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## HUOM! TÄMÄ ON RINNAKKAISTALLENNE

Rinnakkaistallennettu versio *voi* erota alkuperäisestä julkaistusta sivunumeroiltaan ja ilmeeltään.

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## **Organizing at the edge of chaos**

### **Amor vincit omnia**

It was year of 2007 when two friends decided to found a new company. They wrote their goal onto a beverage coaster at a restaurant stating that “one should not be irritated to come to work on Mondays” (Mattila 2014). This was the beginning of a company, Vincit, which has since then turned out to be a success story both financially and in terms of personnel satisfaction.

Since its establishment, Vincit has received a long list of awards including the ones given for the best place to work in Finland for the three last consecutive years (2014 - 2016) and the best workplace in Europe in 2016. The notably high satisfaction of Vincit’s employees and strong financial performance raise an interesting question: How have they done it?

This chapter explores work practices in Vincit in order to understand better what leadership and management principles have led Vincit to be a company that is highly valued by its employees and simultaneously performing financially well. By identifying and conceptualizing these principles and by comparing these findings with work well-being, job satisfaction and job crafting literature, we seek to answer following research questions: 1) what are the organizational principles and practices that have led the case company to the successful results, and 2) how the identified principles and practices can be explained theoretically.

Vincit produces tailor-made software and provides consulting and training on the use of agile methods. They are specialized in internet and mobile applications and embedded devices. The company name Vincit comes from the Latin phrases *amor vincit omnia* (love conquers all) and *labor omnia vincit* (work conquers all). Those working for Vincit believe that love for hard work and hard work as such are the features that make them distinctive in a way which makes them

characterize themselves as a software company that changes the management in the future (Kaartinen 2015; Vincit n.d.).

Vincit argues that there are two factors behind their success: satisfied customers and satisfied employees. The customer satisfaction has been measured in over 200 customer satisfaction inquiries, which reveal that 100 percent of their customers would be willing to recommend their services to their colleagues. The employee satisfaction has been measured in the number of awards and, above all, in daily working life (Kaartinen 2015; Vincit n.d.). The awards the company has earned have been given for many different reasons: managerial practices, growth of turnover, improvement of profits, well-being at work and human resources management (Kaartinen 2015).

From the beginning of its existence, Vincit has consciously sought excellence in its operations. Throughout the years, Vincit has achieved a remarkable position in its field of business. The company has questioned the traditional ways of working from the beginning and it has been recognized having renewed the principles in the whole field of business (TEM 2013).

The company was chosen as the start-up of the year 2012 as well as the strongest company in its region. By that time the company had doubled its turnover every year with no external financing (Pietarila 2015; Taloussanommat n.d.). Based on the growth of turnover during the years of 2008 - 2012, Vincit was listed 17th in the Deloitte's 50 fastest growing technology companies in Finland, with a growth rate of 464 percent (Deloitte n.d.). The profits in 2013 were ten times bigger than profits in 2009 (Tepsi 2014) and year 2016 the turnover was 26 million euros.

The organizational structure of the company has been kept flat while, at the same time, the competence of the personnel has been developed on a constant basis. When the size of Vincit was a little more than 60 people, they had no middle management and no assistants. The

lightweight organization helped to keep the costs down. This was considered important since the price level could not be adjusted because of the global competition. By year 2015, the number of personnel have grown up to 120 people. In addition to Vincit's headquarters in Tampere, the company now has operations also in two other cities in Finland and in California. At the moment, Vincit is still one of the fastest growing technology companies in Finland. Vincit currently employs about a hundred and eighty people and are about to recruit much more – and still manage with two bosses and a human resources manager. In practice this means that anybody can take a project and start managing it (Mattila 2014; Takala 2015).

### **Studying the work practices**

An overall objective for the study has been to understand better Vincit's work practices and their effect to employees' job satisfaction. The data was gathered with semi-structured interviews that covered 12 different topics: 1) personal questions about the interviewees and their role in the company, 2) information about the company, 3) ways of working, 4) the target setting and follow-up, 5) role of managers, 6) role of personnel, 7) internal co-operation and organization, 8) remuneration 9), customer relations, 10) external networks and communications, 11) dialogue, and 12) challenges in the past, present and in the future. Two interviews were conducted from different perspectives within the company. In one of the interviews, the director responsible on human relational matters was interviewed for 1 hour and 38 minutes. The second interview lasted for 30 minutes and focused on a typical worker in Vincit, a software engineer. Both of the interviews were conducted by two interviewers, one who interviewed and other who was monitoring and took notes. Both of the interviews were audio taped and transcribed by a third party.

These transcribed interviews were analysed independently by two researchers. The analysis started with a process known in grounded theory methodology as open coding (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 61). In this phase of analysis, the transcribed interviews were scanned line by line. When any section of the analysed interview was found to be relevant to the research area, a new code was created with the commenting feature of the word processor. If a section in the transcribed interview contained multiple meanings, a new code was created for each of the possible interpretations.

In the next phase of analysis, both of the analysts continued to work independently from each other. All the codes created by one analyst were exported to a spreadsheet application in such way that each of the codes was represented as an individual text box. The analysis proceeded from there by visually organizing and connecting codes until clusters with similar codes next to each other emerged. The result of this phase of analysis can be considered as a knowledge map, a visual display of captured information and relationships (Vail 1999, 17). The two knowledge maps, created individually by each of the analysts, were further visualized and reflected with relevant literature. Our findings were then presented and discussed with a HR specialist in Vincit. This meeting was audio taped and transcribed and it revealed that our findings fit with the perceptions and experiences of the Vincit's representative.

## **Interpretations**

The two different visualized interpretations of Vincit's work environment are presented in Figure X.1 and Figure X.2. These interpretation are discussed in greater detail below and illustrated with quotations from the interview of Vincit's Director of Human Relations.

## Interpretation 1: Making work meaningful

[Insert Figure X.1 here]

The establishment of Vincit was triggered by a strong dissatisfaction with prevailing management approaches. When the CEO and a co-founder of Vincit, Mikko Kuitunen, experienced in his previous work heavy bureaucracy and professional management, he soon came to a conclusion that things could be done in a better way (Tikkanen 2011). There were two particular things that bothered him: dictating style of managers and secretive decisions (Marjamäki 2014). Kuitunen believed that people, in general, have high moral at work and they want to take care of their tasks the best possible way. If they are not let to do it, they grow impatient (Lahnajärvi 2015).

Hence, when Vincit was established, the founders had a goal of creating a great place to work. Kuitunen believed that growth is not a good objective. Instead, Vincit wanted to “make its workers and customers happier and more satisfied tomorrow than today” (GreatPlaceToWork 2016). Kuitunen believed that if the company is set up in order to generate money, there is always a big risk that people forget on what conditions and for what they should make money.

An ideology gives more ingredients to the story. He also says that combining well-being at work to economic success is a lot easier than aiming at huge economic growth while trying to keep the pieces together (Kaartinen 2015).

Apparently, Kuitunen was not alone with his beliefs. Since the establishment of Vincit, many of the applicants have shared similar dissatisfaction with the traditional style of management and have found Vincit’s underlying philosophy appealing: “Many of those who have applied a job

here have said that they have become tired of organizational bureaucracy and they hence want something different. That's why they are so interested in us.”

Dissatisfaction with prevailing management practices, ability to challenge assumptions that are often taken for granted and willingness to always look for better solutions may well be some of the keystones that have made Vincit's a success story. However, this kind of thinking, opposing the mainstream of management, could be easily downplayed. For this reason, it is important to pay particular attention to recruiting and to make sure that the thinking of new employees align with the Vincit's ideology. To this end, Vincit has created a number of practices.

Vincit uses a so called recruiting guarantee. It means that anybody who sends an application will get an answer in twenty-four hours. To give insight to what it actually means: Vincit receives approximately 700 applications per year and in 2014, they recruited 52 new employees. When recruiting, Vincit wants to be sure that it is possible for the prospective employee to fulfil his dreams in the organization, and if not, the person will not be hired no matter how good a programmer he was. The whole business depends on people, on their personal skills and team skills. Since the differences in the productivity of software designers is huge, it is vital that the right people are recruited (Kaartinen 2015). The recruitment activities have been largely successful at Vincit: “Six and half years have gone and six people have left. Four of them established their own business and are now our customers, just there in the neighbourhood, in close co-operation with us.”

If it turns out, during the trial period of four months, that somebody is not happy with his job, he will get a decent remuneration for resigning (Tepsi 2014). By supporting the resignation financially, Vincit wants to encourage people to think carefully what they want form work and from life in general. An unmotivated employee is not happy and he also has a negative effect on

the well-being of the whole team: “We aren’t good for everyone – it’s evident that it’s very hard for me to describe our procedures because there aren’t any. A person who needs instructions and procedures is not fit to work with us because here it’s more about applying and taking the best possible decision in that situation.”

The applicant also meets his prospective closest colleagues before the recruiting decision will be made. When a new employee is hired, his expertise will be put in practice immediately and in a way that orients him towards sharing. One of his introductory tasks is to create one proposition to the internal idea bank of Vincit. His responsibilities also include making other people know him. This happens, among other things, by sending an email to others that reveals not only his tasks in the company but also something about his personal interests (GreatPlaceToWork 2012).

Those working for the company believe that well-being at work is connected with the atmosphere – everybody needs to belong to a community which shares a common aim. For this purpose, Vincit emphasizes the importance of empowerment (Marjamäki 2014). Anybody working for the company is responsible for his own well-being as well as the well-being of others and is entitled to take big decisions in the name of well-being (ParempiTyöelämä n.d.). Vincit believes that people need to be able to work with projects they are passionate about with the way they find most suitable for them. For this reason people can, to certain extent, choose their own projects. There are no imposed processes that must be followed nor tools that must be used. Project teams can decide themselves what will work best in any particular situation: “Each project team can carry out their work the way they want. There exist no general processes or practices that they have to follow. As a result we have quite many small organizations, projects, and independent developers who do they work the way that suits them best.”



Despite of the freedom given to the employees, Vincit emphasizes that they are taking business very seriously. Everybody knows that a customer finally pays for everything: “Although it may seem that there are no boundaries for the actions of Vincit’s employees, this is not the case in reality. There is no need for Vincit to set boundaries, because the customers take care of that when they set budget, schedule and the tasks to be accomplished.”

Everybody also knows that success comes from happy customers: “People at Vincit believe that if you work in a meaningful way, success will follow. Although it is important as such that people enjoy at work, it is also beneficial to the business. Good outcomes happen, when people can work on tasks they feel important.”

The employees at Vincit share a common dream of being a top expert organization that others try to follow and whose customers everybody would like to become (ParempiTyöelämä n.d.).

Frequent success in workplace evaluations and good financial performance shows that Vincit has already reached that goal.

Interpretation 2: Organizing at the edge of chaos

[Insert Figure X.2 here]

Although many of the identified themes are similar compared to the first interpretation, one particular theme stands out in the second interpretation. Vincit was found to be in the middle of creative chaos that was, to certain extent, intentionally created. For one thing, resourcing of work was described as chaotic: “We need to react rapidly to situations. We tender all the time for more projects than get realized. We never know which of the tenders get accepted and we just cannot

keep workers on hold while the tendering process is still ongoing. We make final resourcing decisions once the deal has been finalized. On that time, the resourcing occurs in a rather chaotic and ad hoc manner. We investigate, among other things, who is available and to what other tenders the potential worker is attached to.”

For another thing, Vincit has no clear organizational structure that could be monitored: “No one has a clear holistic picture what is happening in Vincit at any given point of time. There are a lot of things happening all the time and people are encouraged to be involved in influencing decisions towards their preferred outcome.”

Vincit has not established clear predetermined working roles for its employees. On the contrary, the company supports the employees to find themselves their passion and a role in which they can succeed and enjoy working: “There were no objectives set for me when I joined the company. If I asked what I should do, I was replied ‘see what needs to be done’.”

The creative chaos is supported and maintained further with a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Vincit listens its employees very carefully. When problems are raised or suggestions given, solution will be implemented promptly. This is manifested by their “no broken windows” principle, which means that if something is broken, it will be fixed right away. On a personal level, Vincit supports its employees to continuously learn and improve by actively helping them to reach their dreams - whether they concern work, personal development or balance between work and leisure. Dreams are discussed in the company both on a team level as well as personal level. Dreams are also visualized through a photo project describing the future of the organization. The meaning of work is created through the fulfilment of dreams (Ilmarinen 2015). The idea in the dream building is that everybody would be able to build his dreams on his personal strengths and take ownership of his work. The role of the company is to spar and give

support in the fulfilment of dreams: “It can be very important, the real dream. And if the dream is very different than the company’s dream, it’s good to realize and start thinking whether it’s ever going to be possible to reach my dream here.”

Not only Vincit shows that its employees have an opportunity to influence, Vincit also encourages the employees to take initiative. One example of this is a practice called “Gavel of the month”. The practice has its roots in a coincidence. Mikko Kuitunen had won a wooden gavel from a competition and nobody knew what use they could make of such an ugly item. Then someone suggested that they could hand on the gavel to an employee so that the employee would be entitled to take one decision concerning well-being at work. This way everybody in the company would get a chance to practice decision taking in a very symbolic way: “We give every employee an opportunity to take one decision that will be put in practice automatically, there are no limitations. It can be any decision and it will be realized. The only rule is that it must improve well-being at work. It’s a method that helps people to learn how to take decisions. It’s a small thing but symbolically important.”

So, every month, somebody working for the company gets the gavel in his hands and takes a decision that will be realized automatically. There is no budget, no rules, nor any instructions. The only limitation is that the decision must be such that it makes Vincit a better place to work for as many employees as possible. The person who has taken the decision chooses his follower for next month and hands on the gavel (ParempiTyöelämä n.d.). The improvements have been moderate by so far: a double coffee maker, a selection of chocolate bars in the cupboard etc. (Marjamäki 2014). No exaggerations have happened yet. A software developer that we interviewed in Vincit explained the practice from an employee’s perspective: “Trust is reflected in many ways in the daily life, like in the gavel of the month... that somebody is chosen and then

he can take a decision of any kind as long as it benefits all employees; in a way it's a big signal of trust and shows that nobody thinks there will be exaggerations and that nobody wants to dictate. Instead people are heard and they can say their opinion on what direction they want the company to develop."

Many of Vincit's practices aim at transferring the responsibility concerning the work and personal development to the employees. As one example, a HR-development project called Utopia resulted with eight team leaders to stop taking care of administrative foreman work, which was not their passion nor their expertise area. This was made possible by encouraging employees to be more responsible on their own fate and by minimizing administrative responsibilities: "We have removed unnecessary bureaucracy. This allows us to spend our time in tasks that are really important." As a result, employees have experienced improved equality: "None of the managers feels like bosses. It feels that we are all equal." Also, increasing trustworthiness was used as a method of transferring responsibility: "For example, we don't watch over how our personnel use company benefits or spend company money. We trust that people are reasonable and follow one of our simple rules: Do as you need to do and spend money as you would spend your own."

Another example of reducing HR-related work, pursuing fairness and exhibiting openness, is the way salaries are determined. In the beginning, Vincit tried to find criteria for compensation and develop a payroll model. However, they soon discovered that this was hard to obtain. Then one of the founders made a radical decision and declared that all salaries will be publicly shown. After a short confusion employees understood that in any company's payroll there will always be mistakes or biases but when the payroll information is openly shown it is possible to correct them. For some people it was a big thing though. It is not obligatory to reveal one's salary but

over 90 percent of employees did so – thinking that of course, this is Vincit (Takala 2015; Kaartinen 2015). Nowadays, pay level is discussed with each employee once a year and it is easier to reach a mutual understanding concerning the pay level when all payroll information is open: “The purpose of everything is the ownership of one’s work. This is why the payroll model is developed with the whole personnel. People say if there are some critical choices that need to be done before piloting.”

After the salary information had been revealed, the satisfaction of employees has risen so that it is now 98 percent comparing to previous year when it was ten percent units smaller. Speculation has disappeared since everybody can compare his skills and experience with those of others and payroll has become a sort of ranking-list. Raises are easier to negotiate when everybody knows each other’s salaries. Argumentation becomes clearer and usually it is based on what new skills have been learned because learning new things is vital in IT-business (Takala 2015).

When it comes to software design, the company operates in a far more formal way than one could judge by general management (Kaartinen 2015). In software design they follow a project flow and the project team is responsible for it. Also, their customer focus is more traditional and it manifests itself in their 100 percent product guarantee: if the customer is not happy with the product they will not only get their money back but also the source code for their use. After 240 projects, two customers have used the guarantee and one of these times was initiated by Vincit: “Our target is to keep the customer satisfied especially when the project is over, we want the customer leave happy and to feel that they have got what they wanted and even more. But we don’t have written targets for the project, the main thing is the customer experience.”

The customer focus and the feedback is important for well-being at work. This is why the teams meet the customers on a regular basis in order to give the experts an occasion to present their

work and to get direct feedback from it. There is a personnel meeting every second week where customer feedback is discussed in public and successful projects are celebrated

(GreatPlaceToWork 2012). As an interviewee said: “It starts from customer need and then we build a project team around it. And the project team and the customer define together how we will do the project.”

The company also remunerates the team on the basis of customer satisfaction. Every half a year the company’s profits are checked and about 7.5 percent of the profits are given to the personnel and team so that the higher a team’s customer satisfaction, the bigger the remuneration. The team then decides among themselves how they share the money. Usually they use the principle of solidarity and share it evenly but there are other possibilities too. The bonus of each employee is created this way.

With the effort to remove bureaucracy and empower Vincit’s employees, one may ask how the company can be managed. Vincit seem to be led with shared understanding and common goals. One vivid example of this can be found from the early days of the company. Vincit was established with loan money from the bank in order to be able to hire seven programmers. Their first customer was a big American company that eventually gave a profit warning and rapidly terminated the contract with Vincit. Vincit’s owners found themselves in a typical death valley of start-ups; they had an empty order book and a big bank loan. At that time they had ten employees who could, of course, have gone elsewhere, but finally, everybody sat down on a sofa and said how much salary they need to survive in daily life. Kuitunen himself took a half of his normal salary and put in 16 hours per day. Everybody in the company started to sell. The openness paid off. Nobody resigned and in half a year, they had found enough new customers to go on. (Mattila 2014.)

The shared understanding and common goals are also actively discussed and shaped within Vincit. As an example, Vincit lost a big customer again in 2011, and this time one third of their personnel found themselves without a project. A concept of “Battle Plan” was created. The idea of the “Battle Plan” is such that if something unexpected happens, it is described as a battle where there are coordinated troops that attack on the battlefield one after another. Everybody started looking for new leads by going through their own personal networks, finding people that could be prospective customers and passing this information to the sales. The excitement in the battle got so big that finally year 2011 became financially better than the previous year although they had lost one big customer accounting for almost a half of their turnover. This became a practice: “Now, whenever we have that kind of situation again, we remember that we have seen that already and we have always managed. We just need to work a lot. We have the trust that we don’t start the cost cutter immediately but instead, we just state that we need to work a bit harder.”

In 2012, because of the financial recession, Vincit was once again in a situation where the order book was showing that in two months, they would have nothing to bill nor new orders. They realized soon that if they start to investigate the numbers, they will only become paralyzed and start a collective co-determination process in order to dismiss people for economic reasons.

Instead of a negative spiral, they decided to do it the other way round. They officially declared a positive co-determination process for six weeks. Instead of laying people off the teams started to hire new people. The mass media got excited and the news were spread out. Applications started to pour in from people who said that they would like to be part of this kind of positive co-determination process. Finally they ended up with a hundred new applications. One can say that it became a phenomenon. Consequently, Vincit decided to hire ten new employees out of the

hundred applications they got. And all this was done by changing the angle of view: “We got some 100 application saying that I want to be part of your positive co-determination process and it started to live, which then motivated our employees internally because it became a phenomenon. This, in turn, made the customers become interested in us and they wanted to start working with us. Finally, the situations was such that we were able to hire 10 more people – that was six months later. So think of it, from the situation where the billing rate was 0, after a couple of months we needed 10 more people to do all the work.”

Vincit’s desire to maintain creative chaos and empowering its employees have eventually reached to a point where leadership is constantly shared among the employees at any given time in a meaningful manner. This has affected positively employees’ job satisfaction, making Vincit a desired place to work at.

### **An alternative management paradigm**

Traditional management paradigms have commonly considered organizations as machines (Morgan 2006, 11) whose Newtonian-like dynamics need to be uncovered and then controlled (McDaniel and Driebe 2005, 3). Traditional management theories assume that some type of hierarchical leadership is needed and important in formal organizations (Kerr and Jermier 1978, 375; Howell 1997, 114) so that members of organization can perform their tasks in a coordinated, efficient and effective manner. From the traditional point of view, highly prescribed rule sets, formalized control and hierarchical authority structures are an essential part of an organized co-operation, because they are intended to simplify the organization’s ongoing operations and lead to simple, well-defined and predictable responses to a changing, yet in principle knowable world (Plowman et al. 2007, 343).



While the management models of the last century have been eminently effective for an economy premised on physical production, they have proved to be ill-suited for a more knowledge-oriented economy (Uhl-Bien, Russ, and McKelvey 2007, 298). The emphasis on the leader's responsibility for determining and directing the operations of organization through heavy reliance on control mechanisms no longer provide adequate support for firms facing environments with great deals of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (Bennet and Lemoine 2014). Our gathered data suggest that the founders of Vincit have reached a similar conclusion. The company has its origins in a dissatisfaction of prevailing management practices and in a desire to organize and manage the company in a more meaningful way.

Vincit has sought to replace tight rules, targets, budgets, plans, and compensations with more agile practices. By doing so, Vincit have adopted a management perspective that is fundamentally different from the traditional management paradigm. Management at Vincit acknowledge the complexity and turbulence of their situations and make no effort to deal with it by formal means. Instead, the employees are encouraged to take action and influence the way their role in the company evolves. This kind of management approach has similarities with *lean thinking* that emphasize continuous development, fast processing of ideas and suggestions (Liker 2004; Moyano-Fuentes et al. 2012). Vincit's management approach is also closely related to *teal thinking* that highlights shared decision-making, the impact of personality on work, self-leadership, and the philosophy of what good work is (Laloux 2014). In a teal organization, work is based on peer-to-peer networks and employees have a great deal of power, control and responsibility in their own areas.

With the alternative management perspective have come a different way of organizing. This perspective, having its origins in complexity science, sees order to emerge through self-

organization out of local interactions, resulting with much more robust and flexible organizational forms than any centralized design (Heylighen 2009, 16). In complexity literature, this kind of organization is referred as *complex adaptive system* (CAS). CASs are made up of multiple interacting agents that, in the case of organizations, might be individuals, groups, or coalitions of groups (Ashmos et al. 2002, 192; Anderson 1999). These organizational agents, inside and outside the organization, interact in a dynamic manner, exchanging information and trying to coordinate their actions (Plowman et al. 2007, 343). Agents are diverse from each other and this diversity is the source of the creativity required for survival (McDaniel 2007, 23). The agents do not have a clear and holistic picture of what is happening in the system. Instead, each agent pays attention to its local environment and works towards its preferred situation. The challenge is that what is best for one agent is in general not best for the other agents (Heylighen 2009, 7). Consequently, agents do not simply adapt to the environment and to each other. They co-evolve together until they mutually “fit” (McDaniel and Driebe 2005; Heylighen 2009, 8). Agents have the capacity to perceive their environment, exchange information with other agents and to adjust their own behaviour as a function of information they process (McDaniel and Driebe 2005, 5). Each agent's behaviour is dictated by a schema, a cognitive structure that determines what action the agent takes at a given time, based on its perception of the environment (Anderson 1999, 219). As an agent is interacting with its environment, its schema may change leading to a different kind of response in future.

When Vincit’s employees perceive their working environment and adjust their behaviour accordingly, they do not only pursue to solve project related problems but they also pursue to improve their job satisfaction. According to Spector (1994) job satisfaction can be defined as the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs. According to

Locke (1969) job satisfaction has also been defined as “a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one’s job and what one perceives it as offering”. The concept of job satisfaction relates to the psychological well-being at work (Robinson et al. 2003, 46). Well-being is a summative concept that characterizes the quality of working lives, and it may be seen as a major determinant of productivity at the individual, enterprise, and societal levels (Schulte and Vainio 2010, 424). Grant and others (2007, 51) have defined employee well-being as the overall quality of an employee’s experience and functioning at work. The definition includes three dimensions of well-being: psychological, physical and social.

It is difficult for organizations to create optimal job designs. Hence, Vincit has no predefined job descriptions, but rather expects its employees to determine and define the working roles themselves. Not only that, Vincit also deliberately encourages its employees to reach their dreams. Individuals can and do shape the boundaries of their jobs and create a work environment that fits their preferences, skills and competences (Tims et al. 2013, 230; Wrzesniewski and Dutton 2001, 179). *Job crafting* is a way to accommodate employees’ unique backgrounds, motives and preferences (Peeters et al. 2013). In job crafting, individuals alter job characteristics on their own initiative and this has been found to increase the meaningfulness of work and one’s work identity (Wrzesniewski and Dutton 2001, 179). According to Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) job crafting can take three different forms: 1) employees can increase or decrease the number of tasks they need to perform or change how they perform their tasks (that is, crafting the task boundaries); 2) employees can change the number and intensity of interactions with others both on the job and outside of the organization (that is, crafting the relational boundaries); and 3) employees can change the meaning of their job by reformulating the impact their work has on themselves or others (that is, crafting the cognitions about the job).

By crafting their jobs, Vincit's personnel have increased their experience of work engagement that represents the highest level of work well-being. It is a question of drive, dedication and absorption in work (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004, 293). Bakker (2011, 265) and Bakker and Demerouti (2014, 309) have argued that job crafting and work engagement are reciprocally related. Work engagement is an experience of work well-being when the employee is full of energy and dedicated to his or her work tasks. Individual's immersion to work is then rewarding. (Hakanen 2011). When employees successfully create a work environment characterized by job resources and challenging job demands, their work engagement and job satisfaction may increase (Tims et al. 2013, 230).

A synthesis of the theoretical concepts relevant of our study is presented in Figure X.3. We argue that the thinking and behavior of Vincit's employees as agents within CAS can be described with a *sensemaking* process (Weick 1995) consisting of *enactment*, *selection* and *retention* mechanisms. Each of the employees constantly interact with their environment and notice cues that, in one way or another, violates their expectations. In the selection-mechanism employees process these cues towards a plausible understanding of their current environment. This understanding provides agents also means to evaluate the quality and meaningfulness of their work, which has an effect to their motivation and productivity. When the employees, in the retention-mechanism act upon their understanding, they are pursuing outcomes that are desirable for them. Although much of employees actions are taken do deal with turbulent project situations, employees also act to improve their job satisfaction. We have argued that job crafting may be one of the primary means for agents in the retention mechanism to act upon the understanding of their environment.

[Insert Figure X.3 here]

### **Success explained**

Vincit's approach to manage its organization as CAS partly explains Vincit's success. Complex organizations have been found to significantly outperform financially those organizations that were less complex internally (Ashmos et al. 2002, 201). Organizations as CAS empowers its member to be more free and autonomous, which, in turn, can result in the consideration of a broader range of adaptive strategies (Ashmos et al. 2002, 193). By allowing its employees to self-organize, Vincit has enabled the continuous emergence of more effective work practices. This kind of self-organization and emergence can be accelerated (Heylighen 2009, 9). If the organization is kept away-from-equilibrium (established norms), it is forced to experiment and explore their space of possibilities and this exploration helps them discover and create new ways of working and new forms of organization (Mitleton-Kelly 2003, 4).

Our analysis of Vincit, however, also reveals that there are more factors contributing to the Vincit's success that can be explained with CAS. These factors are related to high job satisfaction and employees' high well-being at Vincit that arguably also contribute to the performance of the organisation. After all, much of Vincit's management philosophy is based on a belief that a happy employee is an effective employee. Vincit believes that people need to be able to reach their personal dreams. They need to be enabled to work with tasks they are passionate about with the way they find most suitable for them.

We have in this chapter proposed that working as part of CAS and having a high job satisfaction may correlate with each other. We have further explicated that this linkage can be further explicated by describing agent's behavior with the sensemaking process. Our findings from

Vincit suggest that, as working life gets more complex, organisations may benefit from seeking new ways of operating and enriching their concept of management and leadership. When a company's operating environment is in a state of constant change, the organisation's capacity to learn and adapt can be assumed to be more important than the goal of operational efficiency. This demands new skills from managers. Instead of an administrative approach, managers should be able to lead communal exploration of the operating environment's challenges and the company's goals and make use of all different methods and tools to help employees succeed in their work and attain common goals.

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