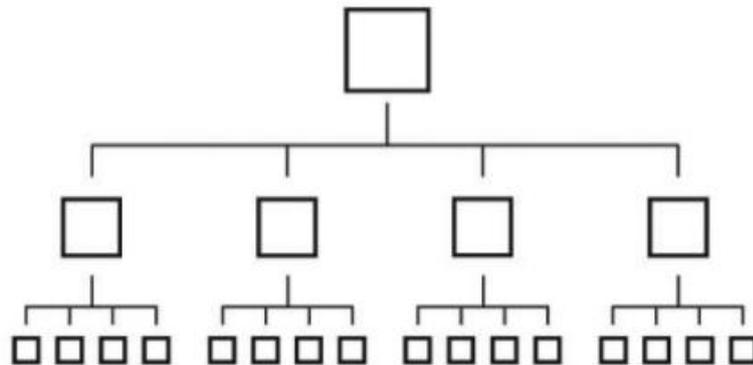
Tracy is a huge opponent towards micro-managing. In his view a manager should select the right person for a particular task, explain the results wanted, delegate the whole task, don’t in-

terfere and only review the progress regularly. His rationale being on exploiting people’s thrive for responsibility as a motivational factor. (Tracy 2014, p. 34-38)

3.4 Empowerment

General Stanley McChrystal took command of the Joint Special Operations Task Force in 2004. At the time being, he was leading the fight against Al Qaeda in Iraq, but out of his experiences, he wrote a book, which acts as a guide for organizational change.

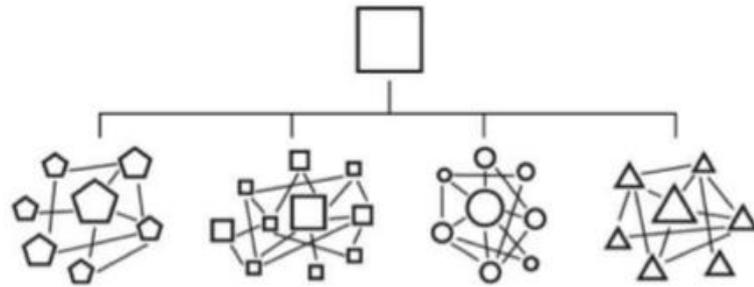
At the beginning of his mission, he had to re-evaluate his role as a traditional leader. He noticed that the wait for his approval, which he had to give due to his position in the organizational hierarchy, did not result in any better decisions, but always added lead-time. He challenged whether the additional cost of this delay was worth it as there was a minimum effect on lesser errors produced.



Command network and hierarchy (McChrystal 2015, p. 129)

He realized that that he was not adding value to the decision making process, so he changed it. He empowered his teams to make the decisions themselves, but he was still being responsible for the decisions they made. However, more often than not those below him reached the same conclusion that he would have made.

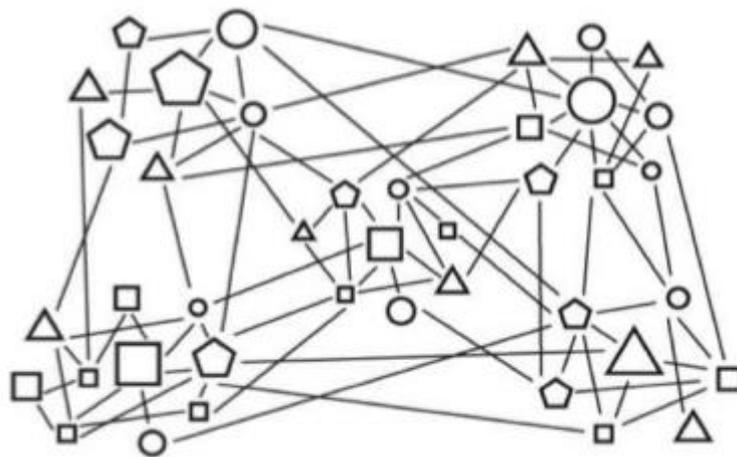
From McChrystal’s point of view, priority should be on reaching the best possible decision in a timeframe that made it relevant. He concluded that they “would be better served by having a 70 percent solution today, rather than satisfying protocol and getting the 90 percent solution tomorrow” (McChrystal 2015, p. 209-210).



Command of Teams (McChrystal 2015, p. 129)

In a team everyone knows each other as well as what they are doing. The team is working towards a common goal and because they know each other and together address a common goal, this also builds up trust between team members. This trust is needed to work efficiently as a team and not to compete with each other.

McChrystal took the idea of teams one step further, by introducing the principal of “Team of Teams”. Since the team model works so well in small teams and team members cannot be added unlimitedly, teams should form teams between themselves.



Team of Teams (McChrystal 2015, p. 129)

In a big organization, it is not possible that every team member knows everyone in all the other teams, but within the “Team of Teams” -model, at least someone in the team should know someone else in the other team and then again, someone else from the team knows someone else in another team. Creating a mesh of interlaced teams.

The “Team of Teams” -model creates relationships across a whole organization in a way, which is not possible in conventional organizational models. These relationships enable the

building of common trust, which is necessary to build a sense of common purpose.

The capability of interacting directly with team members from other teams, who trust each other and are working towards a common goal, combined together with the empowerment to do decisions within the team, will allow teams to act much quicker and achieve more in a smaller timeframe.

Instead of one individual knowing what goal he or she is working towards or having a team enabled to work towards a common goal, the “Team of Teams” are able to do the same thing on an organizational level. The whole organization working towards a common goal, without the need to go up and down the organizational hierarchy.

4 RESEARCH: CURRENT SITUATION

What is the corporate starting point?

4.1 Business Background

The company has dug into the opinion foxhole that the number of employees is not to be added at any account (at least not in the team in question). Simultaneously while looking to expand the business into new countries and increasing revenue and net outcome. Truly a; do more with less, or better to say, do more with the same starting position.

It is not expected to decrease any kind of service quality. Quite the opposite. It is expected that the team will engage in even more development projects to enhance business opportunities, while simultaneously upholding and even increasing the operational service quality of any existing services, without adding headcount. It is further expected that the team will enhance also the current operations by establishing measurement criteria, monitor these and have a continual improvement approach.

4.2 The Team

The team was interviewed individually to get an in-depth view on the current situation. To discover how the change is being realized and how the team is affected by the change.

The interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder to ensure capturing the responses validity and thus to enable capturing qualitative data. From these digital voice recordings, transcripts were made to allow a comparison of the responses.

The responses have been anonymized and summarized to respect the privacy of the team members interviewed. In addition individual answers are not included in this thesis, to not allow identification of individuals based on answering patterns, linguistics or other factors.

The interview questions themselves are attached as an appendix. This questionnaire was used as a manuscript during the interviews to ensure the quality and content of each interview was the same.

4.2.1 The Interview

Everyone in the team is fully aware that there is a change going on in their business environment and half of the questioned even pointed out that there are many changes happening. How-

ever, when being asked to describe the change itself the answers get scattered. Some described the workload shifting from doing to monitoring, while another described the shift to be less and less technical and more project orientated. Others saw the daily activities to have become wider and more complicated than before, with more cross-cultural interaction and overseas involvement.

The same happened when being asked for the drivers of the change. E.g. why it is that the business environment is currently changing and what the strategic goals for this change could be? One fourth of the questioned did not really understand the strategic goals to be achieved through the ongoing change. Half speculated that the change is supporting to achieve marketing area leadership goals or other mid-term part visions of the company. Another fourth speculated that the goal is to achieve a more lean company with lesser company owned assets.

When being asked whether or not the changes have also affected the job roles of the individual persons in the team, the answers became again more harmonious as everyone in the team seems to have had a change in their work role. In addition, the explanations became also more similar for all:

- the workload has become much heavier
- there is more responsibilities to take care of
- more interaction with different people
- more skills required than before
- the resourcing conflict of still having to take care of old tasks as well as shift to the new role and do the new tasks as well

The majority of fears towards the ongoing change were associated with the uncertainty of one’s own future within the company. Fear of becoming obsolete or laid off for other reasons. Only one fourth admitted to liking change and not being afraid of it.

Only after specifically asking of personal opportunities through this change, a more positive angle was found in the responses. The majority of the interviewed could see the change as an opportunity to evolve and grow.

However, for the majority it was unclear how they would fit into the future state of the organization as they felt no one had actually visualized to them their future job role within the future state of the company. Some expressed a basic understanding, but still claimed a clear direction to be missing.

None of the interviewed claim to have been integrated in the design and planning phase of the change. To most these activities and decisions have been made by upper management and they have only seen some elements after the direction has been set. Like for example some projects generated as an outcome for the change.

The greatest personal challenges in managing within the current change were listed as:

- to stay motivated with all the different changes happening
- to understand the level of decisions that can be made without seeking approval
- not enough time to manage current operations and projects as well as in addition further develop services

Towards asking whether any positive outcome has been experienced through the implementation of changes in the daily work routine, all of the interviewed persons had a positive experience from an implemented change. Someone stated that: “Doing something which is more important for the business is really interesting.” Whereas another one claimed that the implementation of some changes enabled the team to focus on other items.

As a generalization, a lot of the time of the team is still being spent on operational tasks to uphold the current operation services and the quality of these. Leaving very little time to develop and enhance services. Any kind of project or development work is being done ad-hoc to existing routine duties.

The team takes a certain pride in the quality of the services it provides and is not willing to cut on principles, which service quality has become. Thus not all development needs can be addressed with the attention they would deserve from the business perspective.

All projects are being steered and driven by the team lead, who pulls in team members according to their specialties and assigns individual tasks to team members. The team lead participates in all the team’s projects and acts as the single decision maker of the team, thus being a clear window person to internal and external interest groups.

4.3 Global strategy

The global strategy of the corporation is to outsource all non-core activities and have even supportive functions focusing on enhancing business opportunities through constant development projects.

The global strategy is aligned with the local business perspective, that headcount is not to be added to the team.

5 ANALYSIS: STRENGTHS, PROBLEMS, CHALLENGES

What are the strengths, problems and challenges in the organization?

Sari Torkkola writes, that it often seems IT has a common enemy, the customer and unloading the frustrations and feelings associated with them in a group helps to also vent some needed air (Torkkola 2015, p. 20). This element is also present within this team and helps to keep up morale in spite of the difficulties within the current change.

The strengths of the team quite clearly lie in the pride of doing “a good job”. While time management restrictions do not allow to do “all jobs well”. Constantly not being able to perform as well as one would like to, has demoralizing affects over time.

The misbalance in expectations to develop business services with the effort it takes to even support existing services causes frustration and disbelieve in management direction.

The whole team is however very committed to support the business and has also, over time, accepted the fact that service operations need to change, in order that the none ideal workload situation is also able to change.

The team lead being the driving force for all development projects also narrows down the projects which can be driven. Luckily, the team lead is very adaptable and willing to change not only processes and service operations, but to change himself as well. However, the current operations on checking all decisions from above, in some cases even above the team as well, ads lead-time and lacks empowerment.

5.1 Uncertain direction

Who or what is leading the change and why?

The research revealed that it was not quite clear to the team what the underlying reasons for the change nor it’s strategic goals were.

The team was not included in the design or planning phase for the change. Only some projects that were an outcome of the change have had planning integration, but without opening up, the final goals of these projects or giving even the possibility to influence the direction.

However, when individual projects were implemented team members could see the benefits of these as enablers for further activities. It is only the end picture which is not truly in focus.

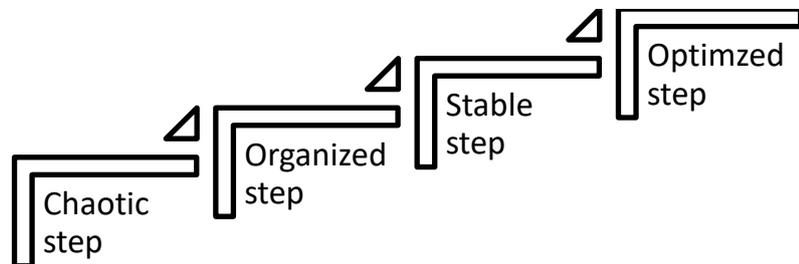
5.2 Uncertain future

The unclear role of oneself in a future organization can directly be linked to the fears uncovered in the research. One is afraid of something he does not know and not knowing your future role in an organization gives room for fear whether or not you will be part of that future within the organization.

At the same time the change could be seen as an enabler for individual development, so the fears were not related to being in objection of change e.g. the resistance phase has been passed. However, the uncertainty makes it difficult to truly explore the change and move towards the final stage of accepting the change.

5.3 Chaos

Torkkola describes 4 steps of enhancing operations. Each step addresses the best management model in accordance at which step an organization is and all steps have to be followed in order. (Torkkola 2015, p. 72-77)



The chaotic step

At the chaotic step nothing can be predicted and everyone is doing what they think is right. Within this step, the first priority is to create order by choosing the essential development items for the organization and visualizing the problem to the work force. Then to start designing the processes to be fluent and to start measuring it.

The organized step

At the organized step, common methods are being utilized and controls are in place to measure the utilization. Special causes might generate variations for the process outcome and even though these are visible, they are not predictable.

The stable step

At the stable step, the process is predictable and fluctuation is within range of the process. Development activities would mean to redesign the whole process.

The optimized step

At the optimized step, the process is not only stable, but also optimized towards customer expectations. To be able to reach this level, customer requirements need to be defined clearly and measured.

Currently there are elements of all 4 steps present, adding to the confusion. Optimization should not happen until a stable phase is reached. To accomplish a stable phase the organized step needs to be reached first. By performing in parallel activities for different operational enhancement levels, it is giving unclear prioritization for priorities as well as adding stress, when the foundations for further development activities is not sound.

There is also an unawareness of current or expected empowerment. Which decisions a team member can make by themselves or which decisions are expected to be taken to upper management. As it is unclear, it is often double-checked generating additional correspondence and delay.

The research revealed that everyone had experienced a change in added workload and responsibility, but at the same time was still contributing a lot of time towards old operational tasks. Highlighting that non-core activities are not yet fully outsourced and the current mix of upholding legacy activities and implementing activities from the future state of the organization is adding to the conflict of having insufficient time to cope with the workload.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS: THEORY PLUS RESEARCH

How to transform the organization for tomorrow’s tasks?

6.1 Leading the change

To be able to lead people in an organization through change, it is key to first get everyone on board the “change wagon”. As written by Bob Nelson and Peter Economy (Nelson & Economy 2003, p. 228) it is important to draw the picture of the future organization after the change, so people can clearly see what we are striving for.

A good tool to paint the future vision is strategic planning as described by Vanhala, Laukkanen and Koskinen (Vanhala, Laukkanen & Koskinen 1998, p. 215-218). Combined with human resource strategic planning it enables to also see the future skillset needs of the employees and when communicated transparently also removes uncertainty among the work force.

The formulation of a change management plan will document the rationale for the change and clarify the change objectives. The analysis of stakeholder’s positions towards change will identify at which stage of change they are (denial, resistance, exploration or acceptance) and help address according communication needs.

Resistance to change is possible to further be reduced by involving people in decision making and delegating responsibilities, so that people are actually part of implementing the change as opposed to change just happening to them, which is a huge differentiator in people’s minds.

Delegation of responsibilities and decision making has also a further benefit of cutting unnecessary delay in decision making time as realized by General Stanley McChrystal (McChrystal 2015, p. 209). In a scenario where you want to achieve more without lengthening time or adding human resources, cutting down on the chain of command will not only empower your people, but also empower the organization to achieve more.

Implementing the teachings from “Teams of Teams” allows an organization to interact between teams and make decisions independently, without the lead-time of running through hierarchical organization steps.

Brian Tracy (Tracy 2014, p. 34) also adds that through delegation you also unlock the full potential of other people and enable the leader to shift his focus from doing to controlling, thus to also achieve more on his part.

When permanent staff is scaled to the lowest level it is necessary to purchase non-core supportive operations as a service as well as flatten peak loads with temporary labour as pointed out by Riitta Strömmer (Strömmer 1999, p. 44). Thus any kind of non-core activities the team is currently performing should be outsourced to enable the team to address the corporation’s future development needs as well as to outbalance the workload situation.

6.2 Gaining control over the chaos

Leading is similar to operating a ship in a fog. You have to trust on your experience, even though that at times you may not see where you are going. Your instruments can assist you with your direction, but once in a while, you will hit some floating debris on your way to your destination. (Torkkola 2015, p. 20)

The instruments for management are good practices and research and an experienced leader should know that no change will go through without some hiccups on the way. This is where the experience comes into play, to not get scared to set off course even if the ride is not smooth at some points.

Lean is about removing or reducing waste. Waste, in this context, are actions that do not generate value from a customer perspective. Reducing waste can help the team to get more done by removing futile activities from the current workload and thus gaining control over the chaos.



(Hash 2015)

One of the categories of waste is overproduction. For specialists overproduction can mean unnecessary meetings, which

are held without questioning their necessity or with too many participants. Overproduction can lead to false prioritization, in which urgent tasks are done before important tasks. However, it is the importance and not the urgency, which should drive prioritization. (Torkkola 2015, p. 25-26)

The team needs to identify which tasks are obsolete or could be made simpler. The same goes also for identifying tasks that would make more sense to outsource than to try to partially manage in-house, in a situation where there is not enough time to address all needs. It is key to find the right core activities, which should be kept in-house and on which the future state of the organization will benefit. This would also help in acquiring the right skillset for the future state as with the focus also the skillset will need to change.

Maximizing resource utilization always lengthens customer waiting periods (Torkkola 2015, p. 57-58). It is important to understand that slack is needed to be able to fulfil customer needs timely and if there is no slack, then the effect becomes visible on the customer side. This is even more visible in chaotic environments or even in an organized environment in case an unpredicted event happens.

It is essential to limit the amount of unfinished work activities when struggling in a chaotic phase. Unfinished work activities can be seen as the “inventory” of waste categories. All unfinished work activities are an inventory of none added value to the customer, since they are not ready and not at the customer’s disposal e.g. in inventory. The team needs to “Start finishing and finish starting” (Torkkola 2015, p. 52-53). This means to not start new work activities while others are unfinished and thus also limiting the total amount of work activities to create clarity and the possibility to finish the ones which are already started.

Emphasis needs to be put also on not “over processing”, which was also one of the waste categories. A specialist might not be willing to let go on a work activity, when it is not perfect yet from his perspective or he is not quite sure what the customer wants. However, the added delay does not benefit anyone, so it is important to finish activities to eliminate over processing and eliminate simultaneously creating an inventory of unfinished work activities.

A further waste category is “motion”, which translates into any unnecessary motions that generate wasted time. Switching tasks adds 40 percent to the total handling time. Employees might think that multitasking and answering to e-mails quickly is showing efficiency, when in real life it’s eating up

resources (Torkkola 2015, p. 61). Multitasking is a myth (Napier 2014). People cannot multitask. They can do one task slower, then interrupt it, change to the next task, do this a bit slower too and then try to come back and figure out what they were doing in the first place.

Finding a common rhythm (when to read e-mail, when to interact with colleagues and when to do job tasks) and clear prioritization rules are an effective way of eliminating interruptions and thus establishing more efficiency (Torkkola 2015, p. 62).

As odd as it might seem in this day and age of smartphones, multiple e-mail accounts and different mobile platforms for collaboration, that all these different things that go “bling” on your mobile phone or desktop are destroying the efficiency of our workforce. As an example: Yes, you answering quickly to an e-mail that could have been also left unanswered without any major influence on the corporation’s future, might have made a good impression on the sender, but what was that thought you were just thinking about to make a bigger life changing change for the bigger good of the corporation? That thought is now probably gone.

It might not always be this dramatic, but it is a well known fact that disturbances have an effect on people’s thoughts, that’s why they are called disturbances. The very technology that was invented to set employees free (from desk jobs and work hours) is now polluting their way of thought. People need to get in control of their routines again. Let the people choose when we will use technology and not the other way around. It is easier said than done and requires a lot of self-discipline. Something to consider for the whole team, even if it sounds very bureaucratic to have “e-mail reading hours”.

One point to take care of is that the rhythm does not create “waiting”, which was also one of the waste categories. “Typically in a specialist organization you are waiting for decisions, approvals or more information for the work activity from colleagues or customers” (Torkkola 2015, p. 26). This is why it is important to have a common work rhythm, across the team, to not create waiting anywhere else in the team.

Visualizing is the most effective tool for communication. An image can quickly give a common understanding about the issue on hand. Through visualization, the team can quicker focus on qualitative and independent decisions, adding transparency and openness.



Visual board example (Kahonen 2017)

Visual boards can speed up meetings and shift gears from repeating the situation towards problem solving and agreeing on action points (Torkkola 2015, p. 49-50). This will remove unnecessary e-mail chains and can replace ineffective reporting meetings with quick 15 minutes corridor status update meetings. An additional method to reduce over processing.

7 CONCLUSION

All changes start at the top.

The team lead should spend more of his time at the communicational borderline between the team and their internal customers. Acting as a diplomat between the business and IT and not so much on steering routine activities or acting as a decision making body for the team. The team lead needs to start delegating decision making to his team members and instead of actively participating in every project, switch to periodically checking progress and thus controlling projects from a higher level. The team also needs the right empowerment to be able to successfully and independently manage projects and development activities without the need to acquire decisions from upper steps on the organizational ladder.

For the team to successfully be capable of steering projects independently towards the intended goal, it is key for the leader to clearly communicate the strategic plan and future vision of the corporation. For communication to be successful, the team lead needs to play the role of the conscious change leader and address the individual mindsets of the team members. Adapting to individual values and beliefs as well as different workstyles.

Visualizing important tasks and issues through the use of visual boards will help the team to focus priorities and narrow activities towards important goals. Visual boards will also make status sharing quicker and easier allowing more time spent on issue solving and lesser time spent on reporting.

The team needs to find a common rhythm for their job tasks, allowing to focus on the task at hand without interruptions. As an example, closing Outlook when not working on e-mails and putting alerts on the PC and mobile phone on silent mode. Not being interrupted will allow more tasks to be completed within the same timeframe when not run in parallel, but in sequential order. However, it is important to have a common rhythm, so that the individual rhythms do not conflict with each other and add to the lead-time. As an example, if everyone agrees and are aware, that e-mail correspondence is being managed at the beginning and/or ending of each business day, team members do not need to wait for replies or have to send reminders, but can adjust their activities to work on other subjects, which do not need interaction from their peers and can resume collaboration work during the timeframe when answers can be expected.

Through outsourcing the teams non-core activities there will not only be better time management to complete tasks which

are in accordance with corporate strategy, but it will also help in fostering trust in leadership as time is being spent on the right tasks. This will lift morale and create more meaningfulness for everyone in the team. Key is to find these kind of activities, which could be offhanded to external help, without fear of one's own job security, but truly seeing it as an enabler to do more.

By implementing all these parts: outsourcing none-core activities, setting clear strategic targets, delegating decision making, visualizing important issues and rhythm job task, the team should be able to do more and also enjoy doing it more.

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Have you noticed an ongoing change in the Business environment you are working in?

Can you describe the change?

Do you know the strategic goals to be achieved through this change?

Have these changes also affected your job role within the company?

Do you have any fears towards the ongoing change and if so, what are the greatest fears from a personal view?

Do you see any opportunities, as an individual, in being within the current change or for yourself after the change?

Has someone visualized to you the future state of the organization and especially your job role in the future state?

Have you been integrated in the design and planning phase of change?

What would you describe as your greatest personal challenges in managing in your current position/in the change/after the change?

Have you already implemented some change in your daily work routine and if so, have you experienced some positive outcome of the implemented change?