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Creating Interview Guides for the Minimalist Organizational Design Project

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One must evolve or drown in the business world of today. The environment has become increasingly complex and capricious. Organizations that want to survive must learn how to adapt to a changing world. Today's organization requires a structure that is much more like a living organism, adapting to changes rapidly and fluidly.

MODe CC stands for Minimalist Organizational Design Co-Creation. The MODe Project aims to research minimalist organizational design and the factors necessary for it to take root, as well as to develop tools and products through additional projects. In addition, it strives to support on a practical level minimalist organizational design in Finnish companies that are either currently international or have the potential to internationalize. The purpose of this thesis is to support the MODe Project's Master Class workshops by creating materials that they will use to collect and analyze data about the current situation, unique challenges, and specific goals of participant companies during their initial evaluation.

This thesis is product-oriented, including a theoretical framework, followed by an empirical application and process description. Through a traditional literature-based review, this paper delves into two key concepts – minimalist organizational design and qualitative interview methodology. The literature identifies the core elements of minimalist organizational design and self-managing organizations, as well as qualitative interview methodology, defining it and ascertaining the requirements for creating a well-structured interview. In addition to determining the essentials of a quality interview, the analysis includes how to consider different audiences, in this case the management and employees of organizations aiming to self-manage. Based on these findings, the interview guide's design process is described and justified.

The resulting interview guides provide interviewers with contextual goals, questions, and enough instruction to guide and produce consistent interview results that are comparable across companies. Interview guide theme headings include Introduction, Right People (Mastery), Systems and Structures, Agility, Autonomy and Motivation, Authenticity, Decision-making, Goals, and Closing.

Keywords
Self-Management, Self-Organizing, Qualitative Interviewing

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1 Introduction

One must evolve or drown in the business world today. The environment has become increasing complex and capricious. Organizations that want to survive must learn how to adapt to the changing world (Martela & Jarenko 2017, 47). The constant “disruptive technology, accelerating digitization and democratization of information, and war for talent” are some of the key factors in today’s world that are necessitating the change in organizational structure (Aghina et al., 2018). All the while, as they face these challenges, companies are also adapting an environment of “increasing complexity, enhanced transparency, greater interconnection, shorter time horizons, economic and environmental instability, and demands to have a more positive impact on the world” (Robertson 2015, 8).

These changes to the environment are no longer supported by the previously dominant hierarchical organizational structure, a set-up that made much more sense during the industrial revolution, when operating a business like a machine was more realistic. Today’s organization requires a structure that is much more like a living organism, adapting to changes rapidly and fluidly (Laloux 2014, 14). As demonstrated in *Figure1*, Organizations running on a self-managing structure enjoy the benefits of being more agile and dynamic through clear structured governance and are filled with people who embody exemplary skills in autonomy and mastery. These traits make these organizations much better suited to tackle the challenges and expectations of today’s business environment.

I first became interested in self-managing organizations and minimal organizational design after reading Frederic Laloux’s Reinventing Organizations. I found the elements of these flat organizations to be inspiring and I was successfully able to continue learning about them by adapting the topic to my HRM project in Spring 2018. The project was of interest to a member of the MODe CC research project, which ultimately led to my thesis topic.

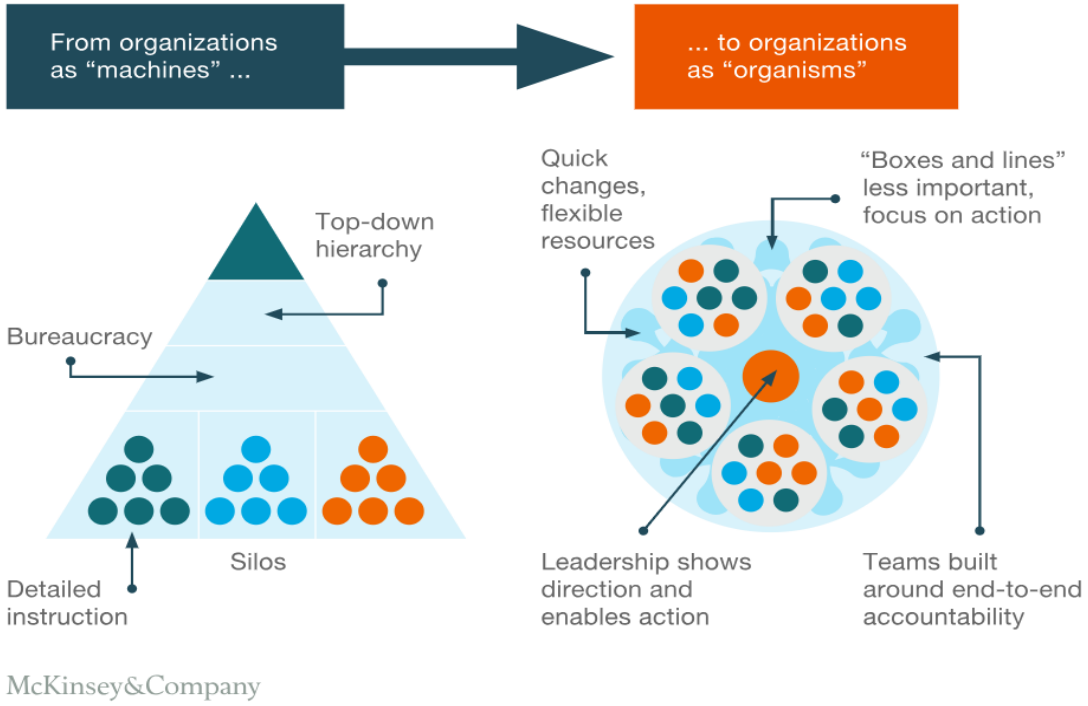

Figure 1 Hierarchy vs. Self-Managed (Aghina et al., 2018)

1.1 Commissioning Party

MODe CC stands for Minimalist Organizational Design Co-Creation (Hereafter referred to as MODe). The preliminary research for the project is scheduled from March until the end of August 2018 and funded by Business Finland. Johanna Vuori is the acting project manager. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences is the coordinator of the project. Other research members represent Aalto University and the Filosofian Akatemia. (MODe website)

The MODe project aims to research minimal organization design and the necessary factors for it to take root, develop tools and products through additional projects, and practically support minimal organizational design in Finnish companies that are international or who have the potential to internationalize (Vuori, 2018, projektisuunnitelma). Through supporting the participating companies through their unique challenges and towards their goals in self-management in the form of tailored Master Class workshops, MODe endeavors to raise the overall level of the necessary leadership and teamwork skills needed to support an experimental, agile, and customer-centric business culture. (Vuori, 2018)

1.2 Purpose & Objectives

The purpose of this thesis is to support the MODe project’s Master Class workshops by creating materials that they will use to collect and analyze data about the participant com-

panies during the initial evaluation. The data collection method they have chosen is a series of interviews of representatives of two different groups within each organization - the management and employees.

The objective is to research and develop two interview guides for the MODe research project team. The interview guide for each group will provide the interviewers with contextual goals, questions, and enough instruction to guide and produce consistent interview results that are comparable across companies.

1.3 Delimitation

The research on self-managing organizations will remain focused on the core concepts that companies will share with one another regardless of differences in size, industry, and experience. The literature review will only present those fundamental concepts that the research determines to be minimally necessary for the successful application of a minimal self-managing organizational structure. The research on interviewing as a qualitative data collection method will only cover interview styles appropriate for collecting the appropriate data relevant to this research and the development of the interview guide products.

The literature used will be focused on recent publications and internet sources produced within the last decade. Additionally, the context will remain closely related to the business world and companies. Applications of self-management on the individual level outside of the business/work context lay beyond the scope of this research.

1.4 Research Problem & Questions

The MODe research team needs to evaluate companies interested in participating in the Master Class workshops that MODe will offer after the preliminary research phase. Before designing the content for their Master Class workshops and deciding how to best guide and support, they must first identify the current situation, unique challenges, and future goals of each participant company. Despite probable differences in size, industry, and experience, the data about each company should be collected in such a way that it contains similar content and can be comparably analyzed, even when the data collection is conducted by different people.

This thesis aims to determine the answers to the following questions: Which key themes about self-managing organizations need to be included in the interview guides in order to appropriately analyze each company's current situation, unique challenges, and goals?

Additionally, which questions will provide the data needed for the objective efficiently during a qualitative interview? What information should be asked of whom? There are two guides, how do they differ and how does the research support the differences?

1.5 Thesis Structure

This thesis is product-oriented including a theoretical framework, followed by empirical application, and a process description. Through a traditional literature-based review, this paper will delve into the two key concepts.

Firstly, it will review the literature on minimal organizational design and self-managing organizations in order to identify the core elements. Through a synthesis of the research on this topic in relation to the MODe project, the essential components will emerge that are necessary to cover for a thorough interview, where the goal is to comprehensively delineate where each participant company is in its journey towards its goals.

Secondly, it will review the literature on qualitative interview methodology, defining it and distilling the requirements for creating a well-structured interview to achieve the aforementioned objective. In addition to determining the essentials of a quality interview, the research will also cover how to take into consideration different audiences, in this case the management and employee of organizations aiming to self-manage.

Next, the thesis will apply the synthesis of the key takeaways from the previous two sections on self-managing organizations and qualitative interviewing in order to discuss how the research will be applied to the interview guide design. Finally, it will review the process of this thesis project, as well as open a discussion about the results, trustworthiness and applicability of this work, and a reflection on personal learning.

2 Self-Managing Organizations

There are essential components on both the individual and company-wide levels that must be present in order for a self-managing organization to thrive and produce the benefits of the organizational model. This section will cover self-management on the individual level, taking a closer look at how autonomy, mastery, and authenticity play a role in the success of self-managing organizational environments. Secondly, it will look at self-management at the company-wide level and the dichotomy of agility and structure in self-organizing environments.

2.1 Self-Management at the Individual Level- Autonomy, Motivation & Authenticity

Individuals within a self-organizing company "share accountability for the work, authority over how goals are met, discretion over resource use, and ownership of information and knowledge related to the work" (Bernstein et al., 2016). Self-managing organizations require inbuilt autonomy, mastery, and authenticity from the individuals in order to run successfully. Autonomous individuals need to be able to have control over their own work and the ability to adjust as needed. They need to be equipped with the appropriate knowledge and ability to do their work well to be motivated and gain mastery. The environment needs to provide an organizational culture where the whole individual can show up at work authentically.

2.1.1 The "Right" People

People are a company's most valuable resource. When all the patents, trade secrets, etc. can be copied, leaked etc., the answer now is to invest in the people that make the organization by building the environment for them to fully engage and work towards a common goal. In his famous essay for the Harvard Business School, Drucker discusses how managing oneself is about the management of relationships. The importance of knowing one's own strengths, how one performs, one's values and proposed contribution must be clear. In order to thrive in a self-managed environment, it then also becomes significant to carefully select the appropriate kind of people - ideally not interested in power or authority but also not need constant directions and guidance. (Drucker 1999, 44)

There are three key components that contribute to the success of the individual who is operating within the self-managing organization. Firstly, the individual requires self-motivation, the intrinsic desire to keep going and work without force. Secondly, the individual must have a goal, a clear vision about what she is trying to accomplish with the work in question. Lastly, the "right" person must process the correct knowledge and skills to accomplish the vision or goal she is working toward. Essential skills of self-management on

the individual level include time management, goal setting, resource management, and the ability to prioritize. (Martelia & Jarenko 2017, 12)

Regardless of the people you have, self-management requires a shift in the way an organization thinks about its people more generally. In Weissbord & Janoff's reference to another work called *The Human Side of Enterprise* by Douglas McGregor, they elaborate that "theory X assumes that most people are dependent, dislike work, and require close supervision. Theory Y assumes that most people enjoy work, want to learn, and welcome responsibility" (Weissbord & Janoff 2015, 2). The driving point of the theory is that the individuals in any organization will actualize the way they are treated. Theory Y psychology is essential for all involved in self-managed organizations if the necessary intrinsic motivation and skills required are to be nurtured appropriately.

2.1.2 Autonomy Breeds Intrinsic Motivation

Autonomy is essential to the self-managed organization. Autonomy supports intrinsic motivation which supports creativity – creativity and the room to test new ideas feeds into the way in which self-managed organizations both evolve their current practices and explore new possibilities. It is a driver of the mastery of the skills needed for having the right people in the organization. In order to achieve the required autonomous people, organizational philosophy should swift away from a thought process that says in order to "achieve desired outcomes, leaders need to control and direct work by constantly specifying tasks and steering the work of employees." Instead, they can move towards the mindset that "effective leaders empower employees to take full ownership, confident they will drive the organization toward fulfilling its purpose and vision'" (Aghina et al, 2018).

In the absence of traditional managing, the "Personal Commercial Mission" (goal) becomes the guide. "The managerial functions of planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling are the personal responsibility of each colleague" (Morning Star Self-Management Institute, 2018). This is why the time management, goal setting, resource management, and the ability to prioritize previously mentioned become so important to supporting autonomy. The philosophy in self-organizing companies renders the "idea of reliance on another, higher manager for recognition and encouragement obsolete and removes all structural barriers to full employee engagement" (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Fully engaged employees both take responsibility for and enjoy the fruits of the success of their engagement, which further reinforces autonomous practices and promotes mastery through experience and the ability to try out new ideas to see what works. According to Daniel Pink, "autonomy motivates us to think creatively without needing to conform to strict workplace rules. By rethinking traditional ideas of control, organizations can increase employee autonomy, build trust, and improve innovation and creativity" (MindTools). This becomes a

self-supporting feedback loop, an ongoing trait of the system, rather than a top-down process.

Autonomy and self-management are generally based on two essential principles - no use of force towards others or their property and the respect and upholding of commitments made to others. Interestingly, these principles are also the base of the legal and civil system and are the prerequisites to a “peaceful and harmonious society” (Kirkpatrick, 2010). These principles are focused on the interpersonal skills and integrity of the individuals. Again, this returns to the previous statements about the importance of finding the right people for this kind of organization. In addition to interpersonal principles, self-managing companies that use the Holacracy format for organizational structure also bring in two additional foundational elements of broader human societies: “there’s rule of law, through the defined governance process, and there are property rights, through clearly defined domains distributed across different roles. These features enable an interconnected autonomy that should be familiar from day-to-day societal life” (Robertson 2015, 85). The combination of the interpersonal skills and these societal structures provides the environment for autonomy to flourish and for the individuals to be capable of self-organizing through intrinsic motivation.

Research suggests that there are ways that organizations can help to nurture and develop intrinsic motivation, a foundational component needed in self-management, in their people. Tips include offering “10% time” to work on a personal project or development that will benefit company, giving up some managerial control to involve people more, giving “goldilocks tasks” which challenge but are attainable (helps promote mastery), and promoting collaboration and skill sharing across teams and functions (MindTools). Contrary to the common belief in a more hierarchical organizational environment, the absence of managers in a more traditional sense of the word does not mean that no one gets recognition for a job well done. “Those who are willing to pay the price of developing high-quality relationships and exhibiting leadership qualities by excellent performance, modeling exemplary behaviors, communicating, envisioning, initiating and caring will be viewed by colleagues as leaders” (Kirkpatrick, 2010). The formal managerial title is not necessary to exhibit leadership qualities which move forward the mission of the organization.

2.1.3 Authenticity at Work

In line with the efficient and adaptive nature of a self-managed organization, another typical characteristic is authenticity in the workplace, an encouragement to show up as a real and balanced person in the organization. Explored in depth in Frederic Laloux’s *Reinventing Organizations,* he explains that “trust is the secret sauce of productive and joyful col-

laboration. But it's hard for trust to flourish when everyone is hiding, to some degree, behind a professional mask… it we want workplaces of trust, if we hope for deep, rich, and meaningful relationships, we have to reveal more of who we are" (Laloux 2014, 159). Traditionally, there has been a stark separation between personal and work life. The constructs of a self-organizing environment, heavily reliant on self-motivated and managed people, entails an inherent trust in others to pull their ends of the workload. Building relationships beyond the scope of strictly business is an effective method to promote trust and empathy.

Inbuilt into the constructs of the Holacracy model, for example, governance meeting structure begins with a check-in to give everyone a chance to show up authentically with their feelings and challenges. This process is designed to help others to understand where each person is mentally during their meeting. Each is encouraged to show up as they are. This serves an additional purpose; it's a way to put distractions on the table to achieve focus and get everyone in the present moment (Robertson 2015, 70). By breaking down the barriers between the people and the business, the individuals have no reason to suppress issues important for them that may otherwise negatively their ability to concentrate on their work. It also opens up the possibility to strengthen existing friendships or create new ones over common interests, struggles, or experiences. To return to the metaphor, the self-managed organization is more like a living organism than a stoic machine. Life is an inherent aspect.

As will become more evident in the following section about self-managing entities on the organizational level, the ability to adapt and respond with creativity or innovation is also intrinsic characteristic. The ability of the individuals within the organization to bring their creativity to new and complex challenges correlates with their wellbeing in the workplace: no one is imaginative without joy, which explains why internal motivation and positive emotions have been linked to creativity… Self-organization is thus a way of increasing the meaningfulness of work and, accordingly, responding to the needs or preconditions inherent in the current working life (Martela & Jarenko 2017, 24). Perhaps counterintuitively, it is the structural system in self-organization that makes the autonomy, mastery, and authenticity possible, so that "when the individual and organizational purpose enter into resonance and reinforce each other, extraordinary things can happen… working from our strengths, everything feels effortless and we feel productive like rarely before (Laloux 2014, 219).

2.2 Self-Management at the Organizational Level- Agility & Structure

In addition to autonomous, masterful individuals who show up authentically to work, the organization needs to have a clear purpose that is shared by all its members, and a clear

understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each person. Self-organizing entities tend to also be agile organizations, able to adapt quickly and smartly to the ever-changing environment. This agility is made possible largely through clear roles and systems, an inseparable dichotomy within self-managed organizations.

2.2.1 Deliberately Developmental Organizations: The Agility & Systems Dichotomy

Agile organizations are able to "mobilize quickly, are nimble, empowered to act, and make it easy to act. In short, they respond like a living organism." They are able to identify a need to change or adapt and have the organizational structure that allows to happen smoothly through leveraging "*standardized ways of working* to facilitate interaction and communication between teams, including the use of common language, processes, meeting formats." Paradoxically, it is the structure which allows the flexibility. The structural elements are designed to evolve slowly over time, yet they support "dynamic" action. The dynamic capabilities allow self-managing organizations to "simultaneously achieve greater customer centricity, faster time to market, higher revenue growth, lower costs, and a more engaged workforce." (Aghina et al., 2018)

Holacratic organizations define the need to change something as a "tension," one of the key skills that the individuals in these organizations have to offer is their ability to identify these pain points and enact changes for the good of the organization's higher purpose. The creator of Holacracy, Brian Robertson explains that "when we feel that sense of frustration at a system that's not working, or a mistake that keeps getting repeated, or a process that seems inefficient or cumbersome, we are tuning into a gap between how things *are* and how they *could be*" (Robertson 2015, 5). In a self-managed organization, the systems and structures are in place to allow people to immediately and efficiently utilize this feeling for positive change in an organization. Harnessing this ability of humans to sense these tensions in a quick and efficient manner can help an organization become as evolutionary as the markets it is operating within.
In order to make use of this sensing of tension, it requires integrating the views of all members, in addition to the autonomy each is given, it also means allowing for the distribution of authority and responsibility, requiring it. "There is no better way to comprehend a system than to have each person describe his or her view of it. Without that, integration is a pipedream" (Weisbord & Janoff 2015, 95). By allowing everyone from within their own roles and responsibilities to contribute to the whole picture and respond to possible tensions, a clearer whole picture is achieved and there is more agility. Agility is not over inward oriented. "People across the organization individually and proactively watch for changes in customer preferences and the external environment and act upon them" (Aghina et al., 2018). However, these tensions are not limited to interactions with clients or specific projects, rather they also extend to the very governance process itself. The

"'structure' is not fixed or solid, but continually evolving" (Robertson 2015, 38). The tensions sensed between what is and what could be are regularly addressed in governance meetings, and then adjusted to relieve the tensions. All aspects and levels of the organism efficiently can transform as needed.

2.2.2 Systems and Structure

The systems and structures of self-organizing entities differ from those of traditional hierarchical organizations. There are certain traits within an organizational culture that heavily influence the way in which people interact amongst each other. Managers in hierarchical organizations often hold the responsibility of being ambassadors for the organizational culture of the company, enforcing standards or exhibiting what is expected in terms of conflict management, (in)tolerance towards differences and different needs with(out) taking sides, or solving differences and finding common ground. "All staff work is by nature integrative. Quality, training, information technology, human resources, finance, and engineering affect everybody. Employees in poorer-performing companies act as enforcers. The best staff people act to make their expertise benefit all" (Weisbord & Janoff 2015, 113). Managers who act as enforcers undermine the autonomy need for people to self-manage, as opposed to contributing their knowledge to benefit the whole of the organizations, separated from the assumption that people need to be convinced to do what they are supposed to.

Traditional hierarchical organizations exhibit specific warning signs that indicate the weakness of the model. It is somewhat common for there to be a lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities and/or accountabilities because the authority is often vested in a person rather than a role, a concept to be elaborated upon shortly. The result is a mistrust and frustration between workers, critical tasks being "missed", excess meetings needed to reach consensus on things, emails with people cc'ed for unclear reasons, people checking with everyone before making decisions and expecting the same of others, and a lot of ideas about what "we should do" but "we" doesn't do it. (Robertson 2015, 40-41). The root of these issues stems from personal authority as opposed to a system of roles which clearly defines what can be expected of whom.

Contrarily, the authority and responsibilities needed are defined by roles within a clearly defined system in self-managing organizations. For example, in Holacratic organizations, there is a "constitutionally defined governance process" as means for distribution of power (Robertson 2015, 24). This means that power is no longer vested in individuals but rather in the system. When someone is uncertain about what a certain role entails and what authority in decisions the role entitles, it is proactively and immediately addressed by either checking the role descriptions (a living description that is updated regularly as opposed to

an ancient job description that is never seen again after the initial hire) or addressed in the appropriate meeting for clarification and then the role description is updated to prevent the same confusion in the future. It is important to note that a role is not a person, rather "roles and people as separate entities; in other words, roles can be shared, and people can have multiple roles" (Aghina et al., 2018). This distinction also contributes to the functionality of the system overall by divesting individuals of personal responsibilities and transferring it to the role within which they operate. The criticism belongs to the role rather than the person. Update it, clarify it, and move forward for the good of the organization.

One of the prerequisites for this system and role structure to work is the free flow of information. There must be transparency about who is doing what and why. This allows for the whole picture perspective and the synergistic strength of the whole, which in this case, is greater than the sum of its parts. This whole picture, or "'Whole elephant' theory has little utility unless you include a way for all concerned to talk about the same system before acting… to make everybody system 'doers,' you need everybody exploring the elephant together (Weisbord & Janoff 2015, 94-95). There is an emphasis on clarifying the system and the transparency of information as a way for everyone to be on the same page as well as having the right people in the right place. Additionally, another trait of a system of roles is mobility. Self-managing organizations are agile, which means that they "allow and expect role mobility, where employees move regularly (both horizontally and vertically) between roles and teams, based on their personal-development goals" (Aghina et al., 2018). Flexibility and multiple individuals vested in a role or vertical mobility are unique and powerful traits in self-organizing companies.

As mentioned above, one of the symptomatic issues so common in hierarchical organizations is the excessive use of meetings and emails to achieve consensus, a problem largely born out of the lack of clarity about who has the authority to make which decisions. In the absence of a clear place to check on this, such as a directory of roles which one would find in Holacratic organizations, people play it safe by involving anyone they deem possibly related to the task and try to reach a decision, inefficient and a great waste of time and resources. "To move beyond the limits of empowerment and the tyranny of consensus, we need a *system* that empowers everyone" (Robertson 2015, 21). In other words, the power is shifting away from a person at the top of an organization to a process, a well-defined set of rules on how the business is run.

When the boss/employee dynamic which resembles a parent/child dynamic is abandoned for an empowering system of rules, it transforms the company into "a functional relationship between autonomous, self-managing adults, each of whom has the power to 'lead' his or her role in service of the organization's purpose" (Robertson 2015, 23). In practice,

this means that “someone with clear autonomy is clear to ask for help, input, and dialogue, and others are free give it and pitch their opinions, without any risk of the process devolving into a consensus deadlock or an autocratic decree from a busy leader too far removed from the issue” (Robertson 2015, 25). Simply put, the person or people operating in a role are clearly executing the tasks defined to it within their authority which is clear to everyone involved. However, the role of leadership roles does not necessarily vanish. “Senior leaders of agile organizations play an integrating role across these distributed systems, bringing coherence and providing clear, *actionable, strategic guidance* around priorities and the outcomes expected at the system and team levels” (Aghina et al, 2018). Again, the authority is vested in the role, not the person, and the purpose is to support others in executing their roles, as opposed to making their decisions for them.

Much of the business between the people within an organization is nonetheless still accomplished in meetings, as in other organizations, though the efficiency and structure of the meetings are much more controlled by the system and have a clearly defined purpose. As Robertson, creator of the Holacratic model of self-managing organizations, so aptly describes, it “is not a governance process ‘of the people, by the people for the people’ – it’s governance *of* the organization, *through* the people, *for* the purpose” (Robertson 2015, 34). Removing the authority from the individual and assigning it to a role does not signify the dissolution of a structure, a misunderstanding. When companies “abandon convention and attempt to skip an explicit power structure altogether or use only a minimally defined one…it presents an insidious danger: if no explicit power structure is in place, an implicit one will emerge” (Robertson 2015, 19). This is what so often happens in hierarchical organizations where role clarity if so rampant.

Instead, meetings are clearly structured. One example of a self-managed meeting structure for small groups to brainstorming laid out four key roles to keep on track with targeting a specific issue and creating the needed documentation for others to benefit from the content of the meeting, preserving the free flow of information within the organization. The meeting roles are delegated in the beginning and are as follows: discussion leader (ensures all get a chance to speak), timekeeper (makes sure time limits are respected), recorder (produces flipcharts of group output in original wording), and reporter (delivers group report in allotted time). (Weisbord & Janoff 2015, 26). This example demonstrates a structure through roles that can be used to ensure that the flow of the meeting is respected and holds the participants accountable for only calling a necessary meeting. It is also crucial to get the right people in the right place. Meeting practices to ensure this according to Lead More, Control Less book can be summarized in the acronym ARE IN. Any issue needs the people with the authority, resources, expertise, information and need (Weisbord & Janoff 2015, 78). Meetings without these essential components will only lead

to more meetings and amount to time and effort wasted. Getting the correct practices in place for true efficiency and direction will result in progress towards the common goal.

When established and operating smoothly, self-managing organizations enjoy a fully functioning agility solidly grounded in a clear system of roles and responsibilities. However, Robertson warns that it is essential when adopting Holacracy, for example, that the system be well-established before becoming overly confident about its success. One common reason Holacracy adoption fails is when the CEO is unable to give power away to the constitution or set of common rules on which the organization operates. Also, if upper executives are unwilling to adopt the new human systems that match the system, then the system slowly falls back into the older structure if it over-confident and under-supported (Robertson 2015, 167-173). Laloux, who describes self-managing organizing through a color code (Teal) also describes necessary factors in transitioning to a Teal Organizational model. In the same vein as Robertson, he states that “the founder or top leader must have integrated a worldview and psychological development consistent with the teal development level... and owners of the organization must also understand and embrace Evolutionary-Teal worldviews” (Laloux 2014, 237). What both of these warnings serve to state, is that, however ironic, when an organization wants to adopt the practices and concepts described here, the change really must come top-down into order to be sustainable.

In a nutshell, a successful self-managing organization needs the right people who possess the appropriate skillset. These people, when provided an autonomous, authentic, and agile work environment equipped with appropriate systems and structures, can self-manage their work within the organization.

3 Interviewing as a Qualitative Data Collection Method

This section provides a look into qualitative interview methodology, defining it and distilling the requirements for creating a well-structured interview. It will explore the fundamentals of designing an interview study and investigate what an interview guide is. This information will form the basis on which decisions about the design of the interview guides will be based.

3.1 Definition

On an abstract level, the qualitative research interview "attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" In effect, it is a professional conversation, "an inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee." The purpose is to create a fuller picture of knowledge about a given topic where it is important to note that the interviewer does not "contribute with his position on the issue, nor does the [interviewee] ask the interviewer about his view." (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, 1-2,4.)

More concretely, an interview is an "interactional communication process between two parties, at least one of whom has a predetermined and serious purpose, that involves the asking and answering of questions." An interview is dyadic, which means that there are two parties involved, which should not to be confused with the number of people, because a party in this context may be represented by more than one person. The "predetermined and serious purpose" in an interview is what sets it apart from social or informal interactions or unplanned conversations. In other words, an interview requires planning and structure, the process includes "plan[ning] openings and closings, select[ing] topics, prepar[ing] questions, and gather[ing] information," which will be more fully examined in the following section. (Stewart & Cash 2014, 1-2.)

An interview is first and foremost an inquiry through questions. There are several types of information-gathering interviews. These include "surveys, exit interviews, research sessions, investigations, diagnostic sessions, journalistic interviews, and brief requests for information" (Stewart & Cash 2014, 3). The range of structure in these interviews runs the gamut from fully scheduled and entirely reproductible, such as a survey, to nearly completely unstructured. Through the structure and purpose, the chosen interview (with the exception of the fully structures interview, which does not provide room for answers beyond the specifically subscribed questions) is executed with thorough questioning and listening.

While the questions may be predetermined, the listening plays a critical role because the interviewer must “actively following up on the subjects’ answers seeking to clarify and extend the interview statements. This involves posing critical questions,” which are often determined on the spot in response to what the interviewee has said (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, 7). Due to the fact that each interview will unfold uniquely despite the use of an interview guide, the qualitative interview is often semi-structured to allow for the individual’s exclusive experience to reveal itself. That being said, the planning that goes into interview design, to be covered shortly, also includes theory. Therefore, semi-structured interviews also include “open-ended and more theoretically driven questions, eliciting data grounded in the experience of the participant as well as data guided by existing constructs within the particular discipline within which one is conducting research” (Galletta 2013, 45).

3.2 Designing an Interview Study

An interview study, or inquiry, is more than asking questions. It should include a guide to ensure that the interviewer acquires the necessary information to make the data comparable across interviews. A qualitative interview is occasionally referred to as an “*unstructured* or a *nonstandardized* interview…many of the methodological decisions have to be made on the spot, during the interview… this requires a high level of skill on the behalf of the interviewer, who needs to be knowledgeable about the interview topic and to be familiar with the methodological options available” (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, 16). Otherwise stated, the interviewer should ideally research interview methodology in order to conduct a truly exceptional interview that produces high quality information for use. It is important to comprehend that designing a study is essentially the *how* of the inquiry. The decisions made about the different phases of the inquiry are made with the end goal in mind. In this stage, it is important to recognize the interdependence of the stages of the process. “A decision at one stage has consequences that both open and limit the alternatives available at the next stage,” which will inevitably have some effect on the study (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, 111).

Designing an interview study consists of seven phases that can be broken down into the following: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting. To remain within the scope of this thesis, this section will focus only on the phases of thematizing, designing, and interviewing an interview inquiry. Thematizing in interview inquiry means to “formulate the purpose of an investigation and the conception of the theme to be investigated… the *why* and *what*.” The design phase consists of the planning of the study where all seven stages of the process are considered and with the goal of obtaining the desired knowledge. (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, 102)

The interviewing phase is where the actual interview based off an interview guide is conducted "with a reflective approach to the knowledge sought and the interpersonal relation of the interview situation. In addition to determining the *why* and *what* of an interview inquiry, it is also important to understand the theme of the study through subject matter knowledge. This means that an interviewer must develop "a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the phenomenon to be investigated in order to establish the base to which new knowledge will be added and integrated" on top of interview methodology. As a result, interviewers who are deeply familiar with the subject matter, and why they are asking, "will attempt to clarify the meanings relevant to the project during the interview." (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, 106, 134)

A thorough research of the topic before an interview serves five key purposes. Firstly, it allows the interviewer to target the questions efficiently because he or she is already familiar with what is readily available on a given topic. Secondly, and as a result of the first point, the interviewer can create more insightful questions and avoid "false assumptions about events, causes, and effects" due to ignorance on the subject matter. Thirdly, the research process exposes the researcher to the various sources on a topic, so that he or she can better evaluate the topic and is more likely to be sure of the facts. Fourthly, "doing the homework" improves your credibility in the eyes of the interviewee, promoting a more open flow of information because the knowledgeable interviewee can speak with someone they perceive as more equal or able to keep up. Lastly, and also as a result of the fourth point, the research process will reveal that the interviewer "cannot be easily fooled and [it] motivates to respond honestly, insightfully, and in depth." (Stewart & Cash 2014, 100-101)

The actual interviewing phase also has a structure which includes an opening, the interview body, and a closing. Each of these phases serve an important purpose. Opening an interview involves both parties. It's a dialogue, not a monologue. The purpose is to create the right atmosphere to "motivate both parties to participate" and to avoid a "defensive climate." The opening consists of creating rapport, which is about creating good feelings of trust and goodwill through situationally appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions, and orientating the other party to the "purpose, length, nature of the interview, how the information will be used, and why and how you selected this party to interview. It is also advisable to agree about anything regarding the use of sound recording, as well as answer any questions before the actual interview begins. (Stewart & Cash 2014, 80-81) (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, 128-129)

The closing of an interview is just as important as the beginning. The "law of recency" says that people tend to "recall the last thing said or done during an interview," which

means that rushing the ending or seeming rude or inconsiderate are likely to have a negative impact the impression of the interviewee and, consequently, on future interactions between the two parties. The closing of an interview should be clearly signaled, a dialogue, allow for any unresolved questions to be answered, and express appreciation for the time of the other party. (Stewart & Cash 2014, 88-91) At the end of an interview, it is also good practice to ask the interviewee if she has anything else to say and enquire about her experience of the interview. (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, 129)

3.3 Interview Guides

An interview guide is “a script, which structures the course of the interview more or less tightly.” The level of specificity can vary widely from a list of topics to be covered to a very detailed sequences of specifically worded questions. The semi-structured interview guide typically includes “an outline of topics to be covered, with suggested questions.” (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, 130) The interview guide enables the interviewer to ascertain “specific areas of inquiry that ensures coverage of important topics, distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, and assist in phrasing questions” (Stewart & Cash 2014, 71). Otherwise stated, a guide is built on a topical sequence, constructed about the key topics to be explored in the interview in order to obtain the needed information for the purpose.

Given the specified objectives of this thesis work, this report will focus on an interview guide that is structured moderately, neither too vaguely, nor too strictly outlined as to prevent the unique company situations from becoming evident, which would be counterproductive to the goals of the MODe project. A moderately scheduled interview “consists of all major questions with possible probing questions under each… it allows freedom to probe into answers and adapt to different interviewees, but it also imposes a greater degree of structure, aids in recording answers, and is easier to conduct and replicate” (Stewart & Cash 2014, 73-74).

After determining the appropriate level of structure for the purpose of the study, the task of drafting the interview guide rational for the interviewers, designating the topics, and the suggested questions remains. The introductory rational in an interview guide states the purpose and how the interview guide is designed for use. That is followed by the questions by topic. Each interview question should “be clearly connected to the purpose of the research, and its placement within the protocol should reflect the researcher’s deliberate progression toward a fully in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study” (Galletta 2013, 45). Ideally, the question should “contribute thematically to knowledge production and dynamically to promoting a good interview interaction” (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, 131). There is a delicate balance between acquiring raw data for the study and facilitating the interviewee in sharing within the human dialogue.

One available tool used for ensuring a selection of questions that encompasses many angles within each topic is the quintamensional design sequence. This is a tool George Gallup, a famous poll designer, created to gauge how intensely people felt about their opinions and attitudes. It's comprised of five dimensions, awareness, uninfluenced attitudes, specific attitude, reason why, and intensity of attitude. By walking an interviewee through a topic using this sequence, the interviewer can get a good sense of the interviewee's understanding of and opinion about the topic. This tool is useful in designing questions in an interview guide because it ensures that the topic is handled from various angles for a fuller picture. (Stewart & Cash 2014, 80)

4 MODe Interview Guide Design

This section discusses the design of the MODe interview guides in light of what has been presented in the literature review on self-managing organizations and qualitative interviewing. The research questions are revisited, and the takeaways are extrapolated for the guides. As there are two different interview guides required by the MODe research team, the differences between the two are explained and justified.

4.1 Guide Design Process Description

In order to begin the design of the MODe interview guides, it is first necessary to revisit the research questions of this thesis: Which key themes about self-managing organizations need to be included in the interview guides to appropriately analyze each company's current situation, unique challenges, and goals? Additionally, which questions will provide the data needed for the objective efficiently during a qualitative interview? What information should be asked of whom? Based on these questions and the theory presented from the literature, the individual interview guides for the management and employees needed to provide the themes needed to correctly evaluate where that company needs support in their transition. Additionally, the guides should provide the interviewers with contextual goals, questions, and enough instruction to guide and produce consistent interview results that are comparable across companies.

After completing the literature review and organizing the theoretical section by theme in response to the research questions of the thesis, the guides were then also organized by theme to maintain a clear connection between the research and the product structure. Organization by theme is also a component of thesis guide design, as it ensures the coverage of the necessary topics to achieve the purpose of the interview. The covered themes emerged consistently from the examined literature as cornerstones to self-management and self-organizing companies. The degree of structure was also considered based on the project goals of MODe. The interview results should be comparable yet allow for tailoring to unique companies and interviewees. The level of the interview guide structure was made based on this criterion and at the request of the commissioning party. Therefore, there are themes and suggested questions, but room for additions and flexibility.

The interview guide theme headings include the introduction, the Right People (Mastery), Systems and Structures, Agility, Autonomy and Motivation, Authenticity, Decision making, Goals, and the closing. The opening and closing are included in accordance with common structure of an interview guide. The themes are arranged in a logical order, which consid-

ers that the interview will become more comfortable with answering more sensitive questions later in the interview when rapport has been established, rather than early on. So, questions that may be more likely to produce controversial answers are reserved for later in the interview guide. Decisions regarding the controversiality of questions upon the assumption that questions making space for criticism of the current state of the company practices might trigger cautious responses when it is precisely knowledge about the sticking points that would benefit the MODe project in designing the Master Class workshop curriculum. Question order was also determined regarding the specificity of the content. Questions designed to gain an overview are asked earlier in the guide recommendations.

Each theme includes an explanation of the purpose of the section for the interviewer. The purpose is to support consistent results for the data collection, supported by the literature on qualitative interviews regarding the design of interview guides. While there is a logical order in the sequence of themes, the interviewer should follow the natural progression of the interviewee and guide back as necessary. The section goals are added to help the interviewer become more adaptable to the interviewee while keeping in mind what data should be collected to achieve the purpose of the interview. While the design of the interview guides includes guidance such as theme purpose and goals, the understanding of the definitions of the terms and familiarity with self-managing principles on the part of the interviewer are assumed. In other words, the interview guides for the MODe project were designed for interviewers who have a thorough understanding of self-management and do not need the guides to provide additional theoretical information to be successful in asking for clarifications where appropriate.

4.2 How to Adjust Each Guide for Management and Employee Targets

While the interview guides for employees and management include the same themes on self-organization, the traditional hierarchical structure of companies of the pasts means that it is likely that employees and management have different experiences in themes such a decision-making, autonomy, and others to varying degrees. Based on the assumption of an unequal or siloed distribution of information within many hierarchical organizations, certain questions regarding the actual adoption and decision-making regarding a transition to self-management were deemed more appropriate for the management interview guide in the design process. Some questions are relevant to both groups, while other questions are phrased differently or are entirely different as a result. The Gallup tool mentioned in the section about qualitative interviewing was used to help consider the various angles to consider in creating a set of questions on a theme in order to produce more well-rounded data for the project.

Questions to employees were created with the assumption that they report to a manager or other superior, and are subject, at least to some extent, to the decisions made by senior management. While they would be informed to some extent about the company's interest in self-management, questions for employees assume that the details of the process and motivations behind it are not necessarily available to them. Questions specifically designed for employees are designed to gauge previous experiences in decision-making and their enthusiasm for changes, and for what kind of change. Because they may have been subject to a sort of parent-like relationship with their superiors, questions regarding autonomy and mastery should help to identify areas where they may require training to develop the skills and habits necessary to work more independently.

Questions to management were created with the assumption that they are responsible for other employees and they make decisions regarding their work. However, there are also questions regarding how decisions may or may not be made in teams, and in what way. Questions regarding the company's interest in self-management and more about what strategy a transition to self-organization would serve within the company's vision are concentrated in the guide for management as they have more likely been involved in that process. Questions in the management guide take an approach more aimed at identifying power structures and processes of control that may require attention to successfully change to self-organization. Many of the same questions from the employee guide are also aimed at management because analyzing the answers between the two groups will produce insights about how each group understands the different themes. There will be a lot to be learned from the differences in how the two groups view the same topics. Ultimately, the goal will be to bring them to a closer and more uniform understanding in the interest of the purpose of the organization rather than position within the company.

5 Discussion

This section looks into the resulting product of this thesis study, the MODe interview guides, and their trustworthiness and applicability. Next, there is a record of personal learning from conducting the thesis process where learning outcomes are evaluated for growth in future projects.

5.1 Results and Applicability

The proposed result of this research was to produce two interview guides (management and employee) that the MODe project would be able to benefit from while evaluating organizations for their Master Class workshops. I surmised that the guides would play an essential role in helping the MODe project researchers to gain a clear picture of each company's challenges and visions with respect to self-organization. The resulting data would shape the content of the workshops and the ways each participating company would receive guidance from the research team at the start of the project.

I successfully created two interview guides based on the needs of the MODe project, which were reviewed by the commissioning party and adjusted based on the feedback given. Despite delays in my schedule for personal reasons, there were also delays in the project funding, which meant that the guides were completed for use in time to be of use to the MODe project nonetheless. Piloting the guides to determine how long the interviews last, as well as to determine any necessary changes in the structure before using them in the project, was also part of the initial plan for this thesis plan. Because of the delays in the project, the piloting process was left out at the end. As a result, the immediate usability of the interview guides resulting from this work may need further adjustments before use. Had they undergone a piloting and adjustment process, I suspect that there might have been some minor changes the order to increase the flow of conversation. Perhaps some questions might have been reframed or rephrased for clarity or to better elicit the kind of information they were initially designed to obtain.

The research and planning phases were fruitful and resulted in a well-rounded understanding of self-management and minimal organizational design, as well as qualitative interviewing as a data collection method. The theoretical framework was comprised of ideas derived from several books. The authors used are well known in their subjects and credible. The analysis of the self-management and minimal organizational design literature resulted in a clear understanding of the key themes, which were, in turn, used in the creation of the thesis product. Although, the interview guides are subject specific, they would

serve anyone looking to have an overview of how their company allows for mastery, autonomy, motivation, authenticity, and agility, as well as the role of systems and structures in this context.

Further analysis of case studies of companies who have transitioned from hierarchical organizational structures to self-managed minimal organizational design would provide more insight into common challenges, as well as provide data about how they were identified and overcome. Although the literature used for this thesis included case study examples, there was also a lot of emphasis on ideology. This was advantageous for grasping the theory behind minimal organizational design. Robertson's book on Holacracy provided the most concrete, fully encompassing framework application from the resources used, which is reflected in this work. Further research from other sources, especially more literature on systems thinking, would help support the objectives and increase credibility through a broader representation of views and greater understanding of the organization as a living and dynamic system.

5.2 Personal Learning & Process

At the beginning of the thesis process, I proposed that I would gain an in-depth understanding of minimal organizational design and qualitative data collection through interviewing. I did gain the in-depth understanding of the studied subjects that I had hoped I would. The research process resulted in my reading of several books to explore different explanations and applications of self-management principles. My research on qualitative interviewing has led to a greater understanding of all kinds of interviews as a means to collect data, as well as a solid understanding of what preparing the semi-structured qualitative interview entails. The research on interviewing also increased my own introspection as a participant in conversation, particularly in the role of the listener. I have learned ways to enter in conversations with a goal to obtain specific information, all the while allowing the story of the other to unfold naturally and without too much manipulation. Towards the end of the literature review period of the thesis process, I recognized that more literature on systems thinking would have helped me to more fully analyze the organization on a living system, which might have provided further insights when creating the questions for the interview guides. However, due to time restraints, I did not pursue this.

In addition to the specific thesis goals, there is another benefit that the process of writing a thesis infers inherently, namely that the process of conducting a longer-term project that involves multiple sources and analytical thinking would sharpen these skills and provide valuable experience and confidence in conducting future research in work life. As the tail-end of this thesis was completed during a work placement, I can confirm that the ability to conduct research from diverse sources over a duration of several weeks to create a report

has been a valuable asset. Work life as an intern has presented me with a variety of tasks that require background research to create well-informed memorandums for my organization. Also, having experience with keeping a larger amount of material on a particular subject matter organized and updated has been helpful. I expect that this will be the case in any future workplace I enter.

Due to unforeseen personal circumstances, I experienced extreme challenges in executing this thesis project in accordance with the initially proposed timeline and to the highest standards I usually hold myself to. While the situation negatively affected my ability to concentrate on the research and writing, it also provided invaluable experience in completing a more complex assignment under duress. It resulted in the failure of my usual methods for completing school work, so I needed to come up with new ways to make progress a little at a time through sheer grit. The situation also required me to apply one of the important elements in self-managing organizations, authenticity. The delays meant I needed to more freely bring my personal life into my school life because I needed an extension on my timeline. I needed to adjust my own expectations regarding the caliber of my work. As a result, I believe I have been able to show up more authentically with my advisors and I have honored myself in this difficult time. That has been a positive experience.

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Appendix 1

MODe Interview Guides

The MODe research team needs to evaluate companies interested in participating in the Master Class workshops that MODe will offer after the preliminary research phase. Before designing the content for their Master Class workshops and deciding how to best guide and support, they must first identify the current situation, unique challenges, and future goals of each participant company. Despite probable differences in size, industry, and experience, the data about each company should be collected in such a way that it contains similar content and can be comparably analyzed, even when the data collection is conducted by different people.

The individual interview guides for the management and employees will provide the interviewers with contextual goals, questions, and enough instruction to guide and produce consistent interview results that are comparable across companies. The guides are organized by theme. Each theme includes an explanation of the purpose of the section for the interviewer. While there is a logical order in the sequence of themes, the interviewer should follow the natural progression of the interviewee and guide back as necessary. The themes in both employee and management guides are the same. However, while some questions are relevant to both groups, other questions are phrased differently or are entirely different. Questions to employees were created with the assumption that they report to a manager or other superior. Questions to management were created with the assumption that they are responsible for other employees and they make decisions regarding their work.

Theme Headings:
Introduction, the Right People (Mastery), Systems and Structures, Agility, Autonomy and Motivation, Authenticity, Decision making, Goals, and Closing.

MODe Interview Guide - Employee

Introduction

This time and set of questions are designed to warm up the interviewee and build rapport. Notify the interviewee of any recording devices, the estimated length of the interview, explain how the interview will be used and why he or she was selected for an interview, as well as answer any questions before starting. The answers to this set of questions below should provide a general overview of the interviewee's relationship to the company and what his or her areas of responsibility are.

- What is your name?
- How long have you worked in company X?
- Please tell us about your company position and responsibilities. (Previous titles, responsibilities?)

The Right People (Mastery)

This set of questions is designed to elicit data about which skills the company values and/or trains. Key skills for self-organization include time management, goal setting, resource management, and the ability to prioritize. This theme will help identify if the employees require additional training for a self-managing environment.

- How would you describe your strengths?
- Which of your skills are valued most in your work?
- Do you feel like there is a skill that you would need more training in to do your work? If so, what? Why?
- What kind of training opportunities are available to you at work?

Systems and Structure

This set of questions is designed to elicit data about the operational structure of the company. After asking these questions, it should be clear how the responsibilities of the organization are distributed.

- How flexible are the job descriptions in the company?
- Has your job description evolved over time? In what way, under which circumstances?
- How do you know what the responsibilities of your colleagues are and what authority they have?

Agility

This set of questions is designed to elicit data about how capable the company is in terms of and adaptability and information transparency. Does the company lean more towards certainty or a “fail fast, fail often” philosophy? Answers to these questions will help clarify data transparency and the company’s ability to respond quickly to external factors.

- Do you have access to all the resources necessary for your work?
- How do you go about getting all the information necessary for your work? Is the information easily accessible?
- If you notice that something can be improved or perhaps you pick up on a trend that should be acted upon, what means do you have to make the improvement or react?
- Can you describe a time when you made a mistake? What were the consequences?

Autonomy & Motivation

This set of questions is designed to elicit data about how much autonomy the employee experiences in executing their duties. Does the company use intrinsic or extrinsic means of motivation? Use this theme to identify potential challenges in motivating employees in a self-managing environment.

- How does your work motivate you?
- Is the purpose and vision of your company clear to you? What is it?
- Can you describe the relationship between the employee and management? How do they support one another?
- What do most people round here think of the ways that management treats its employees? Is that the way you feel too?

Authenticity

This set of questions is designed to discover more about how authentically the interviewee shows up in the workplace. Additionally, it probes how the company purpose aligns with the interviewee personally. Use this theme to identify areas where the company could use support in supporting the wholeness of the employee and to identify potential challenges in motivating employees who are not aligned with the company purpose.

- How does the company support employee bonding? Are there regular team building activities?
- Is your private life represented in some way in your workplace?
- Is the company purpose and vision important to you? Why?

Decision-making

This set of questions is designed to better understand how decisions are currently made in the company and gain some insight into how the interviewee would like to see the process developed. After answering these questions, the distribution and rigidity of decision-making power within the company should be more apparent.

- What does the decision-making process look like in your company?
- What kind of decision-making is done as a team?
- Are there any areas of authority that you feel are best left to the senior management? Why?
- What is the role of the CEO in the company?
- If you had the exclusive power to change the decision-making process in your company, what would you change? Why?

Goals

This set of questions is designed to better understand how the interviewee views his or her career path within the company and whether or not his or her idea about work is compatible with self-management as it is currently understood. The answers should give a better idea of the interviewee's enthusiasm at the prospect of a transition towards self-organization.

- How do you envision your work evolving over the next five years?
- How would self-management change the way you work?

Closing

This time and set of questions are designed to wind down the interview and close off any loose ends. It is good practice to answer any remaining questions that arise during the interview and thank the interviewee for his or her time. This is an important moment to ensure a positive impression of the interview experience, which helps with future communication.

- Is there anything we discussed that you would like to add to?
- Do you have anything else to share that you feel would be relevant to this interview?
- How was this interview experience for you?

MODe Interview Guide - Management

Introduction

This time and set of questions are designed to warm up the interviewee and build rapport. Notify the interviewee of any recording devices, the estimated length of the interview, explain how the interview will be used and why he or she was selected for an interview, as well as answer any questions before starting. The answers to this set of questions below should provide a general overview of the interviewee's relationship to the company and what his or her areas of responsibility are.

- What is your name?
- How long have you worked in company X?
- Please tell us about your company position and responsibilities. (Previous titles, responsibilities?)

The Right People (Mastery)

This set of questions is designed to elicit data about which skills the company values and/or trains. Key skills for self-organization include time management, goal setting, resource management, and the ability to prioritize. This theme will help identify if the employees require additional training for a self-managing environment.

- What kind of values are prioritized in the hiring process? Skillset?
- Which of your skills are valued most in your work?
- How would you describe the strengths of the employee?
- What kind of training possibilities are available to your employees? To you?

Systems and Structure

This set of questions is designed to elicit data about the operational structure of the company. After asking these questions, it should be clear how the responsibilities of the organization are distributed.

- Has your job description evolved over time? In what way, under which circumstances?
- How do you know what the responsibilities of your colleagues are and what authority they have?
- Can you describe how the job descriptions are created in your company?
- How flexible are the job descriptions in the company?

Agility

This set of questions is designed to elicit data about how capable the company is in terms of and adaptability and information transparency. Does the company lean more towards certainty or a “fail fast, fail often” philosophy? Answers to these questions will help clarify data transparency and the company’s ability to respond quickly to external factors.

- How do you go about getting all the information necessary for your work? Is the information easily accessible?
- If you notice that something can be improved or perhaps you pick up on a trend that should be acted upon, what means do you have to make the improvement or react?
- Can you describe a time when you made a mistake? What were the consequences?

Autonomy & Motivation

This set of questions is designed to elicit data about how much autonomy the employee experience in executing their duties. Does the company use intrinsic or extrinsic means of motivation? Use this theme to identify potential challenges in motivating employees in a self-managing environment.

- How does your work motivate you?
- Is the purpose and vision of your company clear to you? What is it?
- Can you describe the relationship between the employee and management? How do they support one another?

Authenticity

This set of questions is designed to discover more about how authentically the interviewee shows up in the workplace. Additionally, it probes how the company purpose aligns with the interviewee personally. Use this theme to identify areas where the company could use support in supporting the wholeness of the employee and to identify potential challenges in motivating employees who are not aligned with the company purpose.

- How does the company support employee bonding? Are there regular team building activities?
- Is your private life represented in some way in your workplace?
- Is the company purpose and vision important to you? Why?
- How do you encourage your employee to express themselves at work?

Decision-making

This set of questions is designed to better understand how decisions are currently made in the company and gain some insight into how the interviewee would like to see the process developed. After answering these questions, the distribution and rigidity of decision-making power within the company should be more apparent.

- What does the decision-making process look like in your company?
- What kind of authority do you feel your employee can be trusted with on an individual level?
- What kind of decision-making is made as a team?
- Are there any areas of authority that you feel are best left to the senior management? Why?
- What is the role of the CEO in the company?
- If you had the exclusive power to change the decision-making process in your company, what would you change? Why?

Goals

This set of questions is designed to better understand the management's motivations behind self-management and what they hope the result will be. The answers should also give a better idea of the interviewee's enthusiasm at the prospect of a transition towards self-organization and an understanding of how the interviewee views his or her career path within the company, and whether or not his or her idea about work is compatible with self-management as it is currently understood.

- What is your company's motivation in looking at self-management?
- Why is your company ready to transition to a distributed authority system?
- Will you pilot the system in only part of the company or in the entire company?
- How would self-management change the way the company runs?
- How would self-management change the way you work?

Closing

This time and set of questions are designed to wind down the interview and close off any loose ends. It is good practice to answer any remaining questions that arise during the interview and thank the interviewee for his or her time. This is an important moment to ensure a positive impression of the interview experience, which helps with future communication.

- Is there anything we discussed that you would like to add to?
- Do you have anything else to share that you feel would be relevant to this interview?

- How was this interview experience for you?